UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE WRITINGS OF DIAMONO SHS

STUDENTS

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DECLARATION

I, Samuel Okyere, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own wok, and it has not been submitted either in apart or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE……………………………………

DATE…………………………………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

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DATE…………………………………………………………………

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DEDICATION

The entire work is dedicated to my dear parents, Mr. Joseph Adom and Madam Grace Konadu, and my lovely siblings, especially, Justice and Gabby, for their immense contributions toward making my tertiary education a reality.

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ABSTRACT

This research examined the common grammatical errors in the writings of students of Diamono Senior High School with the aim of providing remedies. It aimed to find out the grammatical errors made by the students in their writings and the ways to eliminate these errors in their writings. The data source was collected from the students' writings on a given essay topic. I randomly sampled 61 students' writings out of a total of 125 students or essays. Of these, 20 essays each were from the two Arts classes (A1 and A2), 13 from the Business class and 8 from the General Science class. Dulay's theory was the main key in the data analysis. The results showed that the students produced 475 errors which could be grouped into 5 categories. These categories were errors in writings of concord, use of tense, spellings, preposition and conjunction. Concord errors were found 125 times; tense errors were found 115 times; spelling errors were found 100 times; preposition errors were found 75 times and conjunction errors were found 60 times. Based on the results, some recommendations were made, suggesting the various roles stakeholders must play as far as teaching and learning of grammar in the English Language is concerned. These findings undoubtedly have implications for sports media discourse, pedagogy, literary studies and further research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter aims to create a general context within which the present study is situated. It embodies the background to the study which justifies the area of study, the choice of topic as well the social relevance of the topic. It also presents the problem that necessitated the study as well as the research questions that guided the analysis and discussion of the data, and eventually highlights the scope of the study. It finally captures the significance of the study, as well as the chapter synopsis.

1.1 Background

The study of English as a subject is intended to provide the language needs of students as they progress through all the levels of formal education, yet the performance of students in English in Ghana, both spoken and written, has been described in various unpalatable terms to reflect concern about its falling standard. It is not surprising that Gyasi (1990) in the early 90s expressed his frustration when he wrote that "English in Ghana is very ill" and that "The cancerous tumors are countless." He went on to identify the "tumors" to be "wrong collocation, wrong concord; poor spelling, tense error, wrong insertion or omission of the articles; misuse of prepositions; errors arising from mother tongue interference, etc. and then showed the extent of the problem. According to him, "The cancer has spread too far and it is to be found everywhere: in the English of teachers, journalists, other professionals, ordinary men and women, and students from the secondary school to the university" (Gyasi 1990, p. 24).

Now, over two decades on, considering students abysmal performances in English examinations, the question is evident: 'has the situation changed for the

better?' The answer is definitely 'No'. To substantiate my assertion, the latest Chief Examiners' report (of 2018) contain such comments as: "…the poor performance of the majority of the candidates was attributed to their inability to express themselves well in the English Language". It is obvious that even when candidates are not able to perform well in other subjects such as Social Studies and Mathematics, the blame is laid at the door of the English Language that the inadequacy of the English of many candidates resulted in their poor performance in those subjects. The problem is that it seems that the study of the language is becoming increasingly difficult for students, especially those in second cycle institutions. Even though the English language is the official language in Ghana and teachers of English appear to be doing their best, each year the Chief Examiners' Reports show a decline in the performance of candidates. Considering this challenge, there has been an urgent feeling among educationists that there is the need for research into the problems involved in the use of English in Ghana. The outcome of the research indicates that, English language learning is a process where all skills of (listening, reading, writing, speaking and grammar) are interconnected. Among these skills, it is writing that students find most challenging. This is because, they find English rules very complicated because some English language features such as sentence construction, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and so forth in their mother tongue are different from those of the target language. This makes them difficult to express themselves in a clear, correct and comprehensible manner of writing.

Many causes have been cited for the unfortunate situation. For instance, and Adu Darko et al. (2008) counted among these causes, scarcity of qualified teachers and textbooks together with absence of a reading culture as contributing factors to the problem. Other factors are the influence of the social media and the internet. In

addition, poor teaching and learning of the language at the Junior and Senior High Schools have been identified as a primary cause of poor English at the SHS level, even though several interventions have been made to uplift the language at those lower levels. Interventions such as the introduction of free English textbooks, English teachers' workshops, building of libraries in our schools, notwithstanding, the poor standard of English persists among the pre-tertiary students as have been shown by various studies.

The findings of the various studies have been mostly confirmed in the Chief Examiners' Reports on performance of students in English at the pre-tertiary examinations level. This poor situation has not been very different among students of Diamono SHS. Students of Diamono SHS also commit errors relating to wrong concord, wrong register, wrong tense, wrong use of the preposition, conjunctions and other parts of speech. Added to these are misspelling and misuse of words, wrong collocation, ambiguity, use of unidiomatic expressions, wrong punctuation and misuse of capital and small letters. This study however concentrates on grammatical errors. Various attempts such as extra-classes, writing competition, quizzes and a host of them have been laid down to surmount the problem of grammatical errors in students' writings. This study focuses on only final year undergraduate students, the assumption being that, if isolated, the final year students would have minimum or no errors at all in English since they had successfully studied many topics under grammar.

Finally, it is the researcher's hope that the results of this study can be useful for teaching and learning of the rules of grammar.

1.2 Statement of the problem

In recent times, one area of linguistic study that has increasingly attracted most scholarly attention in contrastive analysis is error analysis. As a result, a lot of

studies have been conducted on students' errors. Such studies include: Thorne (1997), Black (1992) and Baffoe (2013). Yet students still commit grammatical errors in their writings. The performance of students in the English Language paper over the years can be described as abysmal. Many stakeholders of education feel that the standards of education is falling. It is against this backdrop that the Ghana Education Service in collaboration with the government organized a 4-day intervention training workshop for all core subject teachers in the 722 senior high schools across the country on January 14, 2020. The training is a part of the Ministry of Education's effort to improve quality teaching and learning in the wake of Free SHS and the Double Track System.

On another score, Dr. Wendy Addo-Lamptey, the Head of the National office of WAEC, in analysis of WASSCE results for SHS candidates, 2018, showed that there was a drop in the performance in English Language from 52.24 percent in 2017 to 46.79 percent in 2018. That of 2019 was 48.97 percent with 51.03 percent who sat for English Language and failed. For English Language, she cited poor concord, tense, spelling, the use of abbreviated words, and dearth of sufficient vocabulary as some of the candidates' challenges. She therefore recommended to candidates to read well-written materials to improve linguistic proficiency as well as embark on more exercises in comprehension, summary and essay writing.

The situation is no different at Diamono SHS. The students have challenges with some major grammatical topics like concord, tenses, spellings, prepositions and conjunctions. And these have led to their abysmal performance in the composition, summary and comprehension aspects of the English Language. These challenges have also taken a great toll on the communication skills of students in the language. One major cause of concord error is confusing a singular verb with a plural verb especially

when the inflectional marker-s is added to mark singularity. On the issue of tense, one area students of Diamono SHS, exhibit difficulty is how to differentiate between regular and irregular verbs when it comes to the formation of past tense. These students overgeneralize the rule of past tense by adding the inflectional morpheme-d/ed to all verbs either regular or irregular to form their past.

Another area students find difficulty is spelling. Most students spell words wrongly by spelling the words based on how they pronounce the word. On the issues of preposition, the students either use the wrong preposition or redundantly use the prepositions. Lastly, on conjunction, the students find it extreme difficult to go in for the right conjunction when they intend to combine parts of sentences. The main problem is that students often make errors when they develop their own knowledge of target language rule system. To help matters, teachers should overcome their teaching problem and must have a good competence in the subject matter. The present study therefore seeks to do an analysis of the grammatical errors in writings of the students of Diamono SHS.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The research was guided by two objectives. It sought to:

1. investigate the types of grammatical errors students of Diamono Senior High School commit in their writings;

2. determine the causes of the errors.

1.4 Research questions

In order to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, the study was guided by the following questions: They are:

1. What are the grammatical errors in writings made by students of Diamono SHS students?

2. What are the causes of those errors?

1.5 Limitation

The subjects of this research were limited to the students of Diamono SHS. The researcher chose the final year students due to the fact that they are still in the early stage of learning so they will be more enthusiastic to learn English and be more open to correction. The grammatical errors they commit will assist them to greater learning and understanding of the English language. The selected school for this study is just one out of several SHS in the country; therefore, there can be no strong basis for generalizing its findings. Another limitation of this study is time. The researcher had one year to complete the study. This accounted for the limited number of schools and the size of population selected for the study. A longer period of time preferably, two or three years would have been ideal to study students' grammatical errors in their writings at successive points. The current study therefore makes it difficult to determine accurately the different grammatical errors that learners produce at different stages of their language development. However, notwithstanding these limitations, the findings provide a fair idea of the falling standard of English in Ghana.

1.6 Delimitation

As the researcher has indicated already, the study sought to discuss some of the grammatical errors that found in the writings of the students of Diamono SHS and show how best these errors could be remedied. The researcher limited himself to errors such as concord, tense, spelling, preposition and conjunction. Besides these grammatical errors, there are others such as wrong use of pronouns, paragraphing,

coherence, inappropriate register, wrong punctuation, wrong use of articles and a host of them which were not captured in this study.

1.7 Significance of the study

Considering the importance of grammatical knowledge in the writing process, this research aimed at discussing the grammatical errors in the writings of students of Diamono SHS. Firstly, the study will be significant to teachers of English Language. The result of this study provides feedback for teachers of English that may be useful to recognize students' difficulties in writing so they will pay more attention to the grammatical errors made by the students and the causes of the errors in writing. The result of the study will help them to evaluate themselves whether they are successful or not in teaching aspects of the English Language.

Again, students will benefit from the study. The result of the study will show them in what aspect in grammar which is difficult for them. By this way, the students are expected to increase their knowledge on the English grammar, thus they will be aware of the errors they made and sources of the errors. Moreover, the study will be of immense importance to other researchers. The researcher hopes that this study can inspire other researchers to conduct further researches about grammatical error analysis or other topics related to errors to enrich the existing study. Lastly, since it is an African based study and specifically the Ghanaian context, it exposes to the linguistic world the inherent errors implicit in the writings of Ghanaian students. This will in no mean way widen our knowledge on error analysis. In consequence, this study provides the necessary bedrock for further studies on grammatical error analysis.

1.8 Organization of the study

This study is organized along five-chapter divisions. Chapter One is a general introduction, which consists of the background of the study and other related information about the research, such as: the statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations, delimitation and structural organization of the thesis. Chapter Two deals with the literature review and covers a detailed discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. It also examines previous studies which have been embarked upon by other researchers in the domain of error analysis and the possible types of grammatical errors. The research methods used are explained in Chapter Three. The methodology covers a detailed discussion of the research design, population of the study, mode of sampling techniques, data collection procedures, the instruments used, data analysis procedures, as well as an overview of the thesis at the end of the chapter. Chapter Four presents a more comprehensive analysis and detailed discussion of the data collected for the study. Chapter Five provides a summary of my findings, the contribution of this study to knowledge, the implications of the study, recommendations and suggestions on how to improve the standard of English in Ghana and my conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

It has been the sole effort of instructors to improve learners' writing skills and to reduce the number of errors students make in their writings. That of grammatical errors is on the ascendency. These errors that learners make in the use of the English language lead to miscommunication of their ideas. The errors are responsible for their abysmal performance in written examinations. To remedy the situation, a number of research studies have been conducted both to find out causes of learners' errors and to help EFL learners overcome difficulties in their writings. This chapter focuses on how the concept of error has been discussed in some selected works such as Bismarck (2014), Nimako (2008), Downing and Locke (2006), Agor (2003), Wiredu (2005), Quirk etal (1998), Yankson (1996), Crystal (1999), Corder (1967), Richards (1974) and Ellis (1985). As part of the literature review, Error Analysis theory which is the theoretical framework which will guide this study has been reviewed as discussed by different authors. This chapter also looks at the sources or types of errors and critically examine the various types of grammatical errors students make in their writings. Finally, the study shall review suggested steps to deal with grammatical deviations in students' writings.

2.1 Errors

Corder (1967) defines error as the breaching of code. Ellis (1994, p.1) also holds the view that an error is a 'deviation from the norms of the target language.' In furtherance, Yankson (1996) defines an error as a noticeable deviation from the rules of a target system. Error is therefore a breach of the language code. According to Yankson (1997), an error may occur as a result of lack of knowledge and the

misapplication of the rules of the second language. In the views of Gass and Selinker (2001), errors are 'red flags'. That means, errors are warning signals which provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the L2. Errors are systematic and they reveal one's level of competence in the use of language; there is therefore the need for them to be eliminated.

Scholars have attempted to examine the distinction between an error and a mistake. According to Yankson (1996), an error is a noticeable deviation from the rules of a target system. It is a breach of the language code. A mistake on the other hand is a type of linguistic deviance, but it is a slip, the result of tiredness, emotional stress, nervousness, memory lapse or preoccupation with the subject. To distinguish between an error and a mistake, Ellis (2003) suggests two ways; the first one is to check the consistency of learner's performance. If he/she sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake. However, if he/she always use it incorrectly, it is called an error. The second way is to ask learner to try correct his/her own deviant utterance. Where he/she is unable to, the deviations are errors; where he/she is successful, they are mistakes.

2.2 Error analysis

Error analysis is one of the most significant targets of second language acquisition. It provides a deep insight for understanding of the process of language learning. As a result, several studies by different authors have been conducted in this regard. They include those of Richards and Schmidt (1971, 1974) and James (1989, 1998). These studies examine errors made by L2 learners and efforts to rectify them. According to Swan and Smith (1995), there are three approaches to the analysis of 'learner English' namely, contrastive analysis, error analysis, and transfer analysis. Contrastive analysis compares the structures of two language systems and predicts

errors. Transfer analysis, on the other hand, compares 'learner English' with L1 and attempts to explain the structure of those errors that can be traced to language transfer. Error analysis compares 'learner English' with English (L2) itself and judges how learners are 'ignorant.'

Related to the above, James (2001, p. 62) refers to error analysis as 'the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance'. Richard and Schmidt (2002) also define error analysis as the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners. Similarly, for Crystal (1999) error analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a language, especially a foreign language. Finally, Brown (2002) defines error analysis as 'the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner'.

Students in the process of learning language, profit from the errors that they make by obtaining feedback to make new attempts that successively approximate their desired object. According to Corder (1967), learners' errors are important in and of themselves. For learners themselves, errors are indispensable, since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. He went further to classify the need to study learner errors in three ways: The study of learner's errors serves a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not mastered; it serves serve a research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned and it serves a learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language (That is, by obtaining feedback on their errors). Simply put, analyzing errors made by language learners will determine the areas that need reinforcement by both teachers and learners.

2.3 Types of errors

There are many different classifications as well as types of errors that are considered in the analysis of linguistic outputs of language learners. Some of these are concord errors, spelling errors, tense errors, conjunction errors and prepositional errors.

2.4.1 Concord errors

Students of Diamono SHS are confronted with a plethora of difficulties in their attempts to write in the second language. One of such difficulties is concord error. It is not out of place for one to conclude that concord error is one of the grammatical errors students make in their writings. It may not be wrong to ascribe this problem to poor teaching and learning of English grammar at the lower levels of the students' education.

Concord has been treated in selected works such as Crystal (1988), Downing and Locke (2006), Gogovi et al (2005), Leech and Svartvik (2002), Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) and Yankson (1994). Finally, this section presents a review of some previous works on concord errors. According to Crystal (1988), concord or agreement is a way of showing that two grammatical units in a sentence have a certain feature in common. This is what Mark and Kirsten (2011) call morpho-syntactic feature. Thus, if the subject of the sentence is singular, the verb must also be singular. For example,

*My **father has** many cars in Dubai.* A singular (my father) subject and a singular verb

       (has)

*My **brothers have** many cars in Dubai.* A plural subject (my brothers) and a plural verb

       (have)

Again, Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) define concord as the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have that feature. Downing and Locke (2006) also define concord as the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (singularity or plurality) that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other. Moreover, Wiredu (1998) defines concord as the agreement relations which exist between two grammatical units so that when one unit displays a particular feature the other unit will also display a similar feature.

All the definitions cited above imply that if a grammatical unit possesses a feature, for example, a singular or a plural noun, that singularity or plurality feature of the noun should be matched correctly with the verb.

For examples,

1st person singular   *I play* for Ghana

2nd person singular   *You play* for Ghana

2nd person singular   *You play* for Ghana

3rd person singular   *He / She* plays for Ghana   *It* provides its food

3rd person plural   *They* play for Ghana

2.4.2 Tense errors

English grammar discusses a lot of concepts such as tense, word classes, sentence structures, clausal elements and others. One of the English grammar concepts in which Diamono Senior High students tend to make error is "tense". Quite a number of authors and literatures have conducted studies on errors of tense in students' writings. Notable authors such as Owu-Ewie (2017), Wiredu (2005), Downing (2006), Crystal (1977), Richards and Schmidt (2002), Trask (2008), Quirk et al. (1973) and Hornby (1898) have researched into tenses.

According to Hornby (1898), the word 'tense' is derived from the Latin word, 'tempus' meaning, 'time'. Tense is a form of verb used to indicate the time In discussing tense and time A.S Hornby states that "the words 'time' and 'tense' must not be confused. The word time stands for a concept with which all mankind is familiar, divided into past, present and future. The word tense stands for a verb form or series of verb forms used to express a time relation.

There is a distinction between tense and time. According to Quirk etal (1973, p.40) time is a universal, non-linguistic concept with three divisions namely past, present and future. On the other hand, tense is the correspondence between the form of a verb and our concept of time. With this, only two tenses are possible, the present and the past. For Jespersen (1924), time is a natural or notional concept which in many languages is expressed in tenses. In another literature, Klein (1994) maintains that "time forms the basic categories of our experience and our cognition... Three such times are normally distinguished, according to their relation to the present moment: past, present, future.

From the above, one can deduce that grammarians accept that both time and tenses locate events or actions and deal with verb variations. Yet they establish that Tense" is a linguistic phenomenon, whereas "time" is an extra-linguistic concept. Tense is thus the grammatical category which correlates with distinctions of time. Tense allows only two types namely, present and past while time accepts the present, the past and the future. In marking tense, the verbal element is the most important grammatical element. This rule is supported by authors such as Klein, Crystal, Angela Downing, Quirk etal and Wiredu. According to Klein (1994), the verb determines the type of tense and "the verb not only expresses an event, an action or a process but it also links whatever it expresses to particular times.

Crystal (1977, p. 92) also argues that as a rule, tense is marked on verbs, hence the verb, the most important element that carries the syntactic load in a sentence. Though the verb is considered by grammarians as the most important element to express the time of the action of events, some languages formally mark the expression of time relations on word classes other than the verb. For instance, a study conducted by Crystal (1977, p. 92) showed that in Japanese, adjectives can also mark tense. It can be concluded that all the literatures agree that English allows only two types of tenses, the present and the past. There is nothing as future tense, rather, future time, since in expressing the future, there is the need of a modal auxiliary to precede the main verb. This assertion is supported by Downing and Quirk.

2.4.3 Conjunction errors

According to Greene (1973) a conjunction is a word that joins words or group of words. In furtherance, conjunction belongs to category of functional words (which are pronoun, conjunction, preposition, and interjection) which are primarily used to modify other parts speech or content words (which are noun, verb, adjective, and adverb). Wishon and Burks (1980) are also of the view that conjunctions equal sentence parts. They group conjunctions into two. Coordinate conjunctions and subordinate conjunctions. In another development, Angela Downing () defines conjunction as a word class that serves to connect words, phrases, clauses or sentences. They describe three types of conjunctions: coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction and correlative conjunction.

They join elements of a coordinate structure and are thus called coordinating conjunction. They are used to connect two simple sentences with a comma. The two parts of the sentence, if split apart without the conjunction, could stand alone as a sentence, as they both have a subject and a verb each. Said another way, both parts of

the sentences are independent clauses. They could also be joined with a semicolon. The various coordinating conjunctions form the acronym, FANBOYS. They conjunctions forming the acronym are:

>*For*   *Sammy bought a phone **for** Adina*
>
>*And*   *Linda is cute **and** Adina is smart*
>
>*But*   *Linda is cute **but** I chose Adina*

A comma as coordinating conjunction: Example, *Linda is cute, yet I chose Adina*

Semi colon as a coordinating conjunction: Example, *Linda is cute; I chose Adina*

Compound subjects with a coordinating conjunction: Example, *Linda and Adina both are intelligent.*

Hartono (1996) defines subordinating conjunction as the type conjunction that join a main clause with dependent clause. Wren and Martin (1990) state that "Subordinate conjunction joins a clause to another on which it depends for full meaning". The subordinate conjunctions include after, because, if, although, that, whether, than, though, till, before, and unless. According to Angela Downing, Subordinating conjunctions connect clauses of unequal rank. That is, a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main clause (independent clause)

Causality: because, since, as

Time: when, as soon as, before, after, while, by the time

Contrast/ Opposition; though, although, even though, while, whereas, rather than

Condition: if, unless, even if, only if, in case, provided that, so that, whether

For example,

>*She has been sad **since** her children died.*
>
>*He attended church always **because** he wanted to make heaven.*
>
>*I remained single **until** she accepted my proposal.*

Correlative conjunctions pair things together as subjects or objects in a sentence, that is why they are also called pairing conjunctions. They include:

Either…..or neither….nor   not only….but also   both…..and   nor….not

as….as so….that

For example,

> *Either you work hard or you fail.*

> *Neither is Mahama competent nor is vice.*

My students have difficulties with conjunctions. They fail to use the appropriate conjunction by taking into consideration the context. Some also fail to distinguish coordinators from subordinators, hence they replace subordinators with coordinators. Once area they mostly commit errors is dealing with correlative conjunctions. This affects the grammatical structure of the sentence. Some of the sentences that contain conjunction deviations are:

> *You should be in bed **and** your temperature is cold. (**because**, **since**)*

> *We missed the first flight **since** we got to the airport on time*. (**though**)

> *Neither of the boys **or** the girls attended the party (**nor**)*

> *Not only was she disrespectful **but** arrogant (**but also**)*

An important study related to this research is the work of Dias (2018). The study investigated the grammatical errors made by the students of State Institute of Islamic Studies in writing their final paper. A sample of 12 students were selected. From the data analysis, the result showed that the students produced errors in the use of conjunction. These errors, typically were omission of conjunctions. The learners wrote sentence such as:

> *Rena, Dina **^** Tony go to market to buy some books. (and is omitted)*

Beside the above study, other research work in error studies is Tagor (2018). The researcher investigated into Indonesia students' Error in Using Conjunction (*because*, *since*, *as*, *in case*) in their writings. The objective of the study were to find out the students' difficulties in using subordinate conjunction and, to find out the causes of the students' problems in using subordinate conjunction. The study concluded that students find difficulty in dealing with the use of conjunctions in complex sentences. These previous studies undoubtedly have implications on the current study.

2.4.4 Spelling errors

The English language is known for its irregularity, and as a result of this, both native and second language users make mistakes in spelling English words. Students also, in general, make a lot of spelling errors in their essays and it has been proved in this study. Due to the influence of other languages, variant pronunciations and other historical reasons, the English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students (Gowere et al., 1995). A recent study by Asma (2017) investigated the spelling errors committed by English-Major students at BAU, Saudi Arabia. The participants in the present study were 65 students. The participants' essays in "technical writing" course were used to be the data of the study. The results of the study show four types of spelling errors, substitution errors, insertion errors, omission errors and transposition errors. In addition, results indicate that the difference between English and Arabic writing system is one of the major causes for students' errors.

A Ghanaian study crucial to the current study is the work of Bismarck (2014). Bismarck, in a study investigated the sources of errors that Senior High School students in Sunyani municipality make in writing in order to establish the actual

problem areas for attention and redress. In the study, he analyzed data collected from the essays written by the students and also the information obtained from teachers of English during his interaction with them. His findings of the study, disclosed that generally words that sound alike are, all too often, not spelled alike. He therefore identified spelling errors from the following sources:

Incorrect pronunciation

Confusion between homophones (homophone induced errors)

Due to confusion over double letter and non- Double letter

Lack of students' firm grasp of word division and combination (wrong amalgamation)

Spelling errors due to students' carelessness

Another study worthy of reviewing in this research is the work of Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) in a study on L1 interference in the L2 writing of Akan Junior High School Students. The findings of the study reviewed that homophone induced errors are responsible for spelling mistakes among learners of the L2. They defined homophones as words that have different spellings but have almost the same pronunciation. According to the research, these spelling errors might have come about as a result of poor pronunciation. The students could not pronounce such words to bring about the subtle differences that exist between their spellings. The sentences below contain wrong spelt words as a result of homophonic challenges.

*The **hole** school formed a circle around Fiifi's lifeless body. (**whole** instead of hole).*

*As a student, quality education is my **rite**. (**right** instead of rite)*

*We don't enjoy the free meal they serve us when we go for a **brake** (**break** instead of brake)*

Regrettably, students of Diamono SHS can't be excused when grammatical errors resulting from spelling errors are discussed. After assessing their writings, it was discovered that they made those spellings mistakes due to the following factors,

The following are some of the words students of Diamono SHS pronounced wrongly and therefore spell them wrongly:

wrong spelling	correct spelling
decieve	*deceive*
anoid	*annoyed*
soo	*so*
allways	*always*
libry	*library*
dormetry	*dormitory*

These words have same sound or pronunciation; hence, students spell them out of confusion.

	when they actually mean	
taught		*thought*
saw		*sore*
quite		*quiet*
no		*know*
weather		*whether*

The following words are written together but students out of ignorance divide them.

correct	***wrong***
indeed	***in deed***
behold	***be hold***
forever	***for ever***

<center>furthermore   **further more**</center>

On the other hand, the words below are divided into two but students erroneously combine them.

<center>

in front	**infront**
in spite	**inspite**
in charge	**incharge**

</center>

The students can also be careless and commit write the following words wrongly

<center>

writing	**writting**
privilege	**priviledge**
february	**februrary**
tonight	**tonite**
tomorrow	**tommorrow**

</center>

2.4.5 Prepositional errors

Kaplan (1989) defines a preposition as a functional word or group of words which have meanings which have something to do with location or direction and movement. The literature that has done a detailed discussion of preposition is Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985). They explain a preposition as a word that relates to the noun or pronoun to indicate:

Positive position –Examples: at, in, on,

Positive direction- Examples: to, on, onto, into

Negative position- Examples: away from, off, out of,

The relative position of two objects- Examples: above, over, under, in front of, between

Time (future and duration)- Examples: at, on, in, after, since, until, by, up to.

According to Quirk et al, prepositions typically show how the noun, noun phrase, or pronoun is related to another word in a sentence. For example, the prepositions below relate the various nouns and pronouns respectively.

*A friend **of** mine has passed on.*

*The dress **with** the stripes was bought.*

*Dennis was hit **by** a ball.*

*No one **except** me deserves to win.*

Preposition with their objects form prepositional phrase. That is, a preposition preceding a noun phrase. For example:

*I met my new girlfriend **at the market.***

*We embraced each other **inside the room.***

*The case was adjourned **at the law court.***

A preposition may appear at the end of a sentence or a clause, but only when its object comes earlier. For example,

*Was he the man you worked **with**?*

*She just needs someone to talk **to**?*

Prepositions such as, **under, off, along, round** and **on** may also function as adverb. Other prepositions such as, **before, after, for** and **since** may also function as conjunctions. Mukattash (1981) in a study to investigate grammatical errors among Arab students rated prepositional errors fourth. This is because he found out that prepositions are a particular area of difficulty for Arab learners, mainly because of mother tongue interference. In another development, Malak (2000) in a study of Arab EFL students with low language proficiency in English, agree with Henning (1978) and with this study revealed that simple prepositions were incorrectly used

very frequently by Arab learners of English due to the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English.

Another study worthy of reviewing in this research is the work of Abdul Saeed (2015) in a study of prepositional errors in the writings of Pakistani ESL students. The prepositional deviations they discovered were grouped under:

Direction Preposition Error (DPE)

Place Prepositional Error (PPE)

Time Prepositional Error (TPE)

A Ghanaian study crucial to the current study is the work of Bismarck (2014). Bismarck, in a study investigated the sources of errors that Senior High School students in Sunyani municipality make. The most common errors identified in the corpus were prepositions that indicate place and time and concluded that most of the preposition errors committed by the students were due to wrong selection and sometimes unnecessary addition of prepositions.

Related to this is another Ghanaian study by Owu-Ewie and Williams. The study sought to examine the frequency of the errors and what can be done to improve the teaching of L2 (English) writing in the Senior High School. Using Samatle's (2001) model, the study revealed that the prepositional committed by learners fall under three categories. They are,

Missing preposition

Wrong preposition use

Redundant preposition

The study revealed that some constructions require preposition while others do not. Surprisingly, the students deviate from prepositional rules and commit errors in all the

tree categories. This means that the students failed to use the proposition when in actual sense it was necessary. Examples of missing preposition are,

> *The headmaster said we should not boast* **^** *our success but be humble and study hard. (**of** is missing here)*

> *The cutlass was* **^** *no use during the grounds work. (**of** is missing here).*

This implies that a preposition was used when it was not required. Examples of redundant use of preposition are,

> *After the cleaning exercise, the housemaster advised us not to violate* ***against*** *the rules. (Inserting the preposition, against is useless. The sentence should read, After the cleaning exercise, the housemaster advised us not to violate the rules.*

This category of errors means that a preposition was required in the sentence but the wrong one was used. This phenomenon occurred in the students' writings. Examples from the data are:

> *Students were advised to move away* ***of*** *the gutter before they fell in it. The use of the preposition is wrong. The correct preposition must be, from as in,*

> Students were advised to move away **from** the gutter before they fell in it.

Unfortunately, students of Diamono SHS commit all these prepositional errors and many more in their writings. This can be attributed to learners' laziness to read on prepositions.

2.5 Dealing with the problem of grammatical errors in students' writings

A current Ghanaian study that has researched into suggested measures to deal with grammatical errors in the writings of Secondary School students is Akurugu

(2010). This study is relevant to my current study. Below are some of the suggested measures:

Firstly, in dealing with the error of concord, English teachers should spend enough time on teaching the components of the various word classes, phrases, headwords and modifiers. If this is done, students would be aware of the headword which will assist them in determining the appropriate corresponding verb.

Secondly, in teaching spellings of words, it would be more helpful if the teacher asks the students to say the words loudly, and write down the number of sounds that they realize in those words before they spell them.

Thirdly, learners must develop good reading and writing habit. A good reading habit and writing would go a long way to enhance effective learning of English. This is because reading materials written in good Standard English is a sure way of learning grammar.

Fourthly, any effort to improve learners learning of grammar require more practical interventions from all stakeholders, with the learner being central focal point to any strategy. It is of the view that seasoned English professors should start teaching kids the rules of grammar and writing skills right from the stages of kindergarten.

Finally, producing responsible and dutiful trainee teachers. Since about ninety-percent of first year students in Diamono SHS are from public schools, it is expected that the English teacher should be trained in a manner that can enable him or her to create, enrich, and sharpen students English writing skills. A teacher who battles with grammatical deviations will transfer such weaknesses on the learners at the early stages.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter spells out the research design, source of data, data collection technique, population, sampling size and research instruments for this study and data analysis techniques employed in the study.

3.1 Research design

Adentwi and Amartei (2009) define research design as the overall plan the researcher employs to collect data in order to answer the research questions. The design for the present study is the qualitative research design largely due to the fact that it is very effective for the study of any communication content (Crewell, 2009).

3.2 Source of data

The source of data for this study is students' documents which are writings, especially essays and summary passages. In getting the document, the researcher will use random sampling technique. The students are Form Three students of Diamono SHS.

3.3 Population and sampling

According to Castillo (2009), research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. The SHS three students of Diamono SHS students were chosen as the target population for this study. The participants were selected randomly. Table 1 shows the number of classes and the total number of students in the research site. The total number of students are 125. Out of the 125 students, 20 students each was selected from the two Arts classes with class sizes of 50 and 45 respectively. 13 students were selected

from the Business class with a population of 23 and 8 students were selected from the Science class with a population of 15. This is represented in the table below.

Table 3.1 Population size

Class selected	Number of Students	Number of essays
3A1	50	20
3A2	45	20
3B	23	13
3C	15	8
TOTAL	**125**	**61**

Figure 1**: Sample data**

3.4 The research site

Diamono SHS is the research site. It is located in the Jaman-North district of Brong Region. I am an English tutor in the school. The students excel in Mathematics and Science related courses yet they perform abysmal in English. This is my motive for conducting this study.

3.5 Data collection

The researcher sought a formal permission from the Headmaster and the Head of Department to brief them of my intention to undertake a research in the school. The target learners were also informed of my intention to conduct such a research. In all cases, I discussed the intended significance of the study with them; that is, to find solutions to causes of grammatical errors in students' writings. To arrive at the data for the study, I collected data by the use of tests and test interventions. In collecting the data, I gave a topic which the students were to write on. I instructed them to write

about 200 to 250 words in one period in a class of 60 minutes. After collecting their scripts, I marked them to identify grammatical errors contained in a sample of the scripts. The following were the steps for classifying and analyzing the grammatical errors in writing according to Dulay (1974): One, identify the error which is found in every words, phrases or sentences; two, classify the data into types or sources of grammatical errors and three, analyze the data to infer the causes they commit errors.

3.6 Data analysis techniques

The procedure of error analysis was used to analyze the data. This procedure is proposed by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005). It comprises the following five steps. (1) collection of samples of learners' writings, (2) identification of the errors, (3) classification of the errors, (4) description of the errors and (5) correction of the errors. After collecting the data and finding out the grammatical errors of students' writings, the researcher will group the grammatical errors into percentages. The percentage will be used to find out what aspect of grammatical errors that most occurred in students' writings.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the research design that was adopted for the conduct of the current study. It has also described the research setting, the data population and sampling, data and data collection instruments and procedures and the techniques employed in the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

The aim of this study was to analyze the grammatical errors in the writings of students of Diamono Senior High School. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research. Its organization is based on the research questions of the study. These are:

1. What are the types of students' grammatical errors in their writings?
2. What are the causes of these errors?

4.1 Types of grammatical errors in students' writings

This research was analyzed based on Dulay et al' theory, the surface strategy taxonomy which concerns on omission, addition, misformation and misordering errors. These errors are defined as mechanical inaccuracies and they occur as a result of wrong use of tenses, **concord**, **spellings**, **prepositions and conjunctions.** The researcher focused on 5 of these errors since they are the frequent grammatical errors students of Diamono SHS commit in their writings. These are, **concord**, **tenses and aspect**, **spellings**, **prepositions** and **conjunctions.**

To find out the type of grammatical of errors and how many errors on those components, the researcher gave the students an essay in an article form on the topic: *Causes of road accidents in Ghana.* The final year students were my target for this study since ideally, they have acquired enough knowledge on grammar lessons and grammatical infelicities. The students were to write a one-page essay on the given topic within thirty minutes. They wrote the test without strict invigilation. A total number of 20 essays each were randomly selected from the two Arts classes since each class is made of 50 and 45 students respectively. A total of 8 essays were

selected from the Science class with a population of 15 students and 13 essays were randomly elected from the Business class with a student population of 23. So, in all, a total of 61 essays out of 125 essays were randomly selected for the research. The researcher then documented the students' writings. After that, the percentage of each category of errors in their writings was counted. And also, the types of the grammatical errors were counted. The last step was counting the percentage of each type of errors and its sources. The data from the students' writings are presented below.
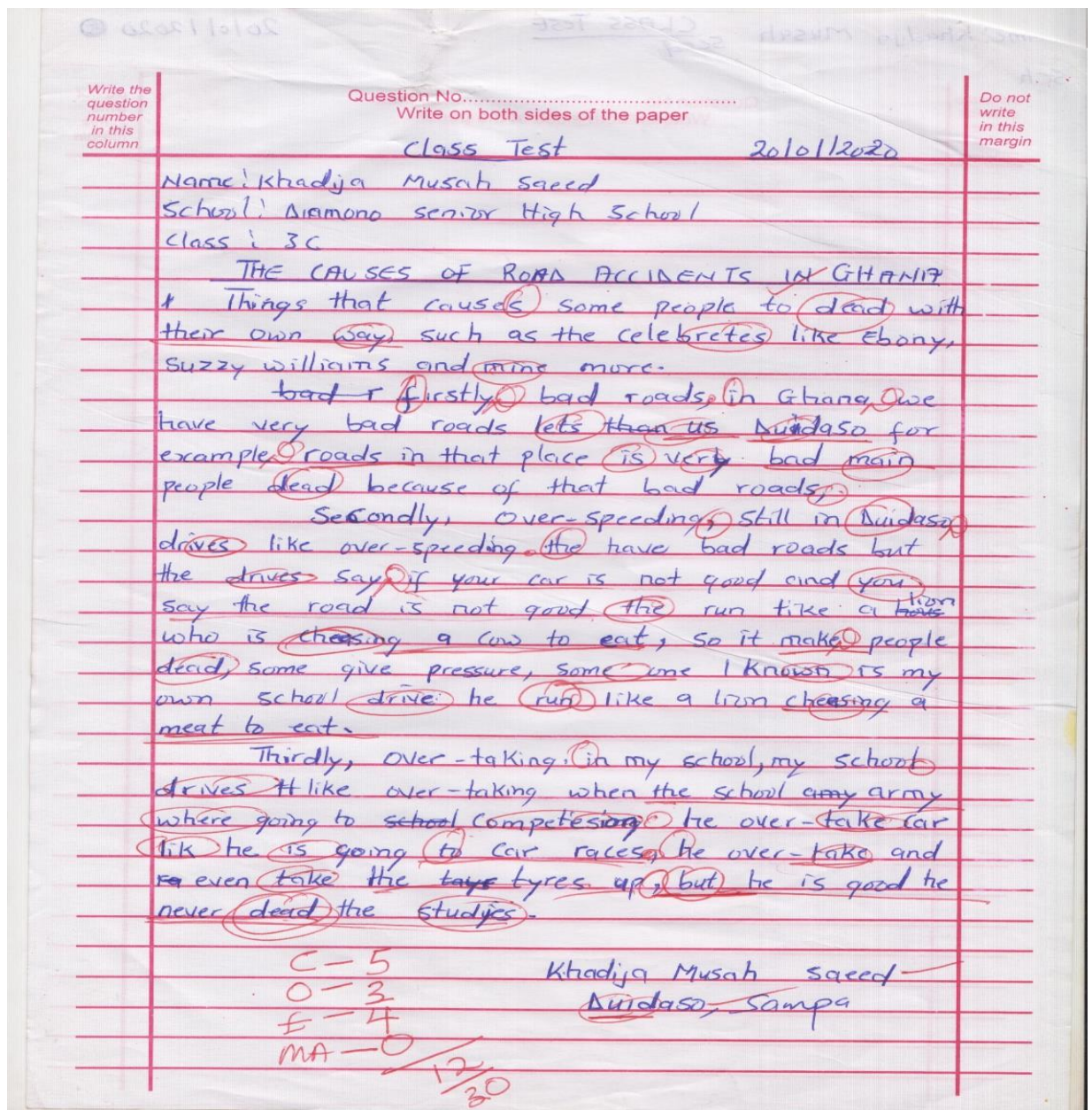
As indicated in the methodology section, the grammatical errors were categorized under the following: Concord errors, tense errors, spelling errors, prepositional errors and conjunction errors. The percentage of frequency is represented in the table and bar chart below.

Table 4.1. Frequency of grammatical errors

Type of Grammatical Error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Concord	125	26
Tense	115	24
Spelling	100	21
Preposition	75	16
Conjunction	60	13
TOTAL	475	100

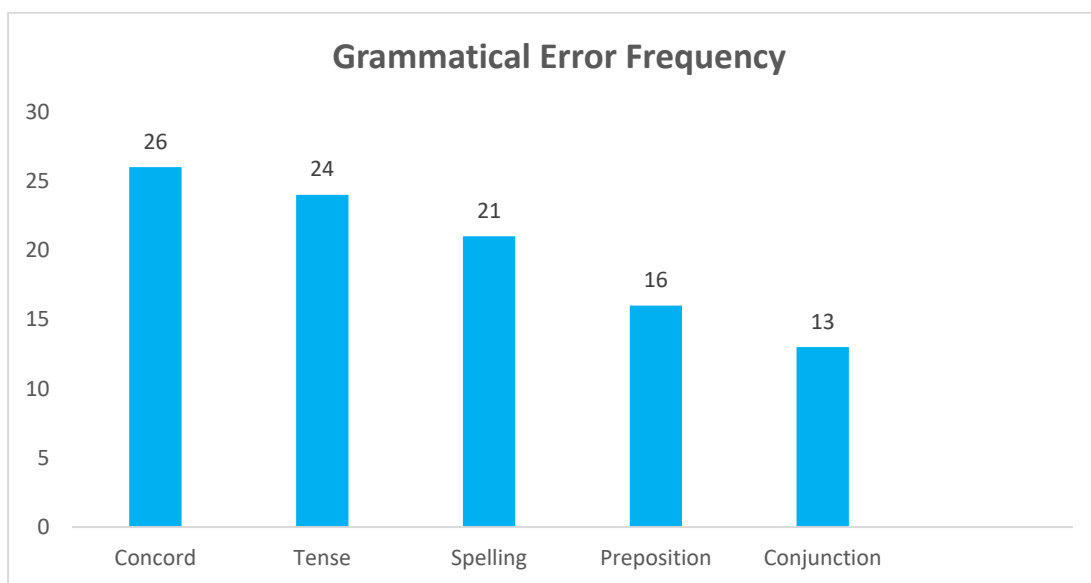**Figure 1: Error frequency bar-chart**

Table 4.1: Frequency of grammatical errors

Table 1 shows that out of the 125 students, 125 or a percentage of 26% of them committed concord errors, 115 or a percentage of 24% of them committed tense errors, 100 or a percentage 21% of them committed spelling error, 75 or a percentage of 16% committed prepositional errors and 60 or a percentage of 13% of them

committed errors of conjunction in their writings. So, in all, 475 grammatical errors were committed by students out of the 61 essays selected. This shows that concord errors were the most frequently committed, followed by tense errors, spelling errors, prepositional errors and conjunction errors in that order and on the average each student committed at least one grammatical error in their writings.

4.1.1.1 Concord errors

The most common type of error made by students in the study group is concord error. Leech (1989, p. 33) defines concord "as the matching relationship between the subject and the verb". He goes on to say that the main rule of concord is simple. This is because singular subjects go with singular verb phrases while plural subjects go with plural verb phrases. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) also define concord as the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have the feature. Yankson (1994) says concord errors "reflect badly on the speaker's personality, they tell us something about his educational background, they portray his interlanguage as a "developing grammar" that borders on illiteracy". He goes on to state that the subject - verb agreement is very basic in an English sentence and it is therefore taught at the early stages in the primary school. So, for this type of error to persist in the interlanguage of Senior High School students as well as university graduates and many highly educated Ghanaians should be a matter of great concern to the English language teacher to correct the situation. It is evident that this item had the highest percentage of errors (26%) in this study. The percentage of frequency of concord error is represented in the table below.

Table 4.1.1. Frequency of concord errors

Type of Concord error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Singular subject with plural verb	37	30
Plural subject with singular verb	33	26
Noun-pronoun agreement	30	24
Mass nouns that do not take plural verbs	25	20
TOTAL	**125**	**100**

Table 4.1.1 shows that out of the 125 students, each student committed concord errors. Out of the 125 students, 37 students which represent 30% committed concord errors relating to singular subject with plural verb. 33 students which represent 26% also committed concord errors relating to plural subject with singular verb. 25 students which represent 20% committed concord errors relating to noun-pronoun agreement. And finally, 30 students which represent 24% committed concord errors relating to mass nouns that do not take plurals. This means that most of the concord errors that students commit according to the data is matching singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa.

In the sentences below, the subject-verb agreement principle and the noun-pronoun agreements are violated. The concord errors picked from the corpus have been sub-grouped in the sub-divisions listed below with examples. The correct verbs/subjects have been italicized and put in brackets (). The following are a few examples of the errors from the data:

4.1.1.1 *Singular subject with plural verb*

1.   *Carelessness **increase** accidents on our roads. (increases)*

2.   *The driver **were** sent to the police station for taking alcohol. (was)*

*3. When the driver **ignore** the road sings. (ignores)*

*4. Over-speeding **cause** road accidents in Ghana. (causes)*

4.1.1.2 Plural subject with singular verb

*5. This means that some drivers **drives** when they feel tired (drive)*

*6. Road signs **is** no longer observed (are)*

*7. The laws **compels** all drivers to be careful (compel)*

*8. The passengers **orders** the driver to speed (order)*

4.1.1.3 Noun-pronoun agreement

*9. Everyone must protect **their** own life (his/her)*

*10. The man caused the accident because **she** was tired (he)*

*11. If you advise some of the drivers to reduce the speed, **he** will not (they)*

4.1.1.4 Mass nouns that do not take plurals

*12. **Informations** have it that some drivers pay bribes to officials (Information)*

*13. The **peoples** of Sampa complained about their roads (people)*

14. *The various unions give **advices** to the drivers on careful driving (advice)*

In English, the subject must agree with the verb that follows, that is to say, if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular and if the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural. On another score, if the subject is masculine, the verb should respond to it and the same applies to the feminine. In sentence (1), a student commits concord error when he writes, *Carelessness **increase** accidents on our roads instead of, Carelessness **increases** accidents on our roads*. On another score, in sentence, (5) a student also commits another concord error when he writes, *The laws **compels** all drivers to be careful instead of, The law **compel** all drivers to be careful.*

A possible explanation why students tend to add –**s** after a plural verb, and omit –**s** after singular verb may be due to overgeneralization of the rule. Students

overgeneralize the plural by adding the plural –**s** to the verb that follows and omit the

–**s** in the verb if the subject is singular. Most ESL students confuse between the third

person singular (–**s**) and the plural (-**s**). They tend to add --**s** to the verb if the subject

is plural and omit –**s** if the subject is singular.

     Noun-pronoun agreement, on the other hand, is the correspondence of a

pronoun with its antecedent in number (singular, plural), person (first, second, third),

and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter) (Sorenson, 2010). One basic principle of

pronoun agreement is that a singular pronoun refers to a singular noun while a plural

pronoun refers to a plural noun but it is sometimes complicated when the pronoun is

indefinite. Sometimes their proper use is violated. There was found an example of

pronoun- noun concord clause error such as Sentence, (9)

*Everyone must protect **their** own life instead of, Everyone must protect **his** or her **life.***

In sentence (9), *The man caused the accident because she was tired, t*he candidate

violates this rule because the the subject in the first sentence, *(man)* does not agree

with the pronoun *(she)* in the second clause. The sentence should be written as:

The man caused the accident because she was tired.

     In the study, concord scored the highest frequency. Such errors reflect badly in

students' writings, there is the need for learners to study seriously the principles

governing concord. Concord errors are purely intralingual factors since the students

have not fully grasped he rules governing the grammar of the English language.

4.1.2 Tense errors

     The second highest percentage of student errors was *Tense errors* with a

frequency of occurrence of 24%. Tense refers to the way a verb is formed to

communicate when an action or occurrence takes place. The verb tense makes the

reader aware of when the action expressed in the sentence is taking place-in the past,

the present, progressive, perfect or the future. Verb tense errors occur when one uses the wrong verb tense. The percentage of frequency of tense error is represented in the table below.

Table 4.1.2. Frequency of tense errors

Type of Tense error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Past tense	52	45
Present tense	35	30
Perfect time	28	25
TOTAL	**115**	**100**

Table 4.1.2 shows that out of a total of 125 students, 115 of them committed tense errors. Out of the 115, 52 students which represent 45% committed tense errors relating to past tense. The reason is that students find it extremely difficult dealing with irregular verbs. In marking the past tense, they ignorantly add the morpheme, 'd' or 'ed' to every verb they come across with. Also, 35 students which represent 30% committed tense errors relating to the perfect time. Comparatively, this means that a few students used the perfect time in their writings. At least, one of out every 5 students that used the perfect time committed errors. It may be due to the fact that they have little knowledge of the perfect time and therefore hardly used it at all. They are confused to go in for the simple past tense when they are actually referring to actions that are located in the perfect time. And finally, 28 students which represent 25% committed tense errors relating to present tense. This means that this tense type did not pose a lot of challenges to the students in their writings. The rule of tense is that, there must be consistency between when the action occurred and the type of verb

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used. It was realized from the study that most students violated this fundamental tense rule. The following are extracts of such errors from the data:

15. We **reach** Accra safely. (reached)

16. If you **told** some drivers to reduce the speed, they will not (tell)

17. They **beated** the driver to death for knocking down a boy (beat)

18. I did not **expected** that Ebony to die soon (expect)

19. The injury was very so serious that the passenger finally **die** (died)

20. I could not **controlled** my tears when Ebony die (control)

21. The number one factor that has **increase** road accidents in Ghana is carelessness (increase)

22. Celebrities have **perish** through road accidents in Ghana (perished)

23. Our car **have** just crossed the bridge when another collide with ours (had)

In sentence 15, the student wrongly used the verb, **reach**. The idea expressed is in the simple past and not the present tense. The cause of this violation of the rule may due to the fact that the student has not fully grasp the mechanics of the English language. The sentence will be correct if the candidate writes, We **reached** Accra safely. Similarly, in sentence 16, *If you told some drivers to reduce the speed, they will not,* the verb (told) in the first clause, is in the simple past so ideally, the verb (will) in the second clause must also be in the simple past tense and vice versa. The correct form of the sentence is, *If you told some drivers to reduce the speed, they would not or, if you tell some drivers to reduce the speed, they will not.* The problem of tense error becomes more complicated when tense has been inflected to mark the perfective or future time.

The main or action verb is inflected with the particles, have, has and had to communicate an idea that has occurred no too long ago in the past. So, the main or

lexical verb in sentence 21 (*increase*) should be in the past perfect tense which is **increased**. The main verb in sentence 22 (perish) must also be a perfective verb which is, *perished.* Both **has** and **have** must accept the perfective form of the verb. In sentence, 23, the speaker refers to two actions but the first action (*Our car **had** just crossed the bridge)* ended before the commencement of the second action (*when another car **collided** with ours)* therefore, the copula verb, *have*, is wrongly used. The correct form is the past perfect which is *had*. Many of the students violate this rule as a result of their inadequate understanding of the grammatical rules that govern the English Language. Sentences 24, 25 and 26 should therefore be correctly written as:

24. *The number one factor that has **increased** road accidents in Ghana is carelessness*

25. *Celebrities have **perished** through road accidents in Ghana*

26. *Our car **had** just crossed the bridge when another **collided** with ours*

4.1.3   Spelling errors

The English Language is known for its irregularity, and as a result of this, both native and second language users make mistakes in spelling English words. Students also in general, make a lot of spelling errors in their essays as it has been proved in this study. In all the sample essays, it was accounted that the third percentage of students' error was spelling. The students committed 100 which represents 21% in their writings. The errors were characterized by the addition or presence of new structure of morphemes that were not needed and the omission of some morphemes in some words when they were needed. The percentage of frequency of spelling error is represented in the table below.

Table 4.1.3. Frequency of spelling errors

Type of Spelling error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Spelling error due to incorrect pronunciation	35	35
Spelling error due to homophones	32	32
Spelling error due to double and non-double letters	19	19
Spelling error due to wrong amalgamation	14	14
TOTAL	**100**	**100**

Table 4.1.3 shows that out of a total number of 125 students, 100 of them committed spelling errors. Out of the 100, 35 students which represent a percentage of 35% committed spelling errors due to incorrect pronunciation of some English words. 32 students which also represent 32% committed spelling errors due to confusion between homophones. 19 students which represent 19% committed spelling errors due to confusion over double letters and non-double letters. 14 students which represent 14% committed spelling errors due to wrong amalgamation of words. This means that more than half of the students committed spelling errors because they spell or write the words as they pronounce it. The reason is that the students do not have control over the English language. The spelling errors could be due to the sources enumerated below with examples identified from the corpus provided. The misspelled words are written in bold in each case while the correct spelled words are put in parentheses or brackets.

4.1.3.1 *Spelling errors due to incorrect pronunciation*

27.   ***Illitracy*** *is a major cause of road accident (illiteracy)*

28.   *The Sampa road is **fool** of **shap** curves (full, sharp)*

*29. Some of the drivers speed to the **extend** that they can't control the **whees** (extent, wheels)*

*30. The **order** driver was speeding (other)*

From the data above, the researcher could deduce that, these spelling errors were committed as a result of the students' inability to pronounce the words correctly and as a result spell them wrongly. Instead, they spell or write these words in the manner they pronounce the words. This can be attributed to interlingual factors since it is a phonetic deviation.

4.1.3.2 *Spelling due to confusion between homophones*

*31. I remember that **faithful** Friday (fateful)*

*32. The **whether** could also be a course (weather)*

*33. Come **reign** or shine, the driver must **rich** his destination (rain, reach)*

*34. Peace must **rain** in 2020 elections (reign)*

*35. The Sampa road is full of **port wholes** (pot, holes)*

Homophones are words that have similar pronunciation. The words italicized were among the words that were wrongly spelt by the students. The confusion was a result of the sameness of the words in terms of pronunciation. This can be attributed to intralingual factors.

4.1.3.3 *Spelling Errors due to Confusion over Double letter and Non-double letter words.*

i. Confusion over Double letters

This spelling errors occur when students wrongly omit some morphemes when in actual fact, the words accept double letters. This error type can also be attributed to intralingual factors. Some of the examples selected from the sample writings of the students are:

*36. The **comitee** to investigate the causes of road **acidents** has failed (committee, accidents)*

*37. **Comitment** on the part of the officials can stop road **acidents** (commitment, accidents)*

*38. The **personel** at the Ministry accept bribes and give license to unqualified drivers (personnel)*

*39. This **habbit** must stop **imediately** (habit, immediately)*

ii. Non-double letters

These spelling errors occur when students wrongly add some morphemes when in actual fact, the words do not accept double letters. This error type can also be attributed to intralingual factors. Some of the examples selected from the sample of the students' writings are:

*40. Drivers in Ghana take advantage of **occassions** to drive even when they are tired (occasions)*

*41. I am **writting** this article to **disscuss** the causes of road accidents in Ghana (writing)*

*42. One car nearly ran into our **dinning** hall (dining).*

*43. The deadly accident occurred **accross** the bridge (across)*

4.1.34 *Spelling errors due to lack of firm grasp of word division (amalgamation)*

A number of English words are separated while others are combined, that is amalgamation of words. Out of ignorance, some of the students separated words that were supposed to be combined or amalgamated and also, combine words that need to be separated. The samples of wrong- amalgamated words from the data are below:

i. Wrong amalgamation of words

*44. **Infact**, something must be done to stop road accidents (In fact)*

*45. **Inspite** of all our complains, nothing has been done (In spite)*

*46. We parked the broken motorbike **infront** of Cashew-truck (in front)*

*47. **Inaddition**, reckless driving also causes road accidents (In addition)*

In each sample, the words in bold consist of a preposition and a noun. They are wrongly spelt when they are combined. This is as a result of the students' ignorance of the rule which is intralingual factor.

ii. Wrong divisions of words

Some of the examples gathered from the data are:

*48. **In deed,** it was the God we serve that saved us from untimely death (Indeed)*

*49. **Every body** must be ready to adhere to road safety rules (Everybody)*

*50. **Through out** the journey, the driver received phone calls while he drove (Throughout)*

It is also wrong to spell the words in bold above dividing them. The rule says that they must be spelt together.

4.1.4   Prepositional errors

A preposition tells a reader when and where something occurred as well as how it occurred. A proposition introduces a prepositional phrase in a sentence. In most cases, it co-occurs with the noun phrase. It must be noted that some constructions require preposition while others do not. Wrong Preposition Usage recorded a frequency of occurrence of 3.24%. This group of errors ranks fourth. Using Samatle's (2001) model, the errors from the writings of the students in this category are grouped under *missing preposition*, *wrong preposition use,* and *redundant preposition.* The percentage of frequency of prepositional error is represented in the table below.

Table 4.1.4. Frequency of prepositional errors

Type of Prepositional error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Wrong use of preposition	30	40
Redundant use of preposition	24	32
Missing preposition	21	28
TOTAL	**75**	**100**

Table 4.1.4 shows that out of a total of 125 students, 75 of them committed errors of preposition. Out of the 75 students, 30 of them which represent 40 % committed preposition errors relating to wrong use of preposition. 24 of them which represent 24% committed preposition errors relating to redundant use of preposition. 21 of the students which represent 28% committed errors relating to missing preposition. The following are selected examples from the data showing sample sentences in which prepositions are incorrectly used by the students.

4.1.4.1 *Missing prepositions*

This means that the students failed to use the preposition when in actual sense it was necessary. Examples identified from the corpus are listed below with the missing prepositions in bracket:

51. Replacing old vehicles will be ^ no use if the roads are not constructed (of)

52. Some drivers do not listen ^ advice (to)

53. The decision to convert single roads ^ dual roads is good (into)

54. Calling corrupt police from the road is a good step (off)

4.1.4.3 *Redundant use of prepositions*

This implies that a preposition was used when it was not required. Extracts from the data are as follows:

*55. We must emphasize **on** good roads (emphasize)*

*56. I want to discuss **about** the causes of road accidents in Ghana (discuss)*

*57. Some corrupt police officials demand **for** money from drivers (demand)*

*58. The causes of road accidents in Ghana comprises **of** (comprises)*

In sentence, 55, One can *place emphasis on* something but it becomes grammatically wrong when one attempts to *emphasize on* something. Where prepositions are not needed, their presence results into redundancy.

4.1.4.3 *Wrong use or selection of prepositions*

This category of errors means that a preposition was required in the sentence but the wrong one was used. This phenomenon occurred in the students' writings. Examples from the data are as follows:

*59. Drivers are advised to stay away **of** alcohol (from)*

*60. We went on the scene to take a look **of** the accident (at)*

*61. It is sad Ebony died **in** a tender age (at)*

*62. **At** arrival, the police asked the driver to show his license (On)*

In sum, the deviant use of the prepositions leads to unidiomatic usage in all cases. Obviously, the students are unable to use prepositions correctly. However, the study therefore reveals that wrong use of the preposition is a major problem. Probably, carelessness and ignorance played a role in the occurrence of the few errors involving preposition use.

4.1.5   Conjunction errors

Table 4.1 in Chapter 4 which shows the categories of errors and their density indicate that conjunction errors were the least frequent errors in the students' essays. A conjunction is a word for connecting two or more words (Sanford, 1979). This is in line with Setyawan (2013) who said that conjunctions are words function to relate words, phrases, or sentences that can be classified into coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions and subordinating conjunctions. Conjunctions take an important role in the writing. Without conjunction, the meaning of the text will not be logic and there will be no cohesion. The percentage of frequency of conjunction error is represented in the table below.

Table 4.1.5. Frequency of conjunction errors

Type of Conjunction Error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Coordinating Conjunction	25	42
Subordinating Conjunction	20	33
Correlative Conjunction	15	25
TOTAL	**60**	**100**

Table 4.1.5 shows that out of a total of 125 students, 60 of them committed errors of conjunction. Out of the 60 students, 25 of them which represent 42% committed conjunction errors relating to wrong usage of coordinating conjunctions. 20 of the students representing 33% committed errors relating to wrong usage of subordinating conjunctions. 15 of the students representing 25% committed errors relating to correlative conjunctions. This means that majority of the students committed grammatical errors relating to coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. Correlative conjunction recorded the least of percentage because the students hardly

use them. From all the samples of student writings, students commit error in attempt to choosing the appropriate conjunction in the context of usage.

4.1.5.1 *Coordinating conjunction errors*

The main function of coordinating conjunctions is to join words, phrases, and clauses together which are usually grammatically equal. The common coordinating conjunctions are *for, and, nor, but, or, yet* and *so*. The common errors that were found in the sample writings of the students involved the use of the wrong type of coordinating conjunction and the redundant coordinating conjunction usage. Some of the samples are:

*63. The driver did not have genuine papers **and** the police didn't arrest him (but)*

*64. We complain to the minister **and** anytime we do so, we get no results (but)*

In the sample sentences above, the student commits an error of conjunction. Though the intention of the student is to contrast, yet the use of the coordinating conjunction, 'and' is not appropriate. The conjunction, 'and' is used to join two sentences that do not contradict each other. This is not the case with the two sentences. A conjunction such as as 'but' is needed to contrast the two parts of the sentence in each case. The conjunction, 'but' will be more appropriate to correct the sentences. So, the sentences must read as:

*The driver did not have genuine papers **but** the police didn't arrest him*

*We complain to the minister **but** anytime we do so, we get no results*

Another sample is:

*65. The minister was the one who gave out the contact **but** he has no right to complain (so)*

This sentence is not coordinated correctly. The conjunction, 'but' does not describe the logical connection between the two parts of the sentence. A better alternative would be,

*The minister was the one who gave out the contract **so** he has no right to complain*

As I mentioned earlier, the selected samples also contained coordination conjunction error resulting from **redundant conjunction**. A good example of sentence that contain such error is:

*66. We prayed for accident free **but yet** there were accidents (but or yet)*

*67. **But although** the roads are not good (although)*

The first sentence, 66, contains a redundancy error. The conjunctions 'but' and 'yet' are synonymous. They mean the same thing, so only one or the other is necessary to convey the intended meaning of the sentence. The second sentence, 67, also contains a redundancy error. This error occurred since the students treat coordinating conjunctions as subordinating conjunctions.

4.1.5.2 *Subordinating conjunction errors*

Subordinating conjunction is used in linking two clauses together. That is, one main clause and the other independent or subordinate clause. Common subordinating conjunctions include, *although, until, because, as soon as, whether, while,* etc. The study revealed that students committed errors with subordinating conjunction when they selected the wrong conjunction. Below are some examples that contain error of subordinating conjunction:

*68. The driver couldn't control the steering wheel **and** he was driving on tough speed (because)*

*69. **Once** we punish drivers, there is no way accidents will stop in Ghana (Until)*

*70. Whether the roads are bad or **nor**, drivers must reduce speed (not)*

*71. The roads are in poor state **but however** we can't abandon the villages (but or however)*

In sentence 68, the sentence above contains an error in the logical expression of ideas. The student uses the conjunction, 'and' which fails to capture the cause and effect relationship between the driver's inability to control the wheel and he driving on tough speed. A better subordinating conjunction to express the cause and effect relationship would be, 'because'.

In sentence, 69, the use of the word, ***once*** is incorrect subordinate conjunction. It should be replaced by **'*until*'** which is the only logical conjunction for the sentence. In sentence 70, the use of the subordinating conjunction, 'whether or nor' is wrong. The correct form must be 'whether or not.' *The correct sentence must be: **Whether** the roads are bad or **not**, drivers must reduce speed (not).* In sentence 71, the sentence features a redundancy error since the conjunction, 'but' comes first in the sentence, there is no need to include the synonym, 'however'.

4.1.5.3 *Correlative conjunction errors*

Correlative conjunctions are simply pairs of conjunctions which are used to join equal sentence elements together. The notable correlative conjunctions are: *Either....or, neither.... nor, not only.... but also, whether.... or, so....as, so...that,* etc. The errors that students committed as far these conjunctions are concerned was selecting the wrong correlative conjunctions. This renders the sentences grammatically incorrect and logically unacceptable. Samples of sentences that contain correlative conjunction errors are:

*72. Neither the president **or** the minister uses the Sampa roads (nor)*

*73. I can't decide whether I will vote **nor** not (or)*

*74. Not only are the roads dangerous **but** deadly (but also)*

When using the word, 'neither' to introduce one of two things in a negative fashion, one needs to introduce the other thing using the word, 'nor', not 'or'. So, in sentence 72, the sentence has a problem with correlative coordinators. If 'neither' is used, it triggers the use of 'nor' and not,'or'. The correct sentence must read:

Neither *the president* **nor** *the minister uses the Sampa roads*

Similarly, in sentence 73, the sentence has a problem with correlative coordinators. If 'whether' is used, it triggers the use of 'or' and not, 'nor.' The correct sentence must read:

I can't decide whether I will vote **or** *not.*

In sentence 74, the sentence also has a problem with correlative coordinators. If 'not only' is used, it triggers the use of 'but also' and not, 'but.' The correct sentence must read:

Not only *are the roads dangerous* **but also** *deadly*

4.2   Causes of errors in students' writings

An attempt was made by the researcher to trace the sources or causes of some of the errors identified in the corpus. In as much as most of the errors could not be traced to any particular source, some few errors, however, could be traced to their likely sources or the error emanated from a combination of factors.

4.2.1   L1 Interference

The study could not rule out completely the role of the L1 as a contributory factor to some of the errors identified in the corpus. Ellis (1985, p. 21) states that "according to the behaviourist theory, old habits get in the way of learning new habits. Therefore, in SLA situation, the grammatical apparatus programmed into the mind as the first language interferes with the smooth acquisition of the second". The behaviorist predicts that transfer will take place from the first to the second language

where there were differences between the L1 and L2; the learners L1 knowledge would interfere with the L2. This situation creates learning difficulties and these result in errors.

4.2.2   Overgeneralization

Many of the errors identified in the study could be traced to overgeneralization.   Overgeneralization occurs when the L2 learner uses his/her previous knowledge of the L2 in situations where that knowledge does not apply. This results from false hypothesis, ignorance of selection rules and incomplete application of grammatical rules.

4.2.3 Communal pull

Some of the errors captured in the study could be traced to extra-mural English, that is, the kind of English spoken outside the walls of the classroom. This includes English spoken or found in the print media, television, radio and newspapers or in the speech community. If the learner is continually exposed to certain wrong forms of the language he internalizes them as correct forms.

4.2.4   Intralingual errors

There are errors or deviant structures which are not mother-tongue induced. They occur as a result of the learner's partial exposure to the L2 linguistic data. These errors are across cultures and so it can affect all learners of the English Language. Faced with a complex's linguistic system, sometimes with no neatly codified rules governing a particular area of grammar, the second language learner would analyze, hypothesize, analogize or lover-generalize, thereby producing incorrect forms.

4.2.5   Summary

The analysis has also revealed that student's errors could be traced to lots of rules; overgeneralization, lack of practice, inappropriate teaching methods used by

some teachers, communal pull, language transfer (ie interlingual and intralingual). Also, lack of exposure to the second language at the early stage of life and lack of motivation from both teachers and parents, is also another cause of students' errors.

4.3   Conclusion

As stated earlier, the researcher sought to identify the grammatical errors that occur in the writings of students of Diamono Senior High School, specifically, the final year students. The study discovered that the grammatical errors frequently committed by the students were in this order: concord errors, tense errors, spelling errors, prepositional errors and conjunction errors. From the data, it was discovered that concord errors were the most frequently committed, followed by tense errors, spelling errors, prepositional errors and conjunction errors in that order. The errors tend to occur by some factors or sources. The causes of the errors are intralingual and interlingual factors. The findings of the study have implications for the learning and teaching of the English Language which will be elaborated in the subsequent paragraph.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter is the final chapter of the study. The aim of this chapter is to briefly summarize the research, provide the key findings of the study, give some necessary recommendations and draw conclusions. The aforementioned parts are paired with the results obtained from the study. As it was stated in Chapter One, the objective of the study was to describe the types of grammatical errors in the writings of students of Diamono SHS, infer the causes and proffer remedies to them. The researcher analyzed the data based on the error classification strategy proposed by Dulay et al. To identify the various grammatical errors committed by the students, the researcher resorted to the use of essays written by the students. The research site was Diamono SHS in the Jaman-North District of the Bono Region. The school was chosen because it is considered as one of the worst performing schools in the district. The researcher is also a tutor in the school. The researcher did a qualitative study and employed the simple random sampling technique to select the needed sample-size of thirty 30 students. Data collected from the students' essays were carefully analyzed and presented using simple percentages. The study concluded that all the grammatical errors discussed are committed by the students.

5.1   Summary of findings

A total of 475 errors were recorded from the essays of the students. The findings showed that concord errors recorded the highest with 125, followed by tense errors with 115; spelling errors were 100, preposition errors were 75, and conjunction errors recorded 60 respectively. Regarding the causes of the errors, it was revealed

that L1 Interference, overgeneralization, communal pull, and intralingual errors contributed to the students' errors.

5.2 Implications of findings

This part of the chapter presents some implications of the findings of the current study to teaching and learning, educational policy, curriculum development and textbook development. The researcher suggests that the steps expatiated below should be taken by all these stakeholders of education to halt the falling standard of English among Senior High School students.

5.2.1 Implications to teaching

In order to remedy the problem, teachers of English must create good atmosphere to facilitate teaching and learning process. How is the teacher expected to do that?

In the first place, it is suggested that the teachers should be aware of grammatical errors in students' writings. In this way, they can recognize their students' difficulties in writing so they will pay more attention to the errors made by the students and the causes of the errors. Knowing the problem will make it easier for teachers to solve the problem. Thus, the result of this study will help the teachers to evaluate themselves whether they are successful or not in teaching English. In the second place, it is expected that the teacher should vary the methods in teaching grammar so that the students are motivated to improve their writing. It would be appropriate for the teacher to adopt methods that focus on fluency and accuracy at the basic and second cycles of our education.

In addition, teachers should encourage students to read extensively outside their class notes since reading widely may affect writing in several ways. Finally, students should be assisted by their teachers to improve upon their writing skills by

teaching them the basic concept of revising and editing their work. Editing and proofreading are effective methods to eliminate grammatical errors in students' writings. On the part of students, they should increase their knowledge on the English grammar. They should employ the integrated approach in the study of grammar. They are also expected to develop their writing proficiency to eliminate or at least reduce those errors. Therefore, the four (4) basic skills of acquiring competence in every language which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing should be taken seriously by students who are learning English. Finally, students should be made to use English more often since language proficiency comes with constant practice. The school authorities should create an environment that will make it possible for students to use the English language every time.

5.2.2 Implications to educational policy

I suggest that there should be a strict legislation by policy makers, the government and the educational directorate insisting that the medium of instruction and communication should be the English Language, especially in the public schools at the lower stages of learning. I also recommend qualified and seasoned English tutors must be made to handle English Language as a subject at the lower stages of learning. If possible, Kindergarten and Primary pupils must be taught by Professors of English Language. This will enhance mastery of the English Language and eliminate the transitional challenges students encounter in the Secondary school levels.

5.2.3 Implications to curriculum development

As an English tutor, the researcher has personally used the teaching syllabus as a reference material for years. A critical observation of the syllabus reveals that the syllabus clearly itemizes the topics that are supposed to be taught by teachers, but does not suggest clearly the methodology these topics can be taught. The researcher is

therefore recommending that there should be a review of the various syllabi and clearly spell out the effective methodologies in teaching grammar topics.

5.2.4 Implications to textbook development

Most textbooks on the markets are readily available to learners, so the researcher recommends to the various authors of English books to work collaboratively with the Ministry of Education and syllabi designers so their output will be efficient to address the leaners' challenges in learning topics under grammar.

5.3 Suggestions for further studies

As a researcher, it is my expectation that that the results of the study can give an informative input about grammatical error analysis or other topics related to errors since I still believe that there are still many phenomena that can be revealed in this research study. Consequent to the above, the researcher expects that the results of the study can inspire other researchers to conduct research related to grammatical errors analysis to enrich the existing study. The researcher admits the study does not answer all questions that have to do with grammatical errors, improvement of the study is still possible. Future researchers may repeat the same topic, but with larger sample size, methodology and conducted in more schools or geographical settings.

5.4 Conclusion

This study investigated the common grammatical errors that students encounter as they study and write English, with Diamono SHS as a case study. The objective of the study was to identify the types of grammatical errors that students make in their writings and the possible ways to remedy the situation. The study revealed among other things that the common grammatical errors that students make are concord, tense, spelling, preposition and errors of conjunction. It is clear from the research that frequent errors committed by students can be traced to factors that relate

to the attitude of learners, poor educational foundation, teachers' methodologies, inadequate textbooks and a host of them. The way forward has been suggested in this chapter under the sub-topic: recommendations and it is the researcher's fervent hope that these suggestions would be heeded to in order for students' grammatical errors to minimize.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINQUISTICS

ESSAY TEST
Write a page essay on an article suitable for publication in any national newspaper on the topic, *Causes of road accidents in Ghana*.

SAMPLE DATA: STUDENTS' WRITINGS

Write the question number in this column

Question No...
Write on both sides of the paper

Do not write in this margin

Class Test   20/01/2020

Name: Khadija Musah Saeed

School: Aiamono senior High School

Class: 3C

THE CAUSES OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN GHANA

Things that causes some people to dead with their own way such as the celebretes like Ebony, Suzzy williams and mine more.

firstly bad roads in Ghana, we have very bad roads lets than us Nuidaso for example, roads in that place is very bad main people dead because of that bad roads.

Secondly, over-speeding, still in Nuidaso drives like over-speeding the have bad roads but the drives say if your car is not good and you say the road is not good the run like a lion who is cheasing a cow to eat, so it make people dead, some give pressure, some one I knows is my own school drive he run like a lion cheasing a meat to eat.

Thirdly, Over-taking in my school, my school drives it like over-taking when the school army army where going to Competesion he over-take car lik he is going to Car races, he over-take and even take the tyres up, but he is good he never dead the studies.

C — 5
O — 3
E — 4
MA — 0
12/30

Khadija Musah Saeed
Nuidaso, Sampa

60

Write the question number in this column

Do not write in this margin

CAUSES OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN GHANA

I am very greatful to bring out my opinion concerning unacceptable and dangerous road accident in Ghana which is decreasing the population in the country. These are some of the causes of road accident in Ghana. Firstly Over Speeding some drivers dont obey rules and regulations in the country they sometimes sometime advice the drivers not to speed their vehicles although speeding of vehicle does not mean you are going to yet can accident but accident which always come out is about Over Speeding of vehicle.

Secondly Over loading someone may ask what is mean by Over loading it is the way of taking load which is more than the vehicle strength and for that matter it can cause an accident I think because of accident many people have lose their believers believers this are some of the most popular and famous people who have pass through vehicle accident if we can remember Our sister Ebony reigns who was Musician and Koba who was radic presenter this people who have be mentioned also chuche In vehicle accident some years ago.

                              Kwadwo Poku
                              Dundaso No &

61

Singkum Vitus   21/1/2020

THE CAUSES OF ROAD ACCIDENT IN

all Ghana

In Ghana, things that lead many people to untimely death in road accident. Many celebrities have died through road accident. They are Ebony, Suzzy, Williams, Awesome Quartey and Supreme. As a concerned citizen, I would like to discuss three causes of road accident in Ghana.

Firstly, bad roads. Bad roads is the main causes of road accident in Ghana. Some of the roads are immaturable. They are full of dust which block the vision of drivers and also no roads signs and sharp curves which can lead the drivers to collide. I hope if there is good roads construction it would reduce accident in Ghana.

Secondly, another cause of road accident is over-speeding among drivers. This happens when they want to reach their destination early. They take too much speed through that they don't over observed road signs which would lead to accident and end up into death.

Lastly, drunk driving. Many drivers believe that when they take alcohol they can ride the car or motorbike without getting hit because they are influenced by others. They engage into alcoholism and they would get drunk while driving. They loose their roads and cross the other. These are the causes of road accident in Ghana.

Singkum Vitus
Duedaso n.s.1

CLASS TEST

ANANE CHRISTOPHER

DIAMOND SENIOR SCHOOL

THREE SCIENCE

THE CAUSES OF ROAD ACCIDENTS IN GHANA

The rate of people in Ghana losen their lives recently mainly depends on road accidents in Ghana. This causes of road accident in Ghana has been happen. through so many factors which include

Firstly, the cause of road accident such as poor road network is one of the major factor through which road accident in Ghana happen. In Ghana a lot of roads are very bad to the extend that people at such areas claim that there is no government in the country. Places like Duadaso Jumeau north district in Brong East region of Ghana a lot of lorry vehicle passes at that place during the cashew season and always there is accident because of the abysmal nature of the roads, so the government need to help.

Secondly. Over-speeding by some of the drivers. Many drivers speed up the vehicle when driving and sometimes they chases or compete with each others and unexpectedly they will realise that they this crash and it is one of the main causes of road accident in Ghana. And the only thing to stop this is through law enforcement.

Lastly some and many of drivers dont observe the road signs sometimes through their illitracy and and like of carelessness, so there must be public education for the drivers.

Anane christopher
Duadaso No two