

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ERROR ANALYSIS IN WRITING: A CASE STUDY IN BAWKU

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL



FRANCIS BUKARI

2017

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ERROR ANALYSIS IN WRITING: A CASE STUDY IN BAWKU SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL**



FRANCIS BUKARI

(7150080022)

**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS,
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND
COMMUNICATION, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER
OF EDUCATION (TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE)
DEGREE.**

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Francis Bukari**, declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for any other degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTÉY**

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr Charlotte Fofu Lomotey, my supervisor, whose expertise, understanding, and patience, added considerably to my graduate experience. I appreciate her vast knowledge and skill in many areas, her professional guidance, and her assistance and support in every step. I'd like to convey my warmest love to my parents and siblings for their support and encouragement. Last but not least, my recognition and gratitude are addressed to my course mates, whose prayers, encouragement and friendliness were the basis of my success.



DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this study to my precious parents Mr and Mrs Bukari, my siblings and also to my students for all their support, love and for being my source of inspiration.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CONTENTS | PAGE |
|---|-------------|
| DECLARATION | i |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS | ii |
| DEDICATION | iii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | iv |
| LIST OF TABLES | ix |
| ABSTRACT | xi |
| | |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.0 Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1 Background of the Study | 1 |
| 1.2 Statement of the Problem | 3 |
| 1.3 Objectives of the Study | 5 |
| 1.4 Research Questions | 5 |
| 1.5 Significance of the study | 5 |
| 1.6 Limitations | 6 |
| 1.7 Delimitation | 6 |
| 1.8 Organization of the Study | 6 |
| | |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW | 8 |
| 2.0 Introduction | 8 |
| 2.1 Meaning of Writing | 8 |
| 2.2 Writing at Junior and Senior High Schools Level | 10 |
| 2.3 The Concept of Error | 10 |
| 2.4 Difference between Error and Mistake | 12 |
| 2.5 Sources of Errors in written essays | 13 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 2.6 Classification of Errors in Written Essays | 15 |
| 2.7 Common Errors in Writing | 16 |
| 2.8 Error Analysis | 18 |
| 2.9 Importance of Errors Analysis in writing | 19 |
| 2.10 How to Overcome Errors in Writing | 22 |
| 2.10.1 Knowledge on grammar rules | 22 |
| 2.10.2 Continuous writing practice | 22 |
| 2.10.3 Reading a Lot | 23 |
| 2.10.4 Positive feedback from teachers | 23 |
| 2.11 Previous related studies | 24 |
| 2.12 Conclusion | 27 |
| CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY | 28 |
| 3.0 Introduction | 28 |
| 3.1 Research Design | 28 |
| 3.2 Data Sources | 30 |
| 3.3 Population and Sampling | 30 |
| 3.4 Sampling Size of the Study | 31 |
| 3.5 Sampling Technique | 32 |
| 3.6 Data Collection Instrument | 33 |
| 3.7 Data Collection | 33 |
| 3.8 Analysis of the Collected Data | 34 |
| 3.8.1 Identification of Errors | 34 |
| 3.8.2 Classification of Errors | 34 |
| 3.8.3 Statement of Error Frequency | 35 |
| 3.9 Validity and Reliability | 35 |
| 3.10 Conclusion | 36 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS | 37 |
| 4.0. Introduction | 37 |
| 4.1 Categorization of Students' Errors | 37 |
| 4.1.1 Spelling errors | 38 |
| 4.1. 2. Word Order | 40 |
| 4.1.2.1 Interligual transfer Errors | 40 |
| 4.1.2.2 Intralingual Transfer Errors | 41 |
| 4.1.3 Punctuation Errors | 42 |
| 4.1.4 Capitalisation | 44 |
| 4.1.5 Tense Errors | 45 |
| 4.1.5.1 Present simple | 46 |
| 4.1.5.2 Present progressive | 47 |
| 4.1.5.3 Present perfect | 47 |
| 4.1.5.4 Present perfect progressive | 47 |
| 4.1.5.5 Past Tense | 48 |
| 4.1.5.6 Past perfect | 48 |
| 4.1.5.7 Past perfect progressive | 49 |
| 4.1.5.8 Simple future | 49 |
| 4.1.6 Concord Errors | 50 |
| 4.1.6.1 Grammatical Concord | 50 |
| 4.1.6.2 Notional concord | 51 |
| 1.1.6.3 Proximity Concord | 54 |
| 4.1.7 Plurality | 55 |
| 4.1.7.1 Errors involving countable nouns where the (s) is left out | 56 |
| 4.1.7.2 Mixing between countable and uncountable nouns | 56 |
| 4.1.8 Preposition Errors | 57 |
| 4.1.8.1 Simple preposition | 58 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4.1.8.2 Complex prepositions | 59 |
| 4.1.9 Article Errors | 60 |
| 4.1.9.1 Definite article | 61 |
| 4.1.9.2 Indefinite Article | 61 |
| 4.1.10 Adjective Errors | 62 |
| 4.1.10.1 Regular forms | 63 |
| 4.1.10.2 Irregular forms: | 64 |
| 4.1.11 Pronoun Errors | 65 |
| 4.1.11.1 Indefinite pronouns | 65 |
| 4.1.11.2 Demonstrative pronouns | 66 |
| 4.12 Wrong Choice of Words | 67 |
| 6.4.13. Summary | 68 |
| 4.2 Causes of Students Errors | 70 |
| 4.2.1 Errors Caused by Students attitude towards learning | 71 |
| 4.2.2 Errors Caused by Teachers Attitude towards Teaching | 72 |
| 4.2.3 Errors Caused by Social Networking Sites | 73 |
| 4.2.4 Errors Caused by differences in structure between L1 and English | 74 |
| 4.2.5 Lack of Practice | 74 |
| 4.2.6 The Complexity of English Language | 75 |
| 4.2.7 Context of Teaching | 75 |
| 4.2.8 Summary | 75 |
| 4.3 Conclusion | 76 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION | 77 |
| 5.0 Introduction | 77 |
| 5.1 Summary of Findings | 77 |
| 5.2 Causes of Errors | 80 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| 5.3 Implication for Teaching | 80 |
| 5.3.1 The Role of the Teacher in Language Teaching | 81 |
| 5.4.2 The Role of the Learners of English | 83 |
| 5.4 Suggestions for future research | 83 |
| 5.5 Conclusion | 84 |
| REFERENCES | 85 |
| Appendix | 96 |
| SAMPLE ESSAY 1A | 96 |
| SAMPLE ESSAY 1B | 98 |
| SAMPLE ESSAY 2A | 100 |
| SAMPLE ESSAY 2B | 102 |



LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 4.1.1 Summary of Spelling Errors | 39 |
| 4.1.2 Summary of Words Order Errors | 41 |
| 4.1.3 Summary of Punctuation Errors | 42 |
| 4.1.4 Summary of Capitalization Errors | 45 |
| 4.1.5 Summary of Tense Errors | 49 |
| 4.1.6 Summary of Concord Errors | 54 |
| 4.1.7 Summary of Plurality Errors | 57 |
| 4.1.8 Summary of Preposition Errors | 59 |
| 4.1.9 Summary of Article Errors | 62 |
| 4.1.10 Summary of Adjective Errors | 64 |
| 4.1.11 Summary of Pronoun Errors | 66 |
| 4.1.12 Summary of wrong choice of words | 68 |
| 4.1.13 Summary of Error Types | 69 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figures | Page |
|---|-------------|
| 4.1.1 Summary of Spelling Errors | 39 |
| 4.1.2 Summary of Words Order Errors | 42 |
| 4.1.3 Summary of Punctuation Errors | 43 |
| 4.1.4 Summary of Capitalization Errors | 45 |
| 4.1.5 Summary of Tense Errors | 50 |
| 4.1.6 Summary of Concord Errors | 55 |
| 4.1.7 Summary of Plurality Errors | 57 |
| 4.1.8 Summary of Preposition Errors | 60 |
| 4.1.9 Summary of Article Errors | 62 |
| 4.1.10 Summary of Adjective Errors | 65 |
| 4.1.11 Summary of Pronoun Errors | 67 |
| 4.1.12 Summary of wrong choice of words | 68 |
| 4.1.13 Summary of Error Types | 70 |

ABSTRACT

Having students to produce an organized, neat and error-free piece of writing has always been the lifelong dream and the ambition of all English teachers. The purpose of this study is to explore the common types of writing errors made by Bawku SHS students in their English essay writing. The study adopted qualitative research design with a population of one hundred and twenty (120) students. The study was conducted in all the six departments of Bawku SHS. The findings were that students committed twelve categories of error with the total errors stood at two thousand three hundred and sixty (2360). Poor teaching, the complexity of the English language, structural difference between learners' native language and English language, and learner poor reading culture to be the cause of errors learners of English as a second language commit. The recommendations were that teachers should constantly update their knowledge on the methodology and content of the English language, and students must always read to improve their knowledge in the English language.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The present study analyses the English language errors in the writing of students of Bawku SHS. This chapter presents the introduction to this research. It includes a discussion of the background to the study, statement of the problem, the objectives, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and the significance of the study. The chapter finally ends with the organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

To the majority of Ghanaians, the yardstick for measuring the degree of one's level of educational attainment is one's performance in the English language. Since the colonial era English has been the barometer with which the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of our school curricular are measured. Poor performance in the language leads to poor performance in other subjects. For instance, the present education language policy states that with the exception of lower primary (classes one to three), English should be a medium of instruction at all levels. English Language is one of the core subjects in Ghanaian schools and also a prerequisite for entry into Senior High Schools as well as tertiary institutions. Thus, success in any form of formal education and training in highly skilled labour generally depends upon one's ability to understand and use English Language effectively.

Regrettably, the mastery of this very important language is confronted with a lot of challenges, such as dearth of sufficiently qualified teachers of English, lack of role models, negative attitude to the learning of the language, poor reading culture and above all, inadequate exposure to the intricacy of the writing skills of the language as

well as faulty application of grammatical rules. Although the enviable position of English in the national life is waxing stronger than it has been, the spoken and written quality of the language in Ghana, as perceived by experts has deteriorated to a drastic level. To buttress this assertion, the West Africa Examinations Council's Chief Examiner's Reports of 2014, 2015 and 2016 revealed that candidates' responses to the examination questions were rather disappointing, in spite of the fact that the questions were clear. The reports indicate that the candidates' short-comings were their inability to express ideas correctly in writing and the abuse of basic grammatical rules.

Writing is a difficult process even in the first language. It is even more complicated to write in a second language. Several studies indicate that native language of learners tend to interfere in writing of the English language (Jarvis, 2000). Writing in a foreign language often presents the greatest challenge to the students at all stages, particularly in essay writing. This is because writing is usually extended and therefore becomes more demanding than in the case of writing short sentences.

Teachers of composition or writing classes in schools in Ghana are generally faced with students who have memorized a good amount of English vocabulary and grammar rules, but have seldom put that knowledge to practical use. In many cases, the majority of these students still translate words, phrases, and sentences from their mother tongue to English, often with very strange results. The challenge for the English language teacher therefore, is to find methods to activate in a meaningful way, the passive knowledge the students possess in terms of the writing skill, as well as help the students become more proficient while working to overcome some of their common errors. A better understanding of the influence of the native language in the

process of English language writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning English. It will also aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help students learn English writing skills better.

It is very important to investigate the dynamics of writing and its teaching, as writing is a skill that not only is tested in every valid language examination, but also a skill that learners should possess and demonstrate in academic contexts. Writing includes numerous considerations and choices made regarding *higher level skills*, such as content, structure and organization, and *lower level skills such* as punctuation and choice of appropriate vocabulary items and grammatical structures (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Moreover, writing skills must be practiced and learned through experience.

The writing skill involves many other sub-skills like the general knowledge about the subject in question and the ability to translate ideas into grammatical sentences.

The scenarios created above indicate that there is a problem concerning the teaching and learning of English in Senior High Schools including Bawku SHS. The errors that the students commit when writing essays contribute to poor performance. It is against this background that this research was carried out to examine the kind of writing errors in the written essays of students of Bawku Senior High School.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The poor performance in English by students of Bawku SHS is mainly attributable to the students' poor writing skills and their poor knowledge of the basic rules of grammar. According to Brown (2000), in order to master the English

language, learners have to be adequately exposed to all of the four basic skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing. In all, they need to know what the internationally accepted English is. However, the standard of English among students of Bawku SHS is on the decline. Despite learning English for several years, the students are still weak in English, especially in their writing. They also still commit errors in all aspects of the English language. Errors such as spelling, concord, pronouns, adjective, tenses, prepositions and weak vocabulary were the most common and frequent type of errors that were found in their writing. The inability of students to write error-free essays has posed a lot of challenges to students. Hence, they usually score low marks in their written essays and that results in most of them failing in the English paper both, in school and in the final examinations.

Previous studies in Error Analysis reveal that writing errors are one of the commonest errors made by learners of English as a second language. This revelation calls for more serious attention to error analysis. It is pertinent to note that a lot of work has been done on error analysis in Ghana. However, these are generally limited to schools in the southern part of the country. Much work has not been done in the northern part of Ghana. Notwithstanding, there are some related studies on some aspect of errors by learners in northern part of the country. For example, Dakuuro (2015) conducted a study on concord errors among the students of Wa SHS and Wa Islamic SHS. He employed qualitative research design with a population of one hundred and forty (140) students. His findings were that students of the two schools face some difficulties in the study of English concord. He recommended in-service training as a tool to help improve the situation. Similarly, Sekwo(2011) also conducted a study on the causes of poor writing abilities among students of Bimbilla Training College. She used quantitative research design with a population of forty

students. Her findings were that students commit various types of errors in their written essays and attributed the situation to lack of constant practice and poor teaching. So that informed the need to also investigate the causes of errors students of Bawku SHS commit in their written essay.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. identify the types of errors that occur in the writings of students of Bawku Senior High School.
2. identify the frequently committed language errors in the English writings of students of Bawku Senior High School.
3. Determine the implications of the findings for English language teachers

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are the types of errors that occur in the writings of students of Bawku Senior High School?
2. What are the frequently committed language errors in the English writings of students of Bawku Senior High School?
3. What are the implications of the findings for English language teachers?

1.5 Significance of the study

This study contributes to the existing literature on the efforts that have been made by scholars to promote acquisition of proficiency in English language by second language learners. The analysis of errors in writing also exposes the common errors as well as their cause(s) that are made by students. This knowledge helps English

language teachers especially and textbook developers to know the areas they may need to emphasize. The results also will enable teachers to develop novel techniques, strategies, as well as teaching methods to help learners overcome their errors. Finally, the findings of the work serve as a useful guide for the formulation of improved English curriculum by curriculum designers. The researcher believes, therefore, that the findings of this study constitute an important resource material for English language teachers, curriculum planners, textbook designers, students, and future researchers.

1.6 Limitations

This research limited itself to examining errors in the writing as well as causes of such errors in essays of Form One students of Bawku Senior High School. It could have covered the whole student population because the other forms: Form two and the form three also have similar problems in their written essays. However, there was limited time within which the research was to be completed; therefore, investigating the whole student body was not covered.

1.7 Delimitation

Due to limited time, the researcher undertook the study with only SHS one students. Bawku SHS was chosen for the study because of easy access to the site and the fact that the researcher has been teaching English language there for the past four years. This research has covered errors committed by students in their written essays.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents the review of literature. This is divided into two sections; the first part discusses the meaning of writing, writing in junior and senior high schools, sources of errors in writing,

classification of errors in written essays, common errors in written essays, the concept of error, error analysis, importance of error analysis and how to overcome errors in writing. The second part discusses available literature related to error analysis in writing. Chapter 3 presents the research methodology. It includes research design, data sources, population and sampling, sampling size of the study, sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, data analysis and classification, reliability and validity the data collection tool used was described; the sample population as well as the procedures used in collecting data was elaborated upon.

Chapter 4 presents the findings. The analysis focuses on the 12 commonly identified error types. These are spelling, concord, tense, poor construction of sentences, capitalisation, punctuation, choice of word, pronouns, prepositions, plurality, articles, word order and adjectives errors. Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study. This includes the summary of findings as well as the role of errors in language teaching and learning. The chapter ends with a discussion of the pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections, the first part discusses the meaning of writing, writing in junior and senior high schools, errors and mistakes, sources of errors in writing, classification of errors in written essays, common errors in written essays, the concept of error, error analysis, importance of error analysis and how to overcome errors in writing. The second part discusses available literature related to error analysis in writing.

2.1 Meaning of Writing

Writing is the graphical representation of spoken words. It can also be defined as a process of using symbols (letters of the alphabet, punctuation) to communicate thoughts and ideas in a readable form Hourani (2008). Many definitions have been given by different researchers about writing. According to Wilga(1993) writing a composition is expressing of ideas in a consecutive way, according to graphic convention of the language. Wilga believes that the ultimate aim of writing in secondary school is to be able to express themselves in a polish literary form which requires the utilization of a special vocabulary and a certain refinement of structure. Also, Ningsih(2004) defines writing as a way to express ideas freely from the writer's knowledge and resources without copying someone else, and certainly without forgetting the linguistic rule, so the writing will be full of meaning. Writing is viewed as the result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing teach students to use these processes. (Richards and Schmidt,2002).

Ager (1997) states that writing is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form. To him, writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuations and numerals. Rama (2015) also defines writing as the fourth language skill that we learn. She further states that to write that it is essential to understand the basic system of a language which includes knowledge on grammar, punctuations, sentence structure, vocabulary and spellings. The ultimate aim of writing is to be able to express oneself in a polished literary form which requires the utilization of specific vocabulary and a certain refinement of the structure.

The ability to write effectively has become increasingly important in the global community and instructions in writing are thus assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign language education. So, good writing skills allow individuals to communicate their message with clarity and ease. Correct grammar, punctuation and spellings are important in written communication and errors are likely to lead readers to form a negative impression about one's ability to communicate effectively.

Ningsih (2004) is of the opinion that the purpose of writing may

1. To clarify a thought, a feeling, an impression, or an experience for readers
2. To provide information to readers
3. To persuade readers to accept an idea
4. To create a piece of imaginative literature that a reader might enjoy.

It can thus be concluded that writing should be seen as the way to express ideas freely from the writer's or students' knowledge and resources. Certainly, this includes remembering the linguistic rule in order to make meaning from the text.

2.2 Writing at Junior and Senior High Schools Level

English language is one of the most important subjects at the pre-tertiary level in Ghana. The ultimate aim is to enable students to communicate effectively with other speakers of English using both the oral and written form. Among the four basic skills to be learned in school, writing is the most important skill. Writing at the junior and senior high schools involve writing essays. These essays are descriptive, expository and argumentative in nature. With the help of the textbook, teachers teach the main rules of the particular piece of writing they are expecting from the students. Teachers are expected to give assignments based on the topic he/she discussed with the students, meaning that all students usually have the same topic except when it is group work. When an essay is written, students are not allowed to use any aid. As writing takes a great deal of time, most of the lesson time is used when writing is involved. The assignments are usually connected to something they have worked with in class, something from the textbook or a novel. Teachers sometimes give essay questions based on social events, in order to keep students motivated. Ideally, students are supposed to write at least one essay a week.

2.3 The Concept of Error

The word error ('errare' in Latin) means a deviation from accuracy or correctness. In language, an error is a deviation from standard language norm in grammar, syntax, pronunciation and punctuation. Corder (1974, p. 260) defines an error as "the use of a linguistic item in a way which a fluent native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning". He further distinguishes between performance errors which are once off violations of grammatical conventions and competence errors which are consistent in an individual's speech or writing and indicate an internalized system different from that of a target language. In other

words, an individual is said to commit an error when that individual does not know how to use the correct form. Brown (2007) defines error as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter language competence of the learner. In addition, Richard and Schmidt (2002) define error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning.

Obi (200, p. 27) also defines errors as “breaches of the code of a language”. He notes that errors are deviant structures or unacceptable utterances which are a sign of imperfect knowledge of the linguistic code. To Obi, therefore, errors are committed by those who are not grounded in the structure of a language. Aiyewumi also (2001) describes errors in language learning as those oddities that are not evidence of carelessness or of unwillingness but of growing pains and desire to learn. To him, errors are inevitable in language learning. Similarly, Crystal (2009) believes that the concept of error presupposes that a correct and established form already exists on the other hand, but another form that is considered wrong and unacceptable is used or is in use. Crystal presents the concept of error from several angles: speaker’s errors and slips of the tongue such as addition, replacement and deletion of phonemes and morphemes; error of production and perception, error in the context of essay-making and error analysis.

Finally, Myles (2007) notes that errors are something that might happen from time to time until the second language learner internalizes the language entirely. He defines an error as a derailment in the speech or writing of a second language learner by the use of inappropriate words and language structures. Myles also explains that a second language teacher can only assess the learners’ ability from the range or type of

errors they make. For scholars such as Corder and Ellis, the argument that errors are only associated to second language learners may not be entirely true. They observe that there is evidence that first language users of language also commit errors.

2.4 Difference between Error and Mistake

Errors are usually compared with mistakes. It is important to make a distinction between errors and mistake, because they are technically two different phenomena. In order to analyse learners' errors in a proper perspective it is crucial point to make a distinction between mistake and error. According to Corder (1981) mistakes are failure to use a known system correctly. Mistakes are caused by memory lapses, physical as well as psychological conditions, such as tiredness or strong emotions. Mistakes are not systematic, they are accidental. On the other hand, errors are the failure to apply the language system correctly because of the learners have not yet mastered a full command of the language system or because the learner's lack of knowledge about the rules. Errors are systematic

In addition, Brown (2000) makes a distinction between mistakes and errors and refers to a mistake as a failure to utilize a known system correctly whereas errors concern a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter language competence of the learners. From the definitions, two things need to be stated here. One, mistakes may not require special treatment assuming they are recognized. Errors therefore may require special ways of treating them so as to help learner to be aware of such errors and overcome them. Trotta (2012) agrees with Brown about the distinction between errors and mistakes. To him, mistakes can be corrected by the author her/himself, whereas in contrast to errors, the author cannot correct them her/himself.

2.5 Sources of Errors in written essays

According to Brown (2004), the main sources of errors are interference from the mother tongue, from the target language, and from second or third foreign language the students may be simultaneously learning. In addition, Myles (2007) identifies both social and cognitive factors as sources of errors in second language learning. He explains that learners may exhibit errors in their writing for the following social reasons: negative attitude towards the target language, continued lack of progress in the second language, a wide social and psychological distance between them and the target culture, and lack of integrative and instrument motivation for learning. He also notes that learners equally exhibit errors for cognitive reasons. Such reasons include difficulty in acquiring academic and discourse style, lack of coherence in organizing information both at the sentence and text level, the complex process of writing in a second language and language transfer due to learners' lack of the necessary information in the second language.

Furthermore, Obi (2009) believes that peer group influence could be sources of errors in language acquisition. In further explanation, he states that from infancy to puberty, children's language is restructured to fit the rules used by their peer group. It is certainly a more powerful influence than the family. Obi's observation highlights the role of peer group in the speech habit of adolescents. An adolescent's peers' opinions matter very much to him/her. Therefore, he/she must speak the way they do if he is to be accepted in their group, the deviance of his language from the acceptable standard notwithstanding. The assertion may be true because my observation at the senior high school level shows that most students speak Pidgin English just to fit in with their peers. In addition,

Yakubu (2005) posits that joining and splitting of words could produce errors in students' writing. He explains that joining and splitting of words are important features of writing for an effective communication. This is because they contribute to the meaning of words as well as the flow of ideas. He identifies some errors that arise from joining and splitting of words as:

(a) Single words that are separated by some users of English. Examples of such words are: 'moreso', 'whenever', 'indeed', 'handbag' 'classroom'; etc

(b) Some separated words that are joined by some users of English. Such expressions are: 'in fact', 'in order to', 'in addition to', 'carry over', 'medium wave', 'in front of' etc. Furthermore, Schneider and McCoy (2002) point out omission of words in sentences as sources of errors. They explain that learners of English omit constituents of the language for a variety of reasons such as learners not adding determiners due to non-existence of determiners in their first language, and omission of preposition, verbs and relative pronouns which are obligatory word class.

Again, Eyisi (2006) and Ozioko (2007) state that omission or wrong use of adjectives, adverbs, idiomatic expressions, punctuations, especially the comma and semicolon, misconceptions, wrong use of concord, pronoun agreements, making bare infinitive 'have to' and vice versa, use of non-standard English, second language learners forcing English into the mould of their native languages, poor changing of direct to indirect speech and modification of fixed expressions as well as misuse of the English articles can also cause grammatical errors. In addition, Baldah (1997) observes that wrong use of tenses, spelling, concord and prepositions are common errors whose persistent difficulty has been a source of serious concern to language experts. He laments that the language efficacy of the products of our education is so

weak that one is bound to question the effectiveness of our English language teaching materials and strategies. He further states that grammatical and concord errors are common in books, newspapers, magazines, on the radio and television. He thus suggests that it is only through constant exposure to good reading materials and systematic teaching that learners of English as a second language become aware of the many visible errors. Finally, poor infrastructure in most deprive schools in Ghana contributes greatly to learners' errors, that is because schools which lack educational infrastructure perform poorly in language acquisition.

2.6 Classification of Errors in Written Essays

The task of classification of errors is by no means an easy one. This is because very often categories of errors overlap and occasionally, some errors simply do not lend themselves to a clear-cut categorization. This informs Huang's (2008, p. 29) conclusion that "there seem to be no ideal model of classification of the tremendous varieties of errors found in students composition". To him all models leak, in one way or another so the analyst has to establish his/her own model of classification. Notwithstanding the difficulties of getting a classic model for error classification, there are some classifications by some researchers which have to be reviewed. These include Dulay (1982) who classified errors into six different categories: omission of grammatical morphemes, double marking of semantic features, use of irregular rules, use of wrong word forms, alternating use of two or more forms, and misordering.

James (1998) also proposes five categories of errors which include grammatical errors (adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, possession, pronouns, prepositions and verbs), substance errors (capitalization, punctuation and spelling), lexical errors (word formation and word selection), syntactic errors (coordination/

subordination, sentence structure and ordering), and semantic errors (ambiguous communication and miscommunication).

In another study by Hengwichitkul (2006), errors were analyzed at the sentential level. All of the errors identified were classified as subject-verb agreement, tenses, parts of speech, participial phrases, relative clauses, passive voice, parallel structure, punctuation, run-ons and fragments. Hourani (2008) also categorized and analysed errors as grammatical. These errors were classified as passive voice, verb tense and form, subject verb agreement, word order, prepositions, articles, plurality, and auxiliaries. Likewise, Runkati (2013) also categorized the errors found in her data into two main types. The former type dealt with errors at the sentential level which were fragments, run-ons, subject-verb agreement, word order, tenses, capital letters and punctuation. The latter one was errors at the word level, such as articles, prepositions, word choices, nouns and numbers.

2.7 Common Errors in Writing

Grammatical errors are a term used in prescriptive grammar to describe an instance of faulty, unconventional, or controversial usage. According to Chih (2013), the term *grammatical error means* inaccurate form of semantic meaning and use. He again stated that, for English learners starting to learn a new language, it is essential that they learn the basic grammar rules of the target language first. He believes it is easier to speak language than to write it. Learners' ability to write grammatically correct sentences calls for much concern specially in an education system which relies on written examination to measure the learners' academic performance. According to Harmer (2007), writing provides learners with more 'thinking time' than the one they experience from spontaneous conversation. Due to that, he believes that writing offers

more opportunity for learners to undergo the stage of language processing in which they will be thinking of the grammar of the language. In addition, Pazever and Wang (2009) argue that the ability to write grammatical sentences is not natural. To them, grammar and writing demand a formal teacher and a structured-taught education. It is clear from their argument that formal teaching plays an important role in correcting learners' grammar and thus poor techniques in teaching grammar can result into many grammatical errors learners commit in writing. This argument is supported by Msanjila (2005) who states that grammatical errors in writing seem to be as a result of poor teaching.

Furthermore, many researchers on error analysis believe punctuation to be among the common errors learners commit. Msanjila (2005) believes that punctuation problems may also be as a result of inadequate learning and poor teaching. He also mentioned comma, full stop, colon and semicolon as the punctuation marks that learners often commit errors with when writing. Jo and Anthony (2000) also states that punctuation errors occur as a result omission or misuse of punctuation marks. They added that the function of punctuation marks is to separate words and phrases within a sentence according to their meanings

Another error the researcher is likely to encounter is spelling error. Fagerberg (2006) argues that spelling in particular is one of the many English writing problems that learners encounter. His argument is supported by Bancha (2014) who states that lack of orthography, phonology and morphology awareness of the English language by non-native speakers is the major cause of spelling errors. He believes that phonological and morphological awareness should be created by teachers to improve learners' spelling. He further argues that teachers should teach spelling by focusing on

how words are spelled and pronounced. On the other hand, Kramerov (2016) believes that the difference in spelling between British and American English is a cause of spelling problems non-native speakers of English face. He mentioned words like *colour/color*, *labour/labor* and *catalogue/catalog* as some of the words which often confuse learners.

Besides the above, concord errors are also common in essays of learners of English. This type of error is as a result of the confusion learners have regarding the plural and singular subject on one side, and plural and singular verb on the other. It may also be due to learners' lack of understanding of proximity concord, notional concord and grammatical concord. In addition, overgeneralization of tense rules, spelling rules, plurality rules and adjective rules contribute greatly to errors learners of English commit in writing. As a result of partial learning of English language rules, students at times are not aware of the rule restrictions of the English language. As a result, they end up committing more errors. For instance, learners mostly write 'gos' instead of 'goes' , 'dos' instead of 'does', 'sugars' instead of 'sugar', 'badder', instead of 'worse'.

2.8 Error Analysis

Error analysis was established by Stephen Pit Corder and colleagues in the 1960s and consists of a set of procedures for identifying, describing and explaining learners' errors. Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005) as well as Garrido & Romero (2012) are of the view that Error analysis became a common method of getting information about learners' language during the early 1970s as an alternative method to contrastive analysis which was based on behaviourist theories. With this, they claim that the difficulties in mastering certain structures in a second language were only

based on the differences between the learners' mother language and the second language. Students, as learners who learn English or other languages often use unacceptable and inappropriate forms. The unacceptable and inappropriate forms are called errors.

It is unavoidable that a learner commits some errors in his language learning process. That does not indicate a sign of failure; committing errors can be regarded as an essential part of learning. However, errors must not be neglected. Error Analysis is an approach that focuses on analysing the errors that learners commit in the process of learning a foreign or second language. Scholars like Corder (1974), James (2001), Abisamara (2003) and Crystal (2009) see error analysis as a study of linguistic obnoxiousness of second language learning. This involves identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the obnoxious forms of language produced by learners using linguistic procedures and principles.

2.9 Importance of Errors Analysis in writing

Error analysis is a useful tool to gather information about learners' language. Erdogan (2005), for example, states that error analysis enables teachers to find out the sources of errors and take pedagogical precautions towards them. For Mahmoud (2011), error analysis constitutes a link between language learning and teaching that can be exploited in initial as well as remedial teaching. As these authors illustrate, error analysis can become a useful tool to improve language teaching and consequently, students' learning. One can also argue that errors are used in checking what have been learnt and what have been missed. Errors help instructors to get the information on the areas of the linguistics difficulties that learners face when writing.

Corder (1981) believes that learners' errors are significant in three ways: First, they give information about the language a learner is using. Second, they provide information on how a language is learnt, and third, they provide information to the learner since errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. Error analysis also has pedagogical benefits because it gives useful input for designing and carrying out the teaching/learning process. It can help us to see how a learner's production deviates from target language forms and get information about the difficulties students face when learning a language. With this information, instructors can plan the teaching/learning process to help students become successful in the task of learning a foreign language. Weireesh (1991) considers learners' errors to be of particular importance because the making of errors is a device the learners use in order to learn.

Weireesh says that Error Analysis is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. He goes on to say that it serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. Error analysis is an essential source of information to teachers because it provides information on students' errors which in turn helps teachers to correct them and also to improve the effectiveness of their teaching. This emphasizes the fact that problematic as the errors may be, when they are identified, learners get help and teachers find it easy to do remedial work. Errors are also significant to syllabus designers to determine what items are important to be included in the syllabus and what to be excluded. The analysis of the learners' errors can help identify their linguistic difficulties and need at a particular stage of language learning. Sercombe (2000) explains that Error Analysis serves three purposes. One, to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached and two, to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and Three, to find out

how people learn a language. From this statement it can be concluded that the study of errors should also be looked at as something positive both for learners and teachers because it helps teachers to modify their teaching.

Mitchell and Myles (2004) claim that errors, if studied, could reveal a developing system of the students' second language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. This view is supported by Stark (2001), who also explains that the teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as their failure to grasp the rules and structures but view them as a process of learning. He subscribes to the view that errors are normal and inevitable features of learning. From the position of various scholars, it is argued that error analysis can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. It provides the necessary information about what is lacking in learners' competence. Another importance is that the analysis of errors is language teaching. This is because in the evolution of language teaching methods, the study of errors has played a very distinctive role.

The early methods considered errors as the evidence of 'mislearning' a language; they were avoided at all cost, and impeccable oral and written production was made the objective for learners. The recent trends of communicative methods focus mainly on developing communicative skills, with errors being of less importance as long as they do not hinder communication. Both scenarios are quite divergent, as one approach considers errors as problematic and the other as an unavoidable companion. The truth is that the study of errors offers great advantages for improving language pedagogies. Error analysis results cannot be out of fashion since they show those areas that language teachers need to focus on; grammar, lexis,

and discourse. In other words, it is by analyzing errors that important suggestions for language method design can be made, this involves all the areas of the pedagogical design, from syllabus to materials.

2.10 How to Overcome Errors in Writing

The sources of errors in writing of learners' essays are largely due to interlingual and intralingual. (Hourani,2008). However, there are some measures such as knowledge of grammar rules, continues writing, reading a lot and positive feedback from teachers can be adopted to help learners of English to overcome their errors.

2.10.1 Knowledge on grammar rules

It is an undeniable fact that an understanding of a language's grammar is essential. As indicated, vocabulary is the flesh of the language and grammar is the skeleton. According to Qashao(2006) most learners of English as a foreign language view the study of grammar a boring and there are frequent outcries about the difficulty of the structures of grammar. He believes that learners must learn the grammar of every language so as to avoid error in the writing and speaking. Hourani (2008) is of the opinion that passive voice and active voice, subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, word order, articles, prepositions, plurality and auxiliary verbs are the areas in grammar where learners must pay more attention to. He therefore believes that grammatical rules should be properly taught to help learners correct their grammatical errors when writing or speaking.

2.10.2 Continuous writing practice

Writing is a productive skill, and good writing skills can only be cultivated through dedicated practice and constant feedback from teachers. If learners do not constantly write, reflect on their writing and try to improve their skills, it will be

highly improbable that their writing will ever be error-free. Learners must be aware that it takes constant practice to avoid fundamental and hard-to-eliminate errors, such as spellings, grammatical, punctuation and unconscious translating back and forth between English and learners native language. Based on this, Amuzu (2016) argues that constant writing practice can help learners to form clearer thoughts. So, if learners practice writing skills it will help to improve their speech, their comprehension will improve, and most importantly, they will be able to speak and write well without any errors. Building on Amuzu's argument, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) believe that writing does not come naturally, but rather, gained through continuous effort and practice. They add that the best way to learn any skill would be to practice it.

2.10.3 Reading a Lot

Learners of English language should read a lot. Reading will help students to increase their knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and be informed and to have knowledge of the world. Shoebottom (2014) argues that reading help learners to improve their vocabulary, sentence formation and grammar.

2.10.4 Positive feedback from teachers

When reviewing learners' essays, teachers should give positive feedback along with talking about what needs improvement. Teachers should engage learners in the revision process by discussing the mechanics of writing without disapproval of learners' ideas. Learners must be made to understand that writing is a process and all writers revise their work. Teachers should remember that learners need encouragement as much as correction. Also, teachers need to speak to some learners in private to avoid embarrassment. Weaver (2006) and Ferris (2008) concur that

students should be shown their strengths and weaknesses so that they can improve on their future work.

Weaver (2006) believes learners are motivated to improve when they receive constructive feedback. He also suggests that tutors should provide appropriate guidance and motivation rather than diagnosing problems and justifying marks. Similarly, Saito (1994) suggests that English teachers need to make explicit the purposes of their feedback so learners can understand how to handle that feedback and the purposes of the feedback so that learners can use it to their benefit. To sum up, Hourani (2008) states that both syllabus designers and teachers of English need to cater for students writing needs. In addition, textbooks should include more free and controlled writing exercises that would help improve student writing abilities.

2.11 Previous related studies

As mentioned earlier, errors made by learners can be used to assist learners to write better. Error Analysis has gained a great deal of interest in many scholars and researchers throughout the world. The study of error analysis was not popular among the early language scholars and researchers in Ghana. However, in recent years, a lot of studies have been conducted on errors in language acquisition in the country. One of such studies on error analysis is Dadzie and Bosiwah (2015) who set to find out spelling errors among junior high school students of Cape Coast Metropolis using three schools with sixty students. They adopted mixed method in their design. At the end of their study, it was revealed that the students have a problem with spelling, and this was attributed to the poor performance at the BECE. It also showed that learners found it difficult to write error-free essays. They attribute the low level performance

of students in spellings to reasons such as L1 interference, ignorance, transfer, false analogy and carelessness.

Similarly, Mireku-Gyimah (2014) analysed errors caused by final year students of a public University in Ghana and found that students committed errors such as wrong register (wrong tone of language and wrong choice of lexical item/vocabulary), awkward expressions, ambiguity, wrong punctuation and capitalization, wrong concord (subject-verb disagreement), wrong preposition usage, wrong tense, wrong adjectives, adverb and pronoun usage and wrong insertion of the indefinite article and omission of the definite and indefinite articles. Amuzu (2016) also conducted a study on errors on Ghanaian students' written essays in Koforidua Polytechnic and concluded that sixteen different categories of errors were committed. These include wrong tense, wrong concord, wrong proper noun usage, wrong plural markers, wrong capitalisation, omission of articles, wrong spellings, wrong punctuations, wrong part of speech and omission of subject.

On the study of errors in Africa, a lot have also been done in Nigeria, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. In South Africa for instance, Nzama (2011) conducted a study to determine errors committed by Isizulu speaking learners of English in selected schools in South Africa using the quantitative research design with a population of ninety students. His findings were that students have difficulties in the use of auxiliaries, tenses, concords, articles, prepositions, pronouns, plurals, mother tongue interference, infinitives and auxiliary with past tense. Apart from these studies, there are other studies that have examined errors in writing in Asia and Europe. Khanom (2014) conducted a research on errors in writing task of higher secondary school student of Bangladesh. The mixed method of design was used for the study.

She had a population of one hundred students. At the end of her study, her findings were that:

1. Students lack in integrative and have very limited writing practice.
2. Students reading skills were unsatisfactory and have limited exposure to reading text in English that explain poor the language in their writing
3. Both the students and the teachers were exam oriented which encourages rote memorization.

She concluded that the errors of learners must be treated seriously before they become fossilized.

In a similar study, Liu (2013) it found that the participants who were Chinese learners committed errors when they wrote English sentences. She pointed out that the sources were carelessness and negative influence of the participants' mother tongue. The analysis on errors made by English as second language learners can be seen in the study of Khansir (2013). He compared and examined the error types found in the written products of ESL and EFL students. He concluded that there were no significant differences between the errors found in the written products of the two groups of the writers. It can be concluded that both ESL and EFL learners faced similar problems in writing. In a recent study, Zafar (2016) conducted an empirical study which used Error Analysis as a treatment. She first analyzed errors frequently made by her Business students, and verb tenses were found to be the most problematic ones. After a two-month writing training focusing on the accurate use of verb tenses, her students had an apparent improvement.

In Thailand, Bennui (2008) for example, analysed errors caused by the transfer of the subjects' mother tongue which was Thai. The findings showed that the Thai language negatively influenced the subjects' writing at all levels including lexical,

syntactic and discourse levels. He concluded that the differences between Thai and English should be taught to Thai English as foreign language students. Similarly, in the analysis of English sentences written by Thai undergraduate students, Jenwitheesuk (2009) also found that the sentences contained errors such as determiners, subject-verb agreement, tenses and prepositions. Phuket and Othman (2015) found many types of errors in their study. These were tense, preposition, word choice and comma errors in narrative essays written by Thai undergraduate students. From the analysis, they stated that negative transfer of the students' first language was the main cause of the errors.

It can be concluded from the above findings that Ghanaian learners of English as well as other learners across the globe encounter difficulties when they write in English. The major sources of the errors identified across these studies are the negative transfer of learners' first language and their incomplete knowledge of the target language. Other sources, such as learners' carelessness cannot be overlooked. Analyzing learners' errors in written English and seeking for sources of those errors have been proven to be helpful to English language learners' writing improvement.

2.12 Conclusion

This chapter has examined various views on writing in language acquisition. It also discussed the concept of errors, classification of errors in writing, sources of errors in writing, common errors in writing, and how to overcome errors in writing. The chapter also reviewed available literature on error and importance of error analysis as an important strategy underpinning the present study. The chapter concluded with a review of related studies on error analysis in writing. The next three chapters present the research methodology, results of the analysis of data collected and conclusion.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of the study is discussed in this chapter. The discussion is done under the following sub-headings.

1. Research Design
2. Data Sources
3. Population and Sampling
4. Sampling size of the Study
5. Sampling Techniques
6. Instrument for Data collection
7. Data analysis and classification
8. Reliability and validity
9. conclusion

3.1 Research Design

The design of a research is to show the procedures the researcher employs in conducting a research and the condition which the research data is obtained. Burns and Grove (2003) define a research design as ‘a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings’. Speaking on the same issue, Wiredu (1996) says that the design of any research describes in detail, all the procedures and methods the researcher employs in his work. Research design answers the research questions. This is in line with Polit, Beck, and Hungler (2001) who define a research design as the researcher’s overall statement for answering the research question or testing the research hypothesis. Polit, Beck, and Hungler definition is in line with Kothari (2008) who believes that a research

design shows how research questions are connected to the data and the required tools and procedures that are needed to answer the research questions. Nuhu (2010) shares the same view; he thinks that a research design guides the researcher in data collection and analysis. He added that a good research design enables a researcher to generate valid findings.

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of errors learners of English as a second language commit in their writing, so the researcher adopted the qualitative design to conduct the study. The qualitative research design involves an interaction between the researcher and the researched. Verma and Mallick (1999) are of the opinion that qualitative research collects data in the form of 'words' rather 'numbers'. They conclude that qualitative research describes the life-worlds of the participants from their perspectives. According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002), qualitative research design refers to research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning, experience or perception. It produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. Qualitative design uses non-statistical methods and small purposively selected samples.

Burns and Grove (2003) similarly write that, text is considered a rich source of data in qualitative studies and that text provided by participants may be a component of a larger study using a variety of sources of data. The rationale for using a qualitative approach for this research was to explore, describe and analyse writing errors that learners commit in their writing. On his part, Kahn (2006) sees qualitative research as a research that seeks to provide answers to carefully outlined research questions without the bias of hypothesis. Tables, charts and numbers were involved in the analysis but as far as the analysis of information was the focus of the study to

arrive at answers to the research questions and not the testing of set hypothesis, one may rightly conclude that the study is qualitative in nature. An advantage in the use of qualitative approach in this study was that the use of written essays by learners reduced cost. It also helped the researcher to explore new areas which would form the basis for further research.

3.2 Data Sources

Students from Bawku Senior High School were involved in the research. The students who were involved in the study were first year students. The researcher chose the first years for the study because they are the classes he teaches. Again, they had had an experience of the senior high school system for more than six months and had received tutoring in the English language.

3.3 Population and Sampling

A population is defined as a group of individuals or people with the same characteristics and in whom the researcher is interested. Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (1999) thinks that a population is a large pool from which our sampling elements are drawn, and to which we want to generalise our findings. Blanche's conclusion is supported by Kusi (2012, p. 80) who defines population 'as a group of individuals that the researcher generalises his/her findings'. In addition, Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005) believe that population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions.

The researcher focused on the first year students of Bawku Senior High School students, both male and female, from all the six departments of the school: General Arts, Business, Home Economics, Visual Arts, General Science and

Agricultural Science. In each class, the researcher counted all students and told them to note their numbers. Then, he asked all bearers of odd numbers to step aside. He sparingly picked either of the two groups in each class, that is, either the odd number bearers or even number bearers were picked. To maintain fairness, he went on to apply the same procedure to each selected group that had more students than the required ratio per class; 20 students per class. Choosing students from all departments was to find out whether the problem is similar in all the departments or it affects only a department. Again, it was to find out how common learners commit errors in their written communication. Therefore, the results that were obtained determined that the problem of errors in writing cuts across all the six departments in the school.

3.4 Sampling Size of the Study

Blanche et al., (2006) define sampling as a process of selecting research participants from an entire population, and involve decisions about which people, setting events behaviours and/or social processes to observe. Maree (2007) also says that sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study. Oluikpe (1981) distinguishes between population and sample in research. To Oluikpe, whilst population identifies the broader category of research participants, for example, students of Bawku SHS, sample on the other hand stands for the particular people or elements chosen from the population for a study. In selecting the participants for this study, the researcher maintained a high sense of neutrality.

The target population for the study was learners of English as a second language. The study covered a total of one hundred and twenty (120) students comprising twenty (20) participants each from the six departments in Bawku Senior High School. Boys were seventy-eight (78) representing 65%, while girls were forty-

two (42) representing 35%. This is a reflection of the gender distribution of the school which stood at two thousand five hundred and sixty-seven (2,567) with one thousand six hundred and twenty-one (1,621) boys representing 63% and nine hundred and forty-six (946) girls representing 37%. In terms of ethnicity, the sampled students represent quite a myriad of ethnic groups in Ghana, with many coming from the Upper East Region. This may be as a result of the geographical location of the school.

Age distribution of learners who took part in the study was: fifteen (15) years old were six (6), eight (8) of them were sixteen (16) years old, fourteen (14) of them were seventeen (17) years. Thirty-four (34) of them were eighteen (18) years old. Thirty-six (36) of the learners were nineteen (19) years old, nineteen (19) years old were eight (8) and twenty (20) years and above were fourteen (14).

3.5 Sampling Technique

The researcher chose purposive homogeneous sampling strategy. Creswell (2008) is of the opinion that whenever a researcher uses purposive sampling, the researcher intentionally selects individuals and sites to learn and understand the central phenomenon. The standard used in choosing participants and sites is whether they are 'information rich', he added. With regard to the homogenous sampling strategy, the researcher decided to include people or sites in his study because they have a common trait or characteristic, Creswell (2008). Purposively and homogeneously, twenty (20) students were chosen from the six departments in the school. The researcher thought different cognitive capabilities were found in the different departments

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The major source of data used to find answers to the research questions was the written essays of 120 students. The topics given in the essays were general and in the narrative and descriptive forms. The test was conducted by the researcher with help from other teachers under examination conditions and it lasted for one hour. The need to test competence in various error types informed the researcher's choice of written essay as an instrument. Through the written essay strategy, the researcher was able to identify the various categories of errors that learners commit. The testing instrument was made in such a way that students had three options to choose from. The allotted time was also enough for learners to express themselves.

3.7 Data Collection

Data was collected via written essay tests, in the form of narrative and descriptive essays. The subjects were asked to write in the class situation within a time limit of one hour, with permission from the head of academic. The students wrote the essays in their own classrooms to avoid anxiety learners usually face when writing test. The researcher also refreshed the students with soft drinks to eliminate all forms of anxiety. The students were made to write their names, programme of study, date of birth, last school attended and gender. The researcher collected the written essays exactly an hour time. The following writing prompt was presented to the participants.

Write a short essay on these following topics:

1. Write a letter to your describing your first day at the SHS
2. Write a letter to your friend in another school telling him/her why you like your school'

3. Narrate to your friend an interesting story you have ever read

This task was given within a time limit of one hour and the minimum words requirement was 250 words. The students were guided to write as directly, concisely naturally and simply as possible.

3.8 Analysis of the Collected Data

The process of analyzing the collected data was to examine the students' performance. Thus, the procedure of analysing the error was taken in accordance with the following four steps (Huang, 2002).

- i. Data collection
- ii. Identification of errors
- iii. Classification of errors into error types
- iv. A statement of error frequency

3.8.1 Identification of Errors

Errors from the collected data in the form of narrative and descriptive essays were identified and classified into different error categories by the researcher himself. The researcher also tried to interpret the structures as best as he could with emphasis on 13 error types.

3.8.2 Classification of Errors

The errors were classified into different error categories – based on Horney's (1998) cited in Ngangbam (2016). Nine classifications of error categories were chosen and four more were selected from the conventional grammatical categories of the sample, thus, the researcher altogether classified the typology into 12 categories.

3.8.3 Statement of Error Frequency

The errors which were identified for each composition were counted according to the subheading of the classification. Errors were counted if it occurred repeatedly. In all, 2,360 errors were committed by learners. Spelling errors was top on the chart while adjective errors was on the bottom, the following categories of errors were also committed, and they were subject-verb agreement, tense, poor construction of sentences, capitalisation, punctuation, and choice of word, the rest were pronouns, prepositions, plurality/singular, articles, word order and adjective errors.

3.9 Validity and Reliability

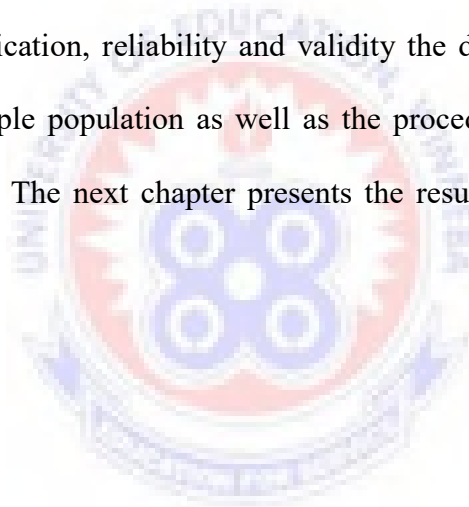
The data that has been described in this chapter were collected by the researcher himself. This was done to ensure that there was reliability and validity of the data collected and to ensure that scientific procedure had been followed in data collection. According to Maree et al (2007), reliability has to do with the consistency or the repeatability of a measure or an instrument. High reliability is obtained when the measure or instrument will give the same results if the research is repeated on the same sample. Hence the researcher observed the whole process to ensure that the process was done scientifically in a controlled environment. This was also done to ensure that all factors that might interfere with data collection were eliminated. This again ensured that all questions related to the instruments used for data collection were explained by the researcher himself and also to save time and minimise expenses which otherwise would have been incurred.

While reliability is necessary, it is not sufficient for a test to be reliable. It needs to be valid. Validity refers to how well a test measures what it is purported to measure (Moskal & Leydens, 2000). Sampling validity was employed because not

every student could have been covered, so students needed to be sampled from all the six departments of the school. Again the head of department of languages and four other teachers of English language perused and approved three essay questions to ensure that the essay questions met standards and were within the ability of the students.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided details of the method used in the conduct of the study. These include research design, data sources, population and sampling, sampling size of the study, sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, data analysis and classification, reliability and validity the data collection tool used was described. The sample population as well as the procedures used in collecting data was also explained. The next chapter presents the results from the analysis of data collected.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of analysis of the data obtained from all the one hundred and twenty (120) Form One Students of Bawku Senior High School who took part in the study. The results showed that students commit different errors in their writings, and this is an indication that they have little knowledge of the English language. The chapter is divided into two parts: The first section presents analysis of the common errors students commit in their written essays. Here, it was observed that the errors were varied: spelling, subject-verb agreement, tense, word order, capitalisation, punctuation, choice of word, pronoun, preposition, plurality, article, word order and adjective errors. It was also revealed that the highest number of the errors committed was spelling errors while the lowest was errors in the use of adjectives. The second and final part discusses the causes of these errors. Here, the researcher observed different causes which include the students' attitude towards learning of the English language, the teachers' attitude towards teaching of English language, Social networking sites, differences in structure between L1 and English, lack of constant practice in writing, lack of practice, context of teaching, complexity of the English language and the context of teaching.

4.1 Categorization of Students' Errors

After analyzing the data, the researcher identified different types of errors in students' written essays. These are spelling, concord, tense, word order, capitalisation, punctuation, choice of word, pronoun, preposition, plurality, article, word order and adjective errors. The error types identified are discussed in the following sections.

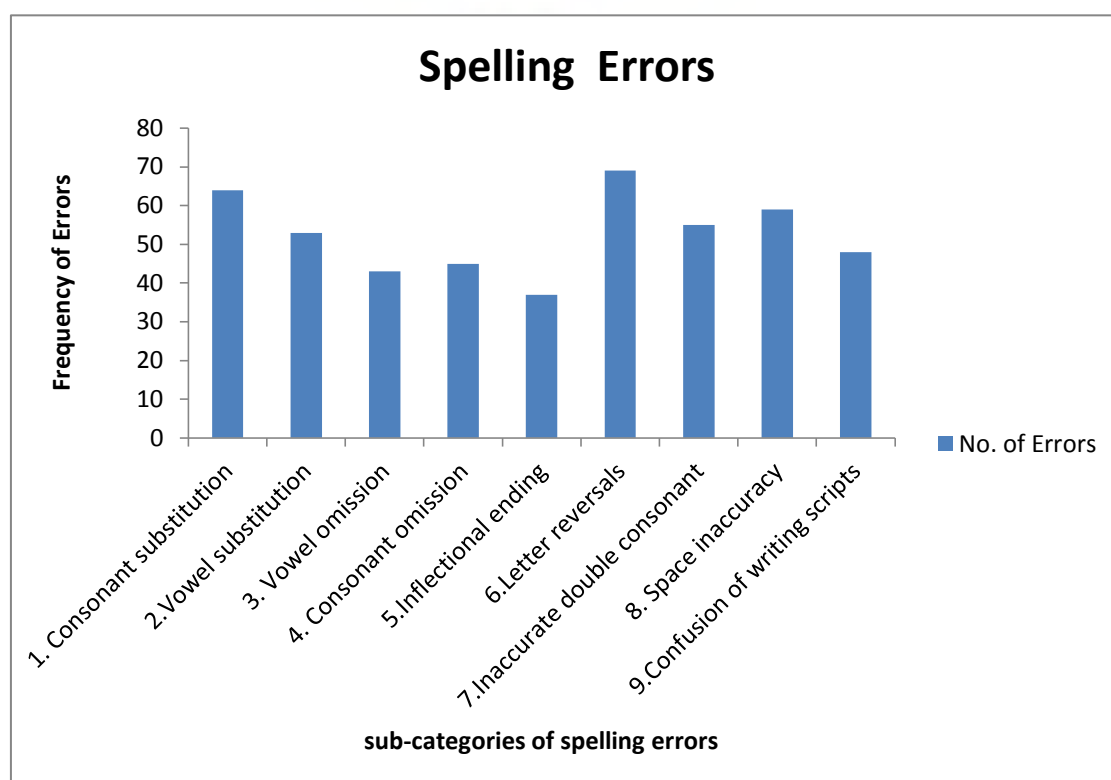
4.1.1 Spelling errors

For one to be able to communicate effectively, accurate spelling is strongly required. Spelling is essential since one misspelling may change the meaning which the author intended to convey in the text (Fagerberg, 2006). From the study, learners made ten (10) sub-categories of spelling errors. These spelling errors include consonant substitution, vowel substitution, vowel omission, consonant omission, inflectional ending, letter reversals, and inaccurate double of consonant, space inaccuracy, doubling of letters and confusion of writing scripts.

Wrong spelling was ranked first in the hierarchy. Out of the total of two thousand three hundred and sixty (2360) errors committed by learners in the study, spellings alone recorded a total of nine hundred and eighty-two (982) errors, giving us an alarming average of eight (8) spelling errors per script. It is clear that spelling errors alone accounted for forty per cent (40%). Banacha (2013) thinks spelling errors are caused by mismatch between English and the learner's first language, phonological differences between English and learners first language, poor morphological knowledge and limited orthography knowledge of the English language. Table 4.1.1 presents a summary of the spelling errors found in the data.

Table 4.1.1. Errors of spelling

| Spelling error type | Frequency of errors | Percentage (%) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Consonant substitution | 128 | 13.1 |
| 2.Vowel substitution | 103 | 10.7 |
| 3. Vowel omission | 86 | 8.7 |
| 4. Consonant omission | 90 | 9.1 |
| 5.Inflexional ending | 74 | 7.5 |
| 6.Letter reversals | 138 | 14 |
| 7. Inaccurate double consonant | 110 | 11.2 |
| 8. Space inaccuracy | 118 | 12 |
| 9.Confusion of writing scripts | 96 | 9.7 |
| 10. social media | 36 | 3.6 |
| Total | 982 | 100 |

**Figure 4.1.1. Frequency of spelling errors.**

Examples of spelling errors found in the study

Furture-future, **arround**-around, **individual**-individual, **thay**-they, **sudent**-student. **Story-building**- storey- building, **Sheeps**-sheep, **furnitures**-furniture
Foriegn-foreign, **opinoin**- opinion, **writting**-writing, **dinning**-dining, **alot**- a lot,

some one- someone, **no body-** nobody **Sirous-**serious, **nosce-**noise, disipline-discipline, **Fater-**fatter, **singger-**singer, **accross-**across, , **becos-**because, **reson-**reason
Frnd- friend , **doc-**doctor, **tonit-**tonight

4.1.2. Word Order

Word order problem is a serious one as spellings. From the study, three hundred and sixteen (316) errors were recorded representing eleven per cent (11%) of the total errors in the study. According to Atatsi, (2009) word order problems among learners of English are a result of poor reading habit. But Brown (2000) states that the major cause of errors among learners of English language is as a result of interlingual transfer, intralingual, context of learning and communication strategies. It can also be as a result of poor teaching, lack of reading culture and lack of constant practice in writing. Word order error is sub-categorised into two: interlingual cause and intralingual cause.

4.1.2.1 Interligual transfer Errors

Brown (2000) is of the opinion that mother-tongue influence causes interlingual errors among learners of L2. He states that L1 influence are frequent at the initial stages of L2 learning since the L1 is the only language system the learner knows and can draw on and therefore, negative transfer takes place. Brown believes may be true because learners who took part in the study committed errors which are as a result of interlingual transfer. Out of the total of 316 word order errors recorded, students committed 204 errors under word order which was as a result interlingual transfer.

Examples of word order errors caused by interlingual transfer found in the study a

1. *By the grace of Allah you will be agree.*

2. *When the teacher is teaching and may much attention to the teacher when in class*
3. *My school that I was attending I was very happy*
4. *I want to telling the school that am schooling is teaching hard.*
5. *We do we didn't rise*

From the examples, students transferred the structure of their native language to English language.

4.1.2.2 Intralingual Transfer Errors

Intralingual errors are caused due to false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, over-laboration and hypercorrection.(Brown, 2000). From the study, 112 errors were identified to have occurred due to intralingual transfers.

Examples from the data are:

1. *They teacher us so serious*
2. *We all the students of Bawku we obey*
3. *My is almost the first in quizzes*
4. *Flow to the school and improve your academic work*
5. *The school are serious forever*

Table 4.1.2 Sub categorization of Errors of word order

| Type of word order | Frequency of Error | Per Cent (%) |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Interlingual transfer | 204 | 64.5 |
| Intralingual transfer | 112 | 35.5 |
| Total | 316 | 100 |

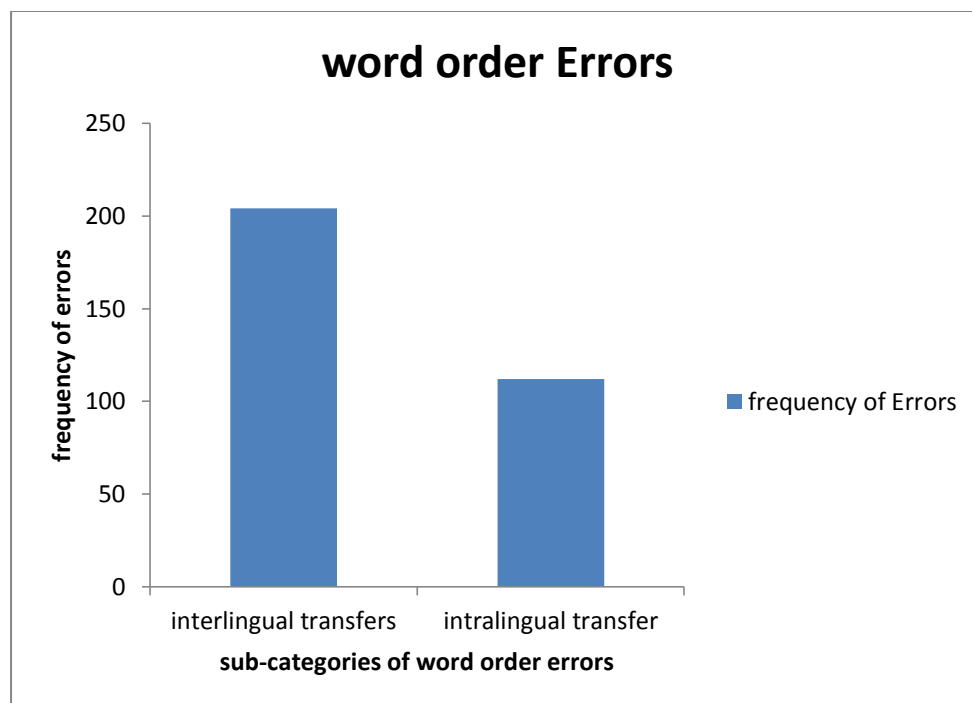


Figure 4.1.2. Frequency of word order errors

4.1.3 Punctuation Errors

The use punctuation marks in written communication are very important because they create room for easy understanding. Shoebottom (2016) states that most punctuation errors are made not only by second language learners of English, but also by native speakers too. He concluded that punctuation errors are as a result of lack of clear understanding of the sentence structure. From the analysis it was revealed that punctuation errors occur as a result of learners' carelessness, poor teaching and overgeneralization. Punctuation errors were the third highest errors committed when the data was analysed with 230 errors representing 10% of the total errors committed by the 120 learners. The common punctuation errors found in the study were full stop, comma, question mark and apostrophe marks.

Examples of punctuation errors

1. *Yours faithfully*

2. *When it was six o clock in the morning'*
3. *The school is located at Bawku*
4. *How are you doing.*
5. *Moses school bag was bigger*

Table 4.1.3. Sub categorization of punctuations Errors

| Punctuation type | Frequency of error | Per cent (%) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Comma | 96 | 41.7 |
| Full stop | 58 | 23.3 |
| Apostrophe | 68 | 29.6 |
| Question marks | 8 | 3.4 |
| Total | 230 | 100 |

The table represents the sub-categorization of punctuation errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub-categories and their percentages. This is shown in

Figure 4.3:

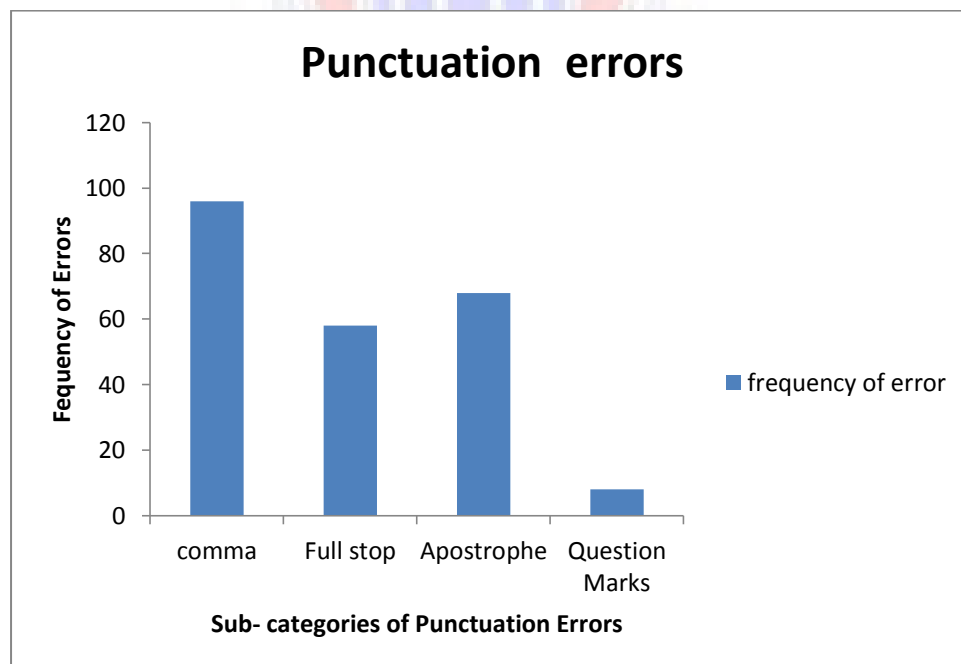


Figure 4.1.3. Frequency of punctuation errors

4.1.4 Capitalisation

Capital letters are useful for sentence initials, the beginning of important words, in topics and headings (Kroll, 1991). However, learners have problems in using capitalization properly because the analysis revealed that many students use capital letters instead of small letters and vice versa. Contrary to this assertion, Quagie (2010) argues that the source of the problem is neither the mother tongue nor from second language interference but due carelessness of learners. He further states that the wrong use of capital letters is a pedagogical problem which can be handled by professional teachers in schools, especially at the primary school level.

Capitalisation errors found in the study were grouped under the following sub-division: proper nouns errors, first person singular pronoun error, names of days of the week and months of the year, historical events, first letter of salutation, and first letter of a complete sentence and names of subjects or disciplines. The study recorded 226 capitalisation errors representing 9% of the total errors found in the data.

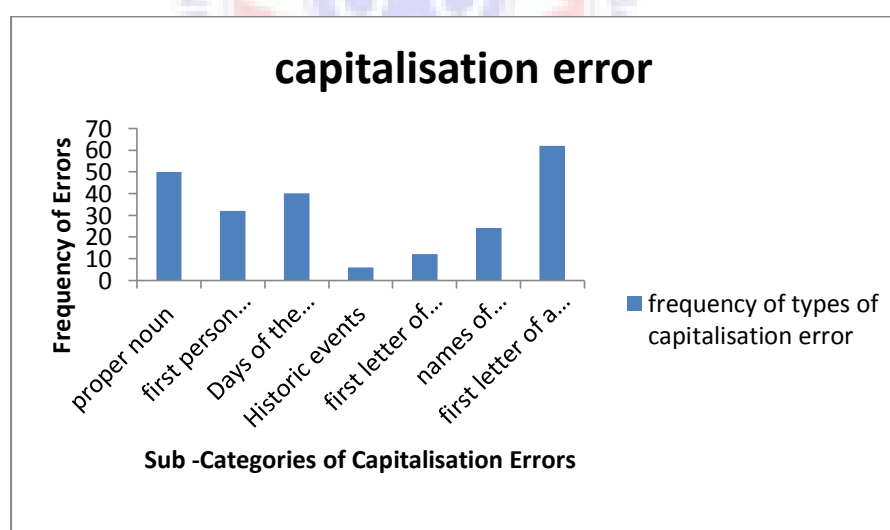
Examples of capitalisation errors are:

1. *sakogo R/c junior high school.*
2. *My senior saw me when i was coming*
3. *2nd february, 2017*
4. *I reported on tuesday*
5. *dear sam,*

Table 4.1.4. The table shows the various categories of capitalisation errors

| Types of capitalisation | Frequency of errors | Percentage (%) |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Proper noun | 50 | 22.1 |
| 2. First person personal pronouns | 32 | 14.1 |
| 3. Days of the week, and months of the year | 40 | 17.6 |
| 4. Historic events | 6 | 2.6 |
| 5. First letter of salutation | 12 | 5.3 |
| 6. Names of subjects and discipline | 24 | 10.6 |
| 7. First letter of a complete sentence | 62 | 27.4 |
| 8. Total | 226 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of capitalisation errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.4:

**Figure 4.1.4. Frequency of capitalisation errors**

4.1.5 Tense Errors

Tense errors were among the highest category of errors identified in the study. A total of 180 errors were committed giving us a rate of 7.6%. The findings attest to the fact that tense is a major problem that the learners encounter. The wide spread

nature of tense errors in the study confirms Darus (2009) assessing that inappropriate usage of verb tense was among the common errors learners of English as a second language commit.

The commonly misused tense in the study were present simple, present perfect, present progressive, present perfect progressive, past simple, past perfect, past progressive and simple future. The analysis showed that students used the present perfect instead of the past and present progressive instead of the present simple. Students seem to be overgeneralizing the use of the present perfect. As to the wrong use of the past tense, the researcher came to conclusion that learners had little understanding of the irregular verbs. Improper choice of the future tense also featured greatly and that can be explained as interference of the first language of students because in the learners' native languages such as *Kusaal*, *Moor* and *Gurene*, the simple present could have been used for the same context.

4.1.5.1 Present simple

Present simple errors are common among learners of English as a second language. According to Garrido and Rosado (2012) simple present error can be explained as intralingual error which can be overcome with time and practice.

Examples:

1. *I begin to worried.*
2. *The headmaster will want us to.....*
3. *My father love us. (loves)*
4. *The other students joined my class on Mondays.*
5. *Abu rode home every day after school.(rides)*

4.1.5.2 Present progressive

Learners had difficulties differentiating between past participle and the present participle.

Examples:

1. *I am written you this letter.*
2. *I wrote to you this letter to inform you....*
3. *They are eat in the dining hall.*
4. *She is walk to the class.*
5. *One is fly. (is flying)*

4.1.5.3 Present perfect

The confusion of the use of the present perfect tense is as a result of learner inability to distinguish between the past perfect and present perfect tense (Bancha, 2014).

Examples:

1. *I had received your letter now.*
2. *I she has gone to the dormitory.*
3. *Aminahad flow from Garu.*
4. *She has went to the dormitory.*
5. *The maths teacher has go to the staff common room.*

4.1.5.4 Present perfect progressive

This is the tense aspect with the highest frequency of 36 errors. Students used the past tense instead of the perfect progressive. This shows that learners can identify and use the tense but confuse the use of perfect progressive and the use of the past tense.

Examples:

1. *She has being slept with men.*
2. *The boys have been run away from school.*
3. *The children have been lie to me*
4. *The head master have been told us to be good boys.*
5. *The sport team of the school has been play well.*

4.1.5.5 Past Tense

When analysing this errors, it can be inferred that students have difficulties with the use of the irregular verb in their past form. So students need more practice to master the irregular verbs.

Examples:

1. *Then he went and bring the can.*
2. *I wroted to the school before.....*
3. *The teacher setted the questions..*
4. *They putted all the books in the cupboard*
5. *My sister keep the book in the bag before coming to school.*

4.1.5.6 Past perfect

Students commit errors in past perfect due to the influence of their native language and poor learning (Bancha, 2004).

Examples:

1. *I had never saw this school.*
2. *You had being robbed for you entered the school.*
3. *The man had ever came to our school*
4. *Our had being cut from town*

5. *The science teacher had go home.*

4.1.5.7 Past perfect progressive

1. *The seniors had been insults me.*
2. *Your school had being robbing them of their marks.*
3. *Fuseini had being passing that subject*
4. *Our school bursar had being going to the bank*
5. *The English teacher had being giving exercises....*

4.1.5.8 Simple future

Some students were confused with the use of the simple future tense. Students were interchanging the use of the simple present tense with the use of the future tense.

Examples:

1. *She will told me not to come.*
2. *When do you come to our school?*
3. *The shall came there*
4. *The form three boys will beated us when...*
5. *The school football team will won all the matches.*

Table 4.1.5. Sub categorization of Errors of Tenses

| Tense | Number of errors | Per cent (%) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Present simple | 14 | 7.7 |
| Present perfect | 30 | 16.6 |
| Present progressive | 16 | 8.8 |
| Present perfect progressive | 36 | 20 |
| Past simple | 26 | 14.4 |
| Past perfect | 18 | 10 |
| Simple future | 16 | 8.8 |
| Past perfect progressive | 24 | 13.3 |
| Total | 180 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of tense errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.5:

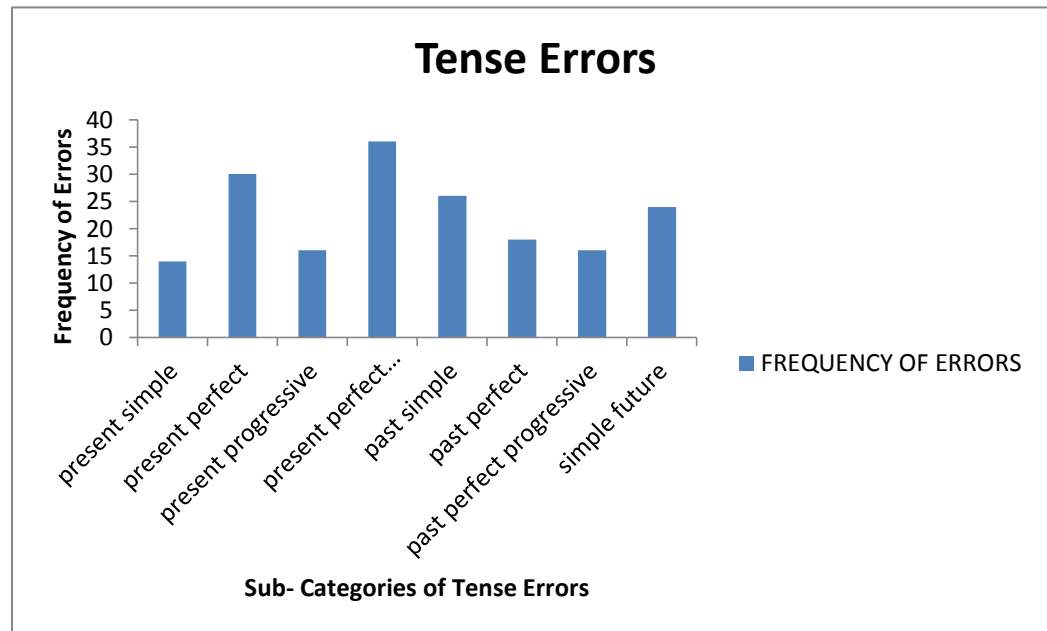


Figure 4.1.5. Frequency of tense errors

4.1.6 Concord Errors

Concord errors originate from inherent irregular pattern in the grammar of the English language (Onuigbo, 2005). He makes special reference to nouns and observes that some language users of English find it difficult to associate the irregular nouns with the appropriate verb form so these make learners to commit a lot of concord errors. The concord errors found in the study were grouped under grammatical concord errors, proximity concord errors and notional concord errors.

4.1.6.1 Grammatical Concord

This is an agreement between subject and verb. The subject and the verb have to agree grammatically and the phenomenon is called subject-verb concord. The verb is considered to be the heart of the sentence and it has to take the same grammatical

form as its controller, the subject (Wood, 2010). This implies a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb. Learners are usually confused with the difference between singular and plural nouns on one side and plural and singular verb. Where most nouns form their plural by inflection of –s, verb on the other hand add –s to form the plural of verb in their present tense. Irregular plural have also shown to be one of the factor that causes grammatical concord errors. For instance, learners get confused with sentences like: *the syllabus covers all what is in that book.* And not *the syllabus cover all what is in that book.*

The examples below were grammatical concord errors committed in the study:

1. *They was the only school....*
2. *The teachers has many cars*
3. *The senior are asking me a question.*
4. *The compound look very neat.*
5. *The headmaster love the students*

4.1.6.2 Notional concord

Notional concord is the agreement of verbs with their subjects and pronouns with their antecedent nouns on the basis of meaning rather than grammatical form. This implies notional concord depends on the speaker's idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker. Notional concord is focusing on the meaning of the whole entity (Crystal, 2004) as in 'Seventy dollars is a lot of money'. Parrot (2000) states that plural nouns leading the inflection (-s) such as a collective noun is considered singular when it refers to a group. In this case the man takes a singular verb. For example,

1. The public is tired of demonstrations

2. The committee has accepted my proposal

In these examples, ‘public’ and committee are subjects in the sentences which refer to groups and are therefore treated as singular. This implies that the group is considered as a single undivided body. On the other hand, when a collective noun is used to refer to the individual member of a group, the noun is treated as plural.

Examples are

1. *The staff are meeting this weekend*
2. *The audience are enjoying every minutes of show.*

In the above examples, the subjects ‘staff’ and ‘audience’ are treated as plural because they refer to the individual members of the group.

Also, Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) assert that notional concord is agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for that idea. This means that notional concord refers to the agreement between subject and verb not based on number and person, but on the speaker’s perception. Therefore, the speaker chooses a singular or plural verb based on his or her own idea about number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker of the idea. Group or collective nouns such as team, crowd, audience, family, public, committee army, government, congregation and others fall into this category. So it is accepted to say

1. *My family is in Bawku.*
2. *My family are in Bawku*
3. *The government have broken all their promises.*

To them, collective nouns notionally are plural but grammatically singular. Although, singular and plural verbs are more or less interchangeable in these contexts, the choice is based, if on anything, on whether the group is being considered as a single undivided body or as a collection of individuals.

Examples of notional concord errors found in the study

1. *The audience were enjoying every minute of the show*

This is incorrect because consideration is being given to the individual reactions of the audience contrastingly; singular verbs has to be used in a sentence like; *The audience was enjoying every minute of the show*

2. *Banku and Okro stew are my favourite.*

The subject Banku and okro is a single unit so it is regarded as a singular subject. Therefore the singular verb 'is' should be selected to match with the subject.

3. *The staff was arriving separately.*

This sentence is faulty because of the use of word 'separately' that means individual staff were arriving and should take 'were'

4. *The audience were clapping together.*

This is also faulty because the use of the word 'together' that shows that all the audience clapped and therefore, should take 'was'

Learners of English often face a lot of difficulties when it comes to the use of notional concord, especially how to treat the collective nouns, since is a choice between singular and plural concord marks. It is often argued that singular forms are used when a collective is thought of as a unit and plural forms when the speaker or writer has the individual member in mind. So learners have problems deciding whether to use singular or plural forms in collective nouns.

1.1.6.3 Proximity Concord

Concord of proximity does not, however, agree with the real subject in the closest noun and the numerous of that specific noun, (Crystal, 2004). That is, it denotes agreement of the verb with a noun or pronoun that closely precedes it in preference to agreement with the head of the noun phrase. For instance, four singular nouns joined by (either, or, neither, nor, not but, and, or) take a singular verb, and if the subjects are plural, then the verbs must also be plural.

Examples of proximity concord errors identified in the study are stated below.

1. *Not gari and bean but rice are my favourite car.*
2. *The president, as well as his vice president, are in Accra*
3. *The teacher, accompanied by the students, have arrived*
4. *Either the boy or the girl are at fault*
5. *Neither the boy nor the girls likes oranges*

Table 4.1.6. A Summary of Sub Categorization of Concord Errors

| Types of errors | Frequency of errors | Percentage of errors |
|---------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Grammatical concord error | 38 | 52.3 |
| Notional concord error | 13 | 18 |
| Proximity concord error | 21 | 29.1 |

The Table 4.6 shows the different concord errors committed in the written essays of the students in this study, and these have been presented in Figure 4.1.6.

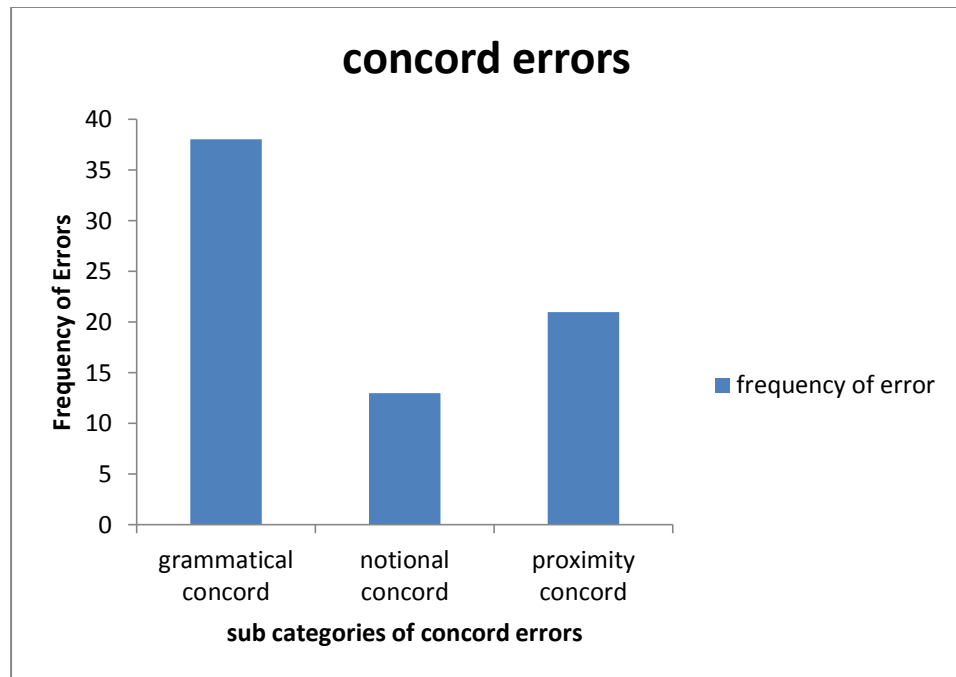


Figure 4.1.6. Frequency of sub categorization of concord errors

Figure 4.1.6 shows that students errors committed under concord is students' inability to choose between singular and plural concord marks which resulted in 72 concord errors representing four 4.5% of the total errors identified in the data.

4.1.7 Plurality

A noun is defined as a word that is used to name any person, animal, thing, idea, state, or quality (Downing & Locke, 2006). In this study, the percentage of errors in plurality is relatively low compared to other types of errors. Eighty-four (84) errors were counted in the texts. The sub-categories of plurality errors were grouped into two: those involving countable nouns and those involving mixing countable and uncountable nouns.

4.1.7.1 Errors involving countable nouns where the (s) is left out

A possible explanation of dropping (-s) students may not realize that determiners such as *some* and *many* require plural nouns and due to the lack of training or incomprehensibility of the rule such errors may occur. (Hourani, 2008).

1. *smoking can cause **many disease** like cancer... (many diseases)*
2. *they should do **some hobby**. (some hobbies)*
3. *my father likes many **peoples** (people)*
4. *the **boyes** are always happy....(boys)*
5. *many **boxs** are in the classroom. (boxes)*

4.1.7.2 Mixing between countable and uncountable nouns

The analysis revealed that the students become confused with the use of regular and irregular plural nouns. As a result, they tend to keep the irregular plural as singular when it is plural. They also appear to add (s) to uncountable nouns. A possible explanation according to Owu-Ewie(2016) is the transfer of knowledge of plural formation process from learners L1 to English language. he further states that most Ghanaian languages have the plural marker for the word ‘sheep’ so he believe learners are likely to over-generalize the rule where (s) is added to singular nouns to become plural. This means that in order to simplify things, learners often sub-categorize certain countable nouns as uncountable nouns and vice versa. Thus, the students' failure to mark plural countable nouns could probably be due to a subconscious learning strategy employed by them to lighten their memory load when managing new English data input. From the analysis students committed a lot of plurality error with a total of 84 errors representing 3.5%.

Examples:

1. *Many child are smoking now.*
2. *...with all this advices*
3. *They bought comfortable furnitures for the school*
4. *the has many infastructures*
5. *the sheeps came and destroyed the farm.*

Table 4.1.7. A Summary of Sub Categorization of plurality Errors

| Plurality errors type | Frequency of errors | Per cent (%) |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Countable nouns | 56 | 66.6 |
| Mixture of count and uncount nouns | 28 | 33.4 |
| Total | 84 | 100 |

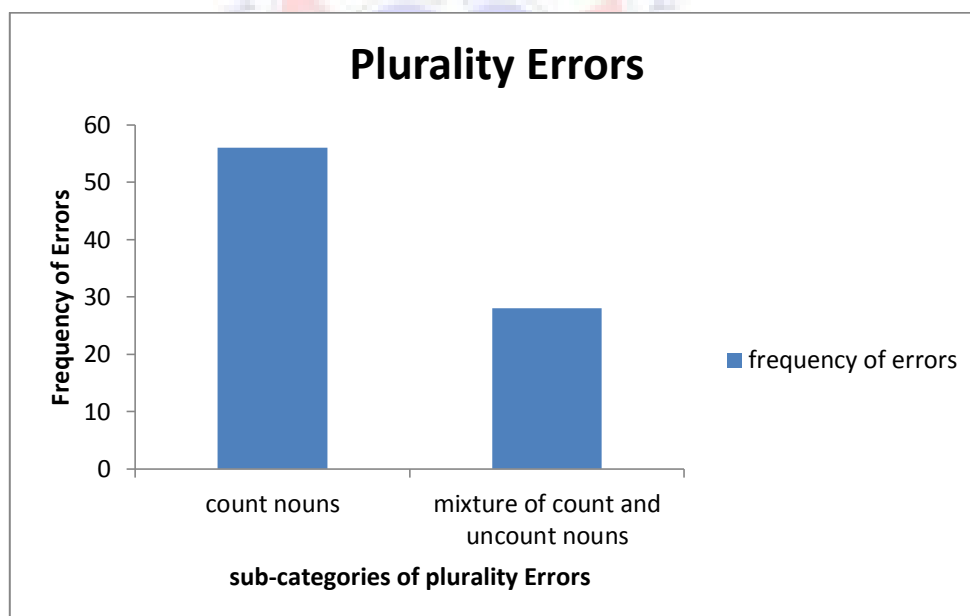


Figure 4.1.7. Frequency of sub categorization of plurality errors

4.1.8 Preposition Errors

A preposition is a word that is used to show a connection between a noun and a pronoun. Prepositions show place, time, manner, and direction or movement. A

preposition is normally followed by a noun, noun phrase or noun clause in an expression. As a closed word class, new members are not readily accepted or introduced into the group, and their roles cannot be easily relinquished to other word classes. Learners of English language have problems when it comes to correctly using prepositions in their communication.

Bond and Hayashi (2006) state that students find it difficult to memorize all the usage and meaning of the prepositions in English language, but they believe understanding of the way they function is crucial. Therefore, students need either to be immersed into an English speaking atmosphere or go through the learning process both deductive and inductive. In effect, constant communication is necessary to overcome the difficulties associated with the use of prepositions. Blom (2006) found nine prepositions that are particularly frequent in errors: to, in, at, of, for, about, on, by and with. Prepositions are classified into simple and complex prepositions. In all 68 errors representing 1.6% were committed both in simple prepositions and complex preposition as shown in Table 4.1.8.

4.1.8.1 Simple preposition

Simple prepositions are one word preposition (Estevez, Johansson, Oltersdorf, Prattala, Martinez-Gonzalez, 2010). Examples of simple prepositions are on, at to, between, behind, for and with. Fifty-two (52) simple preposition errors were found to be wrongly used by the students who took part in the study. Examples are as follows:

1. 'I prefer my school **than** any other school'
2. 'They **agree for** that argument'
3. 'The second match **was among** my school and Bawku Technical'
4. 'Yaro, don't you **remember of** seeing him'

5. 'I went **to tell to** come and see'

4.1.8.2 Complex prepositions

According to Estevez et al (2010) complex prepositions are made up of more than one word, such as 'out of' and 'in between'. Many of the students who took part in the study showed lack of understanding of the usage of complex preposition. Sixteen (16) complex prepositions errors were found to be wrongly used by the students who took part in the study. Examples:

1. '**In line for** school rules and regulations
2. 'Every student must **refrain to** breaking bounds'
3. **Because for** the boy I was punished
4. I saw the snake **in front to** the tree
5. The books were **on top for** the table.

Table 4.1.8. Sub categorization of preposition Errors

| Types of preposition | Frequency of errors | Frequency of errors |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Simple preposition | 52 | 76.4 |
| Complex preposition | 16 | 23.6 |
| Total | 68 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of prepositional errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.1.8.

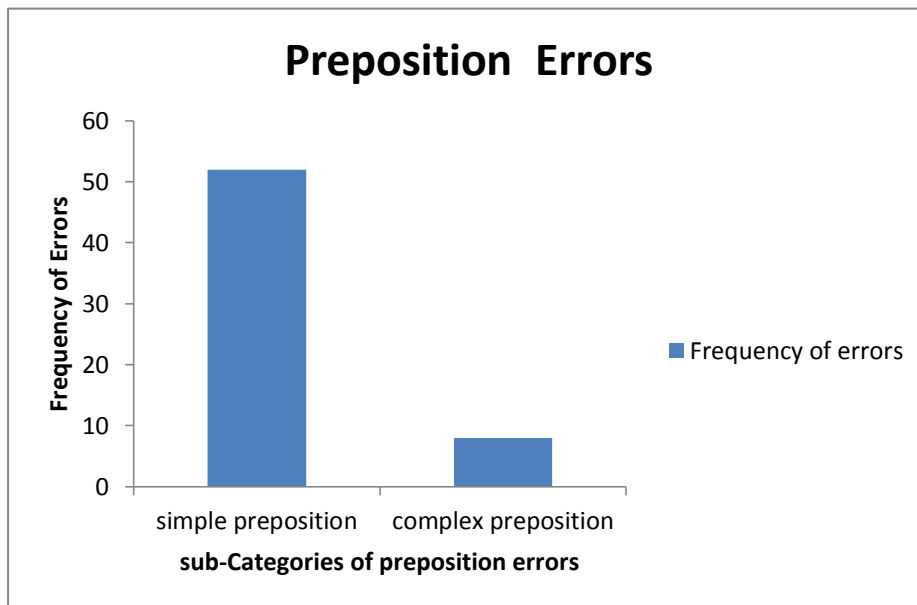


Figure 4.1.8. Frequency of prepositional errors

4.1.9 Article Errors

Articles are demonstrative adjectives which are very important in English Maddox and Scocco (2009). Article is one of the areas that learners of English as a second language have difficulties, the reason for such difficulties may be due to morphological differences of learners' first language and the English language. Learners who to part in this study omit or use articles in a situation where articles are not required or changed definite article to indefinite article, at time learners who do not know which article to use omit the articles in their essays. Buainain (2006) states that second language learners of English omit articles to simplify their task. From the study, learners' committed 36 errors representing 1.5%. The article has two types: definite article and indefinite article.

4.1.9.1 Definite article

According to Maddox & Scocco (2009), the definite article ‘the’ is usually used to point out something that has already been introduced. This can be used with either singular or plural nouns: the boy/the boys.

Example of definite article errors

1. The boys and girls. (the girls)
2. School is located in Bawku (the school..)
3. School uniform we wear is green. (the school)
4. Our dormitory is neatest in the school. (the neatest)
5. When teacher entered we stood up. (the teacher)

4.1.9.2 Indefinite Article

The indefinite article is used to introduce something unspecific, or something being introduced for the first time (Maddox & Scocco, 2009). The indefinite article has two forms; ‘A’ is used before words beginning with consonant sound or an aspirated ‘h’: a car, a lamb, a hope, a habit, a hotel. ‘AN’ is used before words beginning with vowel sound: an ape, an image, an untruth, an honourable man. The indefinite article A(AN) derives from a word meaning ‘one’. It is used only with singular nouns.

Examples of indefinite article errors

1. *I a very*
2. *A students and their chairs*
3. *A school buses that...*
4. *A hour ago he came*
5. *And he was told an both*

Table 4.1.9. Sub categorization of Errors of Article

| Type of Article Error | Frequency of error | Per cent (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Definite | 10 | 27.8 |
| Indefinite | 26 | 72.2 |
| Total | 36 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of article errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure

4.1.9:

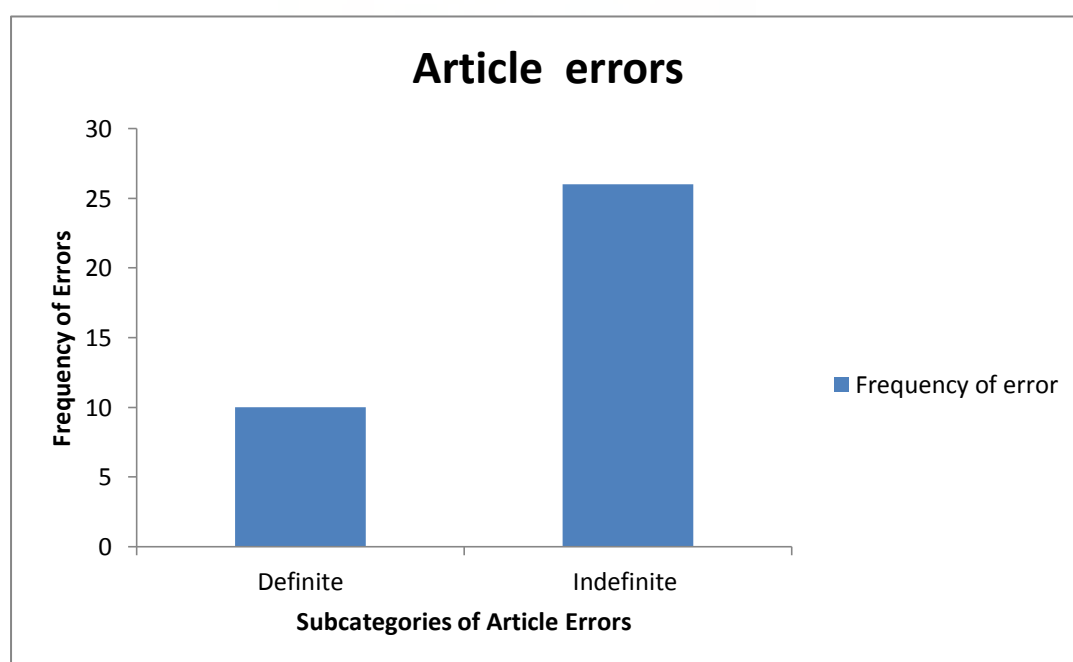


Figure 4.1.9. Frequency of article errors

4.1.10 Adjective Errors

An adjective is a word use with a noun to provide more information' (Yule, 2006:237). Also the term adjective is defined as a word used to describe a noun or pronoun. In grammar, we say that an adjective modifies a noun. Adjectives can be used to describe a lot of things; physical, size, age, shape, colour, material as well as abstract things like opinion, origin and purpose. (Quagie,2010). Adjectives errors

recorded 28 representing 1.2% with irregular adjective form recording eighteen (18) errors and regular adjective form recording ten (10) errors.

4.1.10.1 Regular forms

The regular forms of adjectives are positive, comparative and superlative. Each of these types has their own forms we use "er" for the comparative and "est" for the superlative of one syllable adjective; they are called short adjectives (Abdalla, 2014). The following examples clarify this usage:

- i. Ali is tall, Huda is taller than Ali, and Ahmad is the tallest one.
- ii. My house is a big and John's house is bigger than mine.

When we add "er" or "est" to the adjectives there are sometimes changes in spelling, as it shown in the second example above. For the word begins with consonant and ends with consonant after vowel, we double consonant (g) then added "er". We also use an article "the" before the superlatives. Moreover, adjectives of three or more syllables take "more" in the comparatives and "most" in the superlatives. Examples:

- i. Exciting - more exciting - most exciting.
- ii. Interesting - more interesting - most interesting.

Students should not use "more" before an adjective that already has "the" or "er" endings or "most" before an adjective that already has "the – est" endings. (Beaumont, et al, 1998:199).

Examples of regular adjectives form errors:

1. She is the fater girl in class
2. The school is more neater than my former school
3. The school compound is biger than our school

4. I was the most happiest student that day
5. My father's bus was more longer than our school bus.

4.1.10.2 Irregular forms:

Some very common adjectives have irregular forms; in this case, we do not use the same positive adjectives in comparatives or superlatives (Abdalla, 2014).

There are some changes happen as the following adjectives:

- i. Good - better (than) - (the) best (of all)
- ii. Bad - worse (than) - (the) worst(of all)
- iii. Little - less (than) - (the) least (of all)
- iv. Much/many - more (than) - (the) most (of all)

Examples of irregular adjective errors:

1. *In adding more bad students were sacked*
2. *Your school is worsen than my school*
3. *The baddest place in town.*
4. *I was the best between us*
5. *When I was sick I ate little as compare to now.*

Table 4.10. Sub categorization of Errors of Adjectives

| Adjective form | Frequency of error | Per cent (%) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Regular Adjectives | 10 | 35.8 |
| Irregular Adjectives | 18 | 64.2 |
| Total | 28 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of adjective errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.10

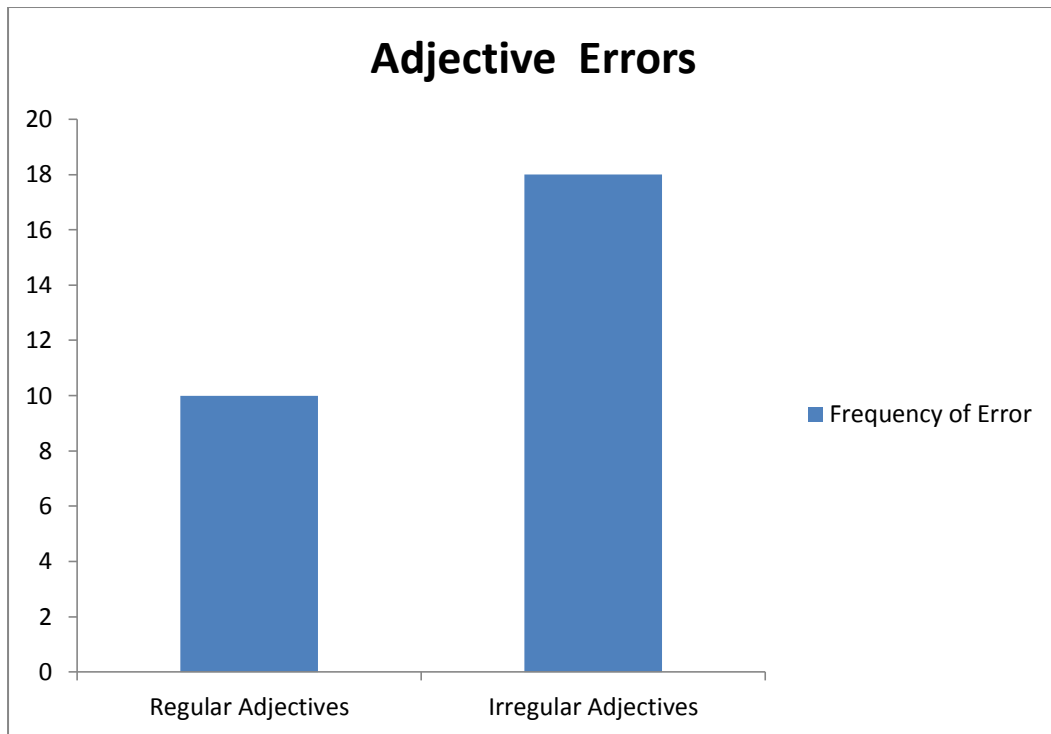


Figure 4.10. Frequency of Adjective errors

4.1.11 Pronoun Errors

Pronouns are used to replace nouns in order to avoid repetition. Pronouns are grouped into several types such as personal, demonstrative, indefinite, possessive, and reflexive (Quagie, 2010). In the study, students made errors in indefinite and demonstrative only.

4.1.11.1 Indefinite pronouns

Indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific thing, place, or person (Quagie, 2010). There are many of them including anyone, anywhere, everyone, none, and someone. The two words forming the indefinite pronouns are usually not separated except *no one* but these were the difficulties learners encountered.

1. 'Some body' came to meet me
2. *Some one* was inside the dormitory
3. 'Every one' was happy to meet the headmaster.

4. *Any where I went the senior wanted to punish me*
5. *Some thing wanted to happen to that boy*

4.11.2 Demonstrative pronouns

According to Quagie (2010), demonstrative pronouns are used to stand for a noun and separate it from other entities. There are four demonstrative pronouns: this, that, these and those. Generally we use ‘this’ and ‘these’ to indicate items near the speaker, and ‘that’ and ‘those’ for items farther away.

Example of demonstrative pronoun errors

1. *This boys are doing well*
2. *These is the school I will like to attend*
3. *Those book is for me*
4. *That men came to the school*
5. *This are the girl who punished me*

Table 4.11. Sub categorization of Errors of Pronouns

| Pronoun type | Frequency of Error | Per cent (%) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Indefinite pronoun | 19 | 73 |
| Demonstrative Pronoun | 7 | 27 |
| Total | 26 | 100 |

The table represents the sub categorization of Pronoun errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.11.

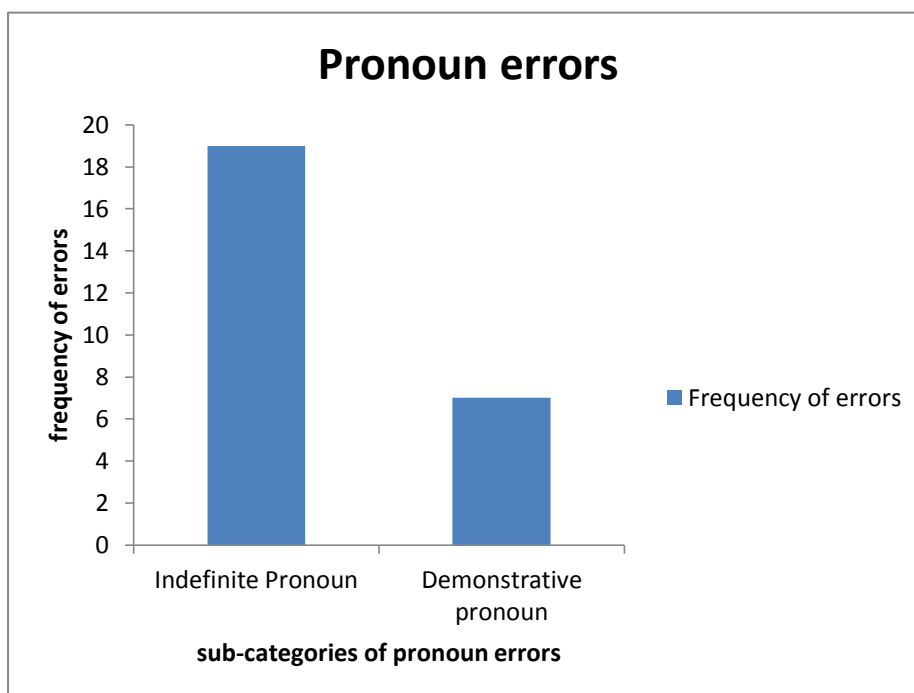


Figure 4.11. Frequency of pronoun errors

It was evidence learners who took part in the study struggles with the use of indefinite adjectives and demonstrative pronouns. Students committed a total of 26 pronoun errors representing 1.2% of the total categories of errors with indefinite pronouns recording 19 errors and demonstrative pronouns recording 7 errors.

4.12 Wrong Choice of Words

Wrong choice of words is a situation where a particular word which is not supposed to be used in a particular context is used. Hourani (2008) believes both formal and informal wrong choice of words are due to poor learning and incomplete rule application. Wrong choice of words affects meaning and creates confusion to readers and listeners. In the study the researcher recorded seventy (70) words which were poorly chosen representing six per cent (6%) of the total errors committed in the study.

Examples:

1. *'I want to take about'*
2. *'Who do not listen to advise'*
3. *'They all when together'*
4. *'We normally play games after school ours'*
5. *'Open to hear from you soon'*

Table 4.12. Sub categorization of wrong choice of words errors

| Type of wrong word choice | Number of Errors | Per cent |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Formal | 54 | 77.1 |
| Informal | 16 | 22.9 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

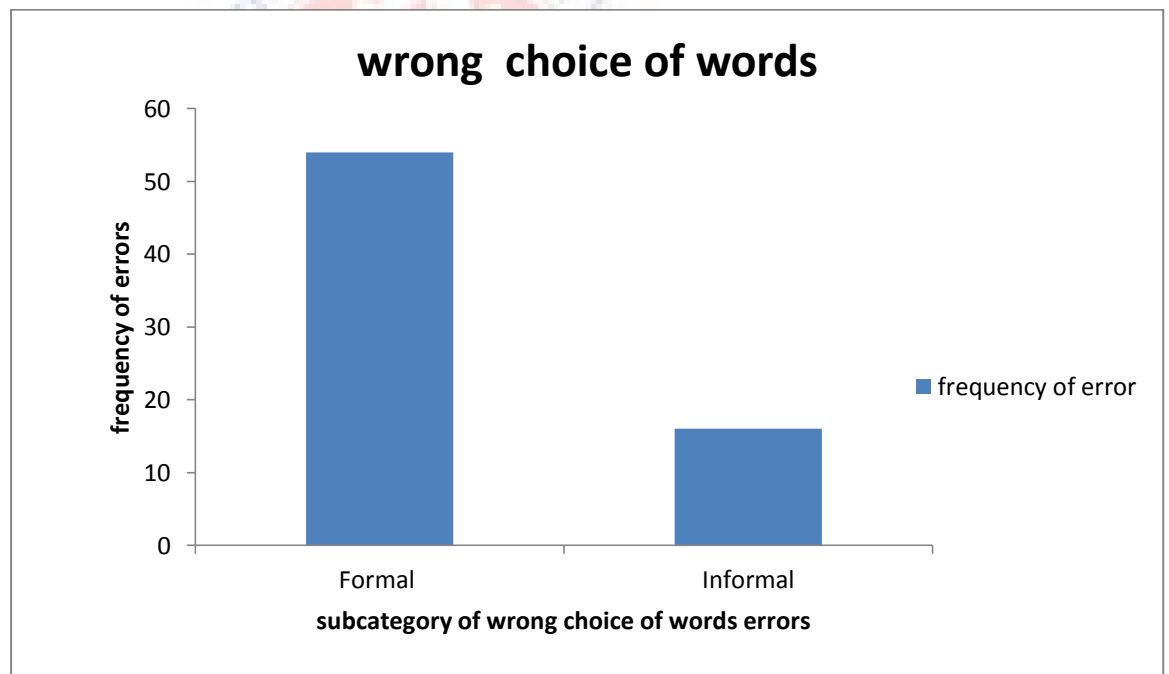


Figure 4.12. Frequency of wrong choice of words errors

6.4.13. Summary

From the categories of errors discussed, spellings is the highest error committed by the 120 students who took part in the study, 946 spelling errors were

committed , representing 40% of the total errors committed in the study. Second in the hierarchy is poor organization with 316 errors representing 13.3%. Third is the punctuation error, with 230 errors giving us a percentage of 10%. Capitalisation errors occupied the fourth position with 212 errors representing 9%. Tense and choice of words place fifth and sixth with 180 and 120 errors respectively, representing 7.6% and 5.1%. Concord is the seventh highest with 106 errors representing 4.5%. Following closely is plurality error with 84 errors representing 3.6%. Preposition errors is 40 representing 1.6%. While article errors were 36 each representing 1.5%. Second from the bottom are adjectives with 28 errors representing 1.2%. The least occurring error is pronouns with 26 errors representing 1.1%.

Table 4.13 Summary of Error Categories Found in the Study

| Error Categories | Total | Per cent |
|---------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1.spelling | 982 | 41.5 |
| 2. Poor organization/word order | 316 | 13.3 |
| 3. Capitalization | 212 | 9 |
| 4. Punctuation | 230 | 10 |
| 5. Concord | 106 | 4.5 |
| 6. Choice of words(register) | 120 | 5.1 |
| 7. Tense | 180 | 7.6 |
| 8. Pronoun | 26 | 1.2 |
| 9. Preposition | 40 | 1.6 |
| 10. Plurality | 84 | 3.5 |
| 11. Article | 36 | 1.5 |
| 12. Adjective | 28 | 1.2 |
| Total | 2360 | 100 |

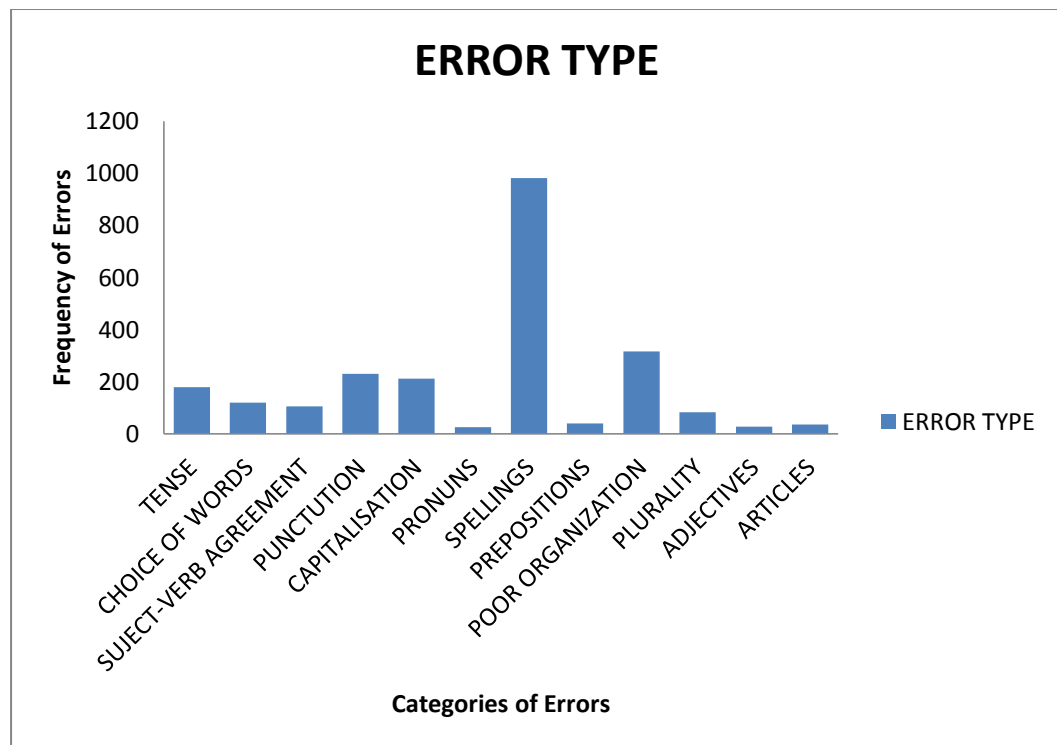


Figure 4.13. Frequency of summary of various error types

4.2 Causes of Students Errors

Brown (2000) lists interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies as the causes of errors in learners written essays. According to Owu-Ewie (2016) interlingual errors occur due to native language being the only previous source the learner can draw from. While the intralingual error occur when learners begin to acquire new structures in the target language.

Through observations and feedback from the students' written essays, the researcher identified errors caused by the students' attitude towards learning, errors caused by teachers attitude towards teaching, errors caused by social networking sites, errors caused by difference in structure between Learners L1 and English, lack of practice, complexity of the English language and context of teaching.

4.2.1 Errors Caused by Students attitude towards learning

Students hardly read for pleasure during their spare time. You scarcely see students sitting in classroom or any quiet place just to read, the only time one can see students reading is when examination is approaching. It will be very difficult for any learner of English as a second language to increase his or her stock of vocabulary if that learner fails to read a lot of storybooks and newspapers just for fun. This position is supported by Nation (2001) who state that good reading habits by language learners in a meaningful context can promote better vocabulary memorization. The unfortunate habit of students not reading has resulted in their inability to express themselves both in written and oral.

Another troubling issue observed by the researcher during the study is learners medium of communication, rarely will you see students speaking the English language in their day -to- day activities such engaging in sports, going for their meals and going to fetch water. The languages the research observed them speak are the *Kusaal*, *Moor*, and *Hausa*, and sometimes the *Twi* language. The only time the students speak the English language is when a teacher is in the classroom teaching or when they meet a stranger who they think do not understand the local languages spoken in the area. The situation is even worse when these students are outside the school premises for any co-curricular activity, they will barely speak the English language.

Additional concern, apart from the above-mentioned, is student's poor habit of listening to news, despite the importance of news to the development of second language learners' competence; the students do not like listening to news both on radio and on television. The only time you will see students crowding the television

centre is when there is a football match. This informs the cause of their weakness in pronunciation and spelling. Societies like debate and drama help in language development yet these societies are those with fewer numbers in the school, the researcher observed. Despite the important role the English dictionary plays for effectively and efficiently learning of the language 98% of the students do possess or use the English dictionary. Without the use of the dictionary, learners will have limited vocabulary and this will eventually affect their writing abilities. Thus, learners use approximation and transfers to make up for the absence of the appropriate L2 declarative knowledge necessary in order to realize a given communication goal.

4.2.2 Errors Caused by Teachers Attitude towards Teaching

Taking into account the data obtained from the responses of the students in the essays they wrote, it has been found that methods of teaching plays a role in the weakness in the English writing skill. This opinion is supported by Kaweera (2013) who views students' errors as a result of inadequacy of teaching. Most of the English language teachers the researcher contacted complained a lot on learners' inability to write error-free and meaningful essays but none suggested how to help learners to overcome such error. They only gave reasons why learners' performance was not encouraging in the English language which includes learners' being lazy to learn. Others also told me that some of them after returning the exam papers, they generally speak about the mistakes and errors made by the students, and merely supply some corrections. This method is not ideal because students are often primarily concerned about their grades and so are not concerned about specific mistakes and errors they make, nor do they discuss the causes of these mistakes and consequently how to correct them.

Again, most language teachers are not effective in class because they are usually not well- prepared; some hardly give exercises, and do not even correct the errors of learners when marking their essays. The cumbersome nature of essay assessment and evaluation and the large class size of most Ghanaian schools have also resulted in English language teachers not properly assessing their students. It is very disturbing to note that learners get assessed on essay writing only thrice a year and nine times in their entire stay at the senior high school level.

4.2.3 Errors Caused by Social Networking Sites

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007) social networking sites are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. These sites are used to interact with friends, peers and others that are found in groups on these sites. The sharing of information ranges from news, debates, gossips, feelings or statement of mind, opinions, research etc. Social media and its manufacturing and shortening of words has also contributed to the errors learners commit. According to Nokia (2002) caution must be exercised in encouraging students' use of social media because it was affecting the standards of the English language. One has to agree with Nokia because the rate at which social media is affecting student ability to write is very alarming. Students no longer write correct sentences and do not spell correctly due to the influence of the social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Messenger, WhatsApp application among others.

4.2.4 Errors Caused by differences in structure between L1 and English

Most of the spelling errors identified were due to differences in phonological structure between the learners' L1 and the English language. The difference in phonological structure errors occur as a result of different articulation that occurs as a result of students' use of a particular pronunciation. The irregularities and inconsistency of correspondence between letters and sounds are problematic to many students. Also, the different syntactic structure that exists between the students L1 and the English language was identified to be a cause of most faulty and incoherent sentences the students committed during the study. Ngangbam (2016) believes syntax complexity is one of the most difficult structural elements for English as second language learners. Finally, the difference in morphological structure that exists between the learners' L1 and English cause learners to commit inflectional errors such as: ..ed, ..s, and ..ing in the study. This is because learners do not possess consolidated knowledge of the English grammatical rules.

4.2.5 Lack of Practice

According to Davies (1998, p. 25), 'writing is essentially a creative process and good writers must learn to communicate their ideas clearly to an unseen audience'. This takes a lot of practice. Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 6) believe that writing does not come naturally but rather gained through "continuous effort and much practice". In addition, learners must take the responsibility for their learning if meaningful learning is to take place. He also adds that the best ways to learn any skill would be to practise it. To become a good driver, the best way is to drive. Similarity, to become a proficient writer, the best way is again to write a lot. Furthermore, Hedge (1988, p. 11) states that "my own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer, a student needs to write a lot". It can be concluded that lack of

continuous writing activities may lead to students committing more errors in the writing process.

4.2.6 The Complexity of English Language

Closely connected with the context of teaching is the fact that English itself is complex and irregular and does not easily give in to study by making hard and fast rules and regulations. Owing to this, it is difficult to decide where a supposed law of English study ends. According to Tsadidey (1996, p. 6) “there are many exceptions to the rules and a teacher who sets out to teach English by making hard and fast rules will end up contradicting himself by the end of the day”. So in the study learners overgeneralised some of the English grammatical rules.

4.2.7 Context of Teaching

Learner’s errors in writing were caused by the context in which the lessons of language teachers are delivered. Context of teaching refers to a classroom situation whereby the teacher or the textbooks lead learners to make faulty hypotheses about the target language.(Owu-Ewie,2016). Owu- Ewie term it ‘false concept’ or ‘induced error’. There are some situations where students make errors because of wrong instructions or explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or word in the textbook or wrong pattern in a drill. Some teachers are not competent enough to teach the English language, this can give rise to certain dialects that may itself be a source of error.

4.2.8 Summary

The analysis revealed that errors in the learners’ essays could be traced to many sources such as: poor reading culture among students, the learners’ attitude in exposing themselves to language materials, lack of language laboratories in schools

and the structure difference between L1 of learners and English language. It was also revealed that social networking sites do affect learners adequately in their study the English language. Lack of writing practice, complexity of the English language, context of teaching and teachers feedback were the other causes identified to be the causes of students' weakness in writing error-free essays.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the different types of errors learners of English commit in writing. The error types discussed are spellings, organisation, capitalization, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, choice of words, tense, pronouns, preposition, plurality, articles and adjectives. The discussion clearly indicated that spelling errors were the most committed errors by the students who took part in the study. This obviously showed that most learners of English have problems when it comes to spelling. Other areas where learners also performed poorly were organisation, punctuation, tense, subject-verb agreement, capitalisation and choice of words. Whenever these types of errors are committed, it is obvious that such essays will make little meaning hence this account for the bad performance of students in English language in all levels of our education.

The causes of the errors were also discussed. Poor reading culture among students, the learners' attitude in exposing themselves to language materials, lack of language laboratories in schools, the structure difference between L1 of learners and English language, large class size, inadequate professional English language teachers, social networking sites and lack of constant writing practice were identified to be causes of learners difficulties in writing good compositions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the analysis and the interpretation of the results. The research questions on the types of errors students of Bawku SHS commit have been answered. Using essays written by students, it has been shown that students usually make a lot of errors in their writings. A qualitative interpretative design was chosen for the analysis of errors in the essays of 120 students from Bawku Senior High School in the Bawku Municipality in the Upper East Region of Ghana. In all, the analysis revealed that students committed various errors. A summary of the findings of each type of error identified is presented in the next section. Based on this, the discussion on the causes of errors are also presented. The third section discusses the pedagogical implications of the result; the role of teachers in language learning as well as the role of learners in learning the English language. The final section presents suggestions for future research on other aspects of the English language.

5.1 Summary of Findings

A total of 120 essays were analyzed. The findings show spelling errors as the commonest errors committed by the students. The findings of the twelve (12) categories of errors are presented as follows: Spellings was the highest error committed by the 120 students who took part in the study, 946 spelling errors were committed (Table 4.1), representing 40% of the total errors committed in the study. The study revealed a number of misspellings in the area of consonant substitution, vowel substitution, vowel omission, consonant omission, inflectional ending, letter reversals, and double consonants, space inaccuracy, and doubling of letters. The research findings suggest that participants have poor spelling abilities. In addition,

some of the spelling errors suggest that students have insufficient knowledge of word formation. The analysis also suggests that students are careless when writing in addition to being overconfident on the when writing.

Second in the hierarchy was poor word order with 316 errors recorded representing 11% of the total errors in the study. The study revealed that poor word order errors originate from interlingual and intralingual transfers. The third type of error was the punctuation error, with 230 errors representing 10% of the total errors committed by the 120 learners (Table 4.3). The common punctuation errors found in the study were wrong use of full stop, comma, question mark and apostrophe marks. Capitalisation errors occupied the fourth position. The study recorded 226 capitalisation errors representing a percentage rate of 9% of the total errors committed. The capitalisation errors were grouped under proper nouns errors, first person singular pronoun error, names of days of the week and months of the year, historical events, first letter of salutation, and first letter of a complete sentence and names of subjects or disciplines (Table 4.4). Tense errors committed by learners in the study were 180 errors giving us a rate of 7.6%. The commonly misused tense in the study were present simple, present perfect, present progressive, present perfect progressive, past simple, past perfect, past progressive and simple future. Wrong choice of words were sixth on the ladder with 120 errors representing 5.1%

Concord was the seventh highest in terms of the errors committed with 106 concord errors representing 4.5% of the total errors in the data. The concord errors were grouped under grammatical concord errors, proximity concord errors and notional concord errors. Although some of the students had some of their concord expressions correct, the analysis revealed a lack of full understanding regarding

agreement between the subject and its verb with respect to time and number. This lack of understanding may be due to the over simplification strategy and over generalization of the rules of English. Concord has a lot of rules governing its usage and the results suggest that students devise their own way of applying them to cover their laziness. Following closely was plurality errors with 84 errors representing 3.6%. Plurality errors were grouped under errors involving countable nouns where the (s) is left out and errors involving mixture between countable and uncountable nouns

Wrong choice of word also recorded 70 errors representing 6% of the total errors committed in the study. Preposition errors were 68 errors representing 1.6%. From the analysis, learners committed 36 errors with the use of the article representing 1.5%. The article errors were categorised under definite articles and indefinite articles. Definite article recorded 10 errors while indefinite article recorded 26 errors. The English article is considered one of the most difficult obstacles that second language learners contend with. It becomes even a problem if the first language has no similarities regarding the use of articles. Most Ghanaian languages do not employ the use of definite and indefinite article system unlike in English. Hence, the difficulties with its usage by second language learners.

Errors in the use of adjectives follow article errors with 28 errors representing 1.2%. Irregular adjective forms recorded 18 errors while regular adjective form recorded 10 errors. The least error committed was pronoun error with a total of 26 errors representing 1.2%. Indefinite pronouns recorded 19 errors and demonstrative pronouns recorded 7 errors. It is evident that the prescriptive rule regarding the indefinite pronoun is a challenge to learners. Learners sometimes have difficulties regarding put the two words which form the indefinite pronoun together.

Demonstrative pronoun also poses challenge to learners especially ‘this’ and ‘these’ learners usually interchange them.

5.2 Causes of Errors

Broadly, errors in the writings of the students were caused by interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. (Brown, 2000). Carelessness and learners’ perceptions also greatly contributed to errors recorded in the essays. Errors are also said to be caused by students’ attitude towards learning. Students do not like reading; they only read when it is time for examinations. This makes it difficult to build their vocabulary. Another cause of the learners’ errors was their failure to practise writing. The analysis revealed that the only time students get to write essay is the end of term examination.

Teachers’ attitude and competence were also identified as one of the causes of errors. Some English teachers are sometimes not well prepared before teaching resulting in providing the students with wrong information. Furthermore, social networking sites such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Twitter contribute to the errors students committed. This was mostly manifested in shortening of words as well as the formation of new words. Structural differences between learners’ native languages and the English language also contributed to the errors the students committed. Ngangbam (2006) observes that the structural complexity between learners’ native language and English language is one of the most difficult structural elements for the learner of English as a second language.

5.3 Implication for Teaching

After investigating the errors learners of Bawku SHS commit in their essays, it is necessary to suggest some implications that these results may have on English

language teaching. The pedagogical implications are significant to syllabus designers, teachers and learners, and textbook writers. There is nowhere in the English language syllabus where errors are touched on. As such, teachers turn to ignore these critical areas, even though attention is needed in this area. The researcher, therefore, suggests that in designing or reviewing subsequent English syllabus in Ghana, there is the need for syllabus developers to include them in the syllabus so that teachers will help their students overcome them. Again, it is also very necessary to note that textbook writers have a role to play as far as what students study is concerned. It is thus suggested that once the curriculum is modified, writers need to include error types like spelling and word order to enable the students to avoid such errors. Furthermore, a modification of the curriculum and inclusion of errors in their textbooks will only yield desired results if teachers teach these topics in English lessons.

5.3.1 The Role of the Teacher in Language Teaching

The role of the basic and secondary school teachers in laying a solid foundation for the acquisition of proficiency in English cannot be overemphasized. There must be a deliberate effort to improve on the standard of teachers of English language. It is therefore suggested that they should be sent for regular in-service training, seminars and conferences. The syllabi for such programmes must be structured in such a way that all the aspects of the language which pose great difficulty to students would be taught thoroughly. Teachers might want to listen to and read good literature. This is because in a language learning situation, adequate exposure to the language leads to efficient and effective use. As much as possible, teachers must be adequately equipped to face the challenges of teaching English.

Azikiwe (1998) advises that English teachers must have knowledge of the structure of the students' mother tongue to be able to identify its structural qualities which might be different from those of English. This implies that the teacher should have knowledge of the dominant first language spoken in the area where he teaches so that he would be able to do a simple comparative analysis of the two. This will help him/her to identify the possible areas of difficulty and ease in learning the target language. The learner of English is at the centre of the teaching and learning process. The role of the language teacher, according to Obi (2009), is to guide the learner to inculcate basic language skills and acquire communicative competence.

To achieve this, teachers must try and be flexible in delivering their lessons. They should give sufficient attention to the teaching of the rules of concord, spellings, tenses, word order, punctuation, and capitalisation in both basic and high school. Structural drills are recommended if students are to master the compatibility of words in sentences. Teachers can assess the students' knowledge by giving frequent class exercises on lexis and structure, spellings, as well as on essay writing. Essay writing would help students apply the rules of grammar, which they usually learn in isolation. The results of the assessment would guide the teachers in the course of remedial teaching.

Finally, it is advised that teachers of English in tertiary institutions must give adequate attention to the teaching of difficult areas in the language. When this is successfully done, it will not only bridge the gap created by inadequate teaching and learning in basic and secondary schools, it will also raise the level of sophistication of students in the language. With this, they can write meaningful essays and use skills in the language.

5.4.2 The Role of the Learners of English

Bearing in mind that the success of any learning depends largely on the learner's attitude towards what is learnt, a learner of English should be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards the language. Positive attitude would raise a learner's level of motivation and consequently, his attainment of proficiency in the English language. Motivation could come through extensive reading. The onus of making the students read lies with parents and teachers. However, teachers should be wary of the recommended texts because some of them are replete with grammatical errors. By reading books written by English language experts, students would gradually acquire the rules that guide the grammar of the language. This would eventually enhance their communicative competence. Furthermore, learners should be made to recognize their incompetence in English language as a reflection of the general problem facing the use of English in the Ghanaian society. This will motivate them to make efforts to overcome them.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

The essence of error analysis is to apply the knowledge gained from the analysis to the teaching and learning process. A good number of previous research on error analysis in writing tends to analyse learners' errors in all the skills. This method has a shortfall in giving detailed attention to different types or categories of errors committed by users of English as well as their causes. The researcher thus recommends that distinct linguistic errors committed by learners such as spellings, punctuations, concord, confusion in the use of homonyms, use of colloquial expressions in formal writing, wrong use of tense, wrong use of adverbials, structural ambiguity and other related aberrations be singled out and given detailed attention in further research on error analysis. The exposure given to these areas would be of

immense help in English language pedagogy. Further research work is also recommended on errors analysis in writing in English on a wider scope. It could be done by covering all the junior high schools and senior high schools in the Bawku municipality and beyond.

5.5 Conclusion

In all, the ultimate aim of this research work was to evaluate errors in the written essays of Bawku Senior High School students. Students written scripts were used to analyse the types of errors committed by the students. The study identified errors spelling, concord, tense, word order, capitalisation, and punctuation, choice of words, pronoun, preposition, plurality, article, and adjective errors. The analysis also revealed that the most frequently committed error was spellings, followed by word order errors, capitalisation errors, punctuation errors, concord errors, wrong choice of words, tense errors, pronoun errors, preposition errors, errors in the use of plurals, article and adjective errors. Based on the results, teachers are encouraged to be conversant with the native language of learners and have adequate training in second language teaching approaches, strategies and methods. This will help learners to minimise the errors they usually create.

REFERENCES

- Abdalla, M.A.I.(2014). *Problems facing EFL students identifying and using adjective*.
Retrieved from <http://repository.sustech.edu/handle/123456789/10430>
- AbiSamra, N. (2003). *An analysis of errors in Arabic speakers' English writings*.
Retrieved from <http://abisamra03.tripod.com/nada/languageacq-erroranalysis.html>
- Adejara, R. A. (1996). *Tertiary English Grammar*. Lagos: Difamo Books.
- Aiyewumi, M. et al (2001). *Remedial English for Professional Students*. Kaduna.
Lantern
- Alamin, A (2012). *Syntactic and Punctuation errors*. *Journal of English language teaching*. Retrieved from [http:// www. ccenet.org/elt](http://www.ccnnet.org/elt).
- Alfaki, I. (2015). *University students writing problems: diagnosis and remedy*.
International Journal of English language Teaching. Retrieved
from [http://www. eajournal .org](http://www.eajournal.org).
- Amuzu, E. K. (2016). *Errors on Ghanaian students' written English*: Legon. Ghana.
- Azikiwe, U. (1998). *Language Teaching and Learning*. Onitsha: Africana First.
- Bakuuro, J. (2015). *A study of concord in English among students of Islamic Senior High, Wa and Wa Senior High School*. University of Education, Winneba.
(Unpublished thesis)
- Baldah, F. (1997). *Good English: An Encyclopedia of English Grammar and Correct Usage*. Nimo: Rex Charles and Patrick.
- Bamgbose, A. (1976). *Mother Tongue Education: The West African Experience*.
London: Hodder and Stoughton.

- Bancha, W. (2014). *What causes spelling errors of Thai EFL students*. Retrieved from https://research.ncl.ac.uk/ARECLS/volume_10/bancha_vol10.pdf
- Bartholomae, D. (1980). *Study of error. College Composition and Communication*. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/ac52>
- Beaumont, D.C. (1998). *The Heinemann ELT English grammar*. Macmillan.
- Bennui, P. (2008). *A study of L1 interference the writing of Thai EFL students*. Retrieved from <http://journals.melta.org.my/index.php/majer/article/view/204>
- Benson, C. (2002). *Transfer Cross Linguistic Influence*. Retrieved from <http://www.mofet.macam.ac.il/amitim/iun/Documents/ItamatShatz27-6-2016.pdf>
- Blanche, M. (2006). *Research in Practice*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press
- Blom, L. (2006). *Swedish problems with preposition*. Jonkonping university.
- Boyd D.M. and Elleson N. B.(2007). Societies through social network sites. *Journal of Computer-mediated communication*. pp 210-230.
- Brown D.H. (2007). *First language acquisition principles of language learning and teaching*. 5th ed. Pearson. New York.
- Burns, N and Grove, S. (1993). *The practice of nursing research: Conduct, critique &utilization*. Philadelphia. Sanders.
- Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skills*. London: Longman Press.

- Chih, H. H. (2013). *Revisiting causes of grammatical errors for ESL teachers*. Retrieved from [http:// www. Interesjournals.org/ER](http://www.Interesjournals.org/ER)
- Chokwe, J.M. (2015). *Students' and tutors' perception of feedback on academic essays in an open and distance learning context*. Retrieved from <https://openpraxis.org/index.php/OpenPraxis/article/view/15>
- Collins, L. (2002). *The role of L1 influence and lexical aspect in the acquisition of temporal morphology*. *Language Learning*. retrieved from <http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/PDF/March-2011-sz.pdf>
- Connor, U. & Kaplan, R. (1987). *Writing across languages: Analysis of L2 text*. Addison-Wesley.
- Cooley T. (1992). *Guide to Writing*, London: Norton Company
- Corder, S. P. (1981). *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research 3rd ed*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Croll, J and E, Willson. (1995). *Acts of Teaching. How to Teach Writing*. Englewood: Teacher Idea Express.
- Crystal, D. (2004). *Rediscover Grammar*. Harlow: Longman.
- Dadzie, G and Bosiwah, L. (2015) *Spelling errors among junior high school students in the Cape CoastMetropolis*. Retrieved from <http://files.aiscience.org/journal/article/pdf/70360012.pdf>

- De Vos A. S. et al (2005). *Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions*. 3rd Ed. Hatfield: Van Schaik
- Downing, A. & Locke, P. (2006). *English Grammar. A university Course*. 2nd ed. Routledge. New York
- Eckersley, E. C. (1979). *A Comprehensive English Grammar for Foreign Students*. London: Longman.
- Ellis, R. (1985). *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English.
- Ellis, R. and Barkhuizen, G. (2005). *Analysing Learner Language*. Oxford: Oxford University press
- Erdogan, V. (2005).. *Mersin University Journal of the Faculty of Education*. pp. 261-270.
- Estevez, V.C. (2010). *Identification of the errors regarding prepositions usage in students of the upper intermediate English course from the ELT program*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573230.pdf>
- Eyisi, J.(2006). *A Grammar of English: The Student's Companion*. Awka: Anthony Publishers.
- Fagerberg, I.(2006). *English spelling in Swedish secondary schools: Students' attitudes and Performance*. Karlstads. University Press.
- Ferris, D. (2002). *Treatment of error in second language writing*. Michigan, The University of Michigan Press.

- Grab, W. and Kalan, R. (1996). *Theory and Practice of Writing*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.
- Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Group.
- Ubahakwe , D. (1979). *The Teaching of English Studies: Readings for Colleges and Universities*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Hengwichitkul, L. (2006). *An analysis of errors in English abstracts translated by Thai university graduate students*. Bangkok. Srinakharinwirot University.
- Hourani, T.M.Y. (2008). *An analysis of the common grammatical errors in the English writing* <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n1p67><http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/thesis>
- Huang, J.(2002).*Error Analysis in English Teaching: A Review of Studies*, Journal of Chung – San Girls' Senior High School pp. 19-34.
- James, C. (1998). *Errors in Language Learning and Use*. London: Longman.
- James, C. (2000). *Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis*. Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Limited
- James, C. (2001). *Errors in language learning and use: Exploring error analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Jarvis, S. (2000). *Methodological rigor in the study of transfer: Identifying L1 influence in the interlanguage lexicon*. Retrieved from <http://www.ohio.edu/people/jarvis/cv.pdf>

- Jenwitheesuk, T. (2009). *A study of persisted syntactic errors in writing of the 3rd year students of English for international communication program*. Paper presented at International Conference on the Role of University in Hands-on Education. Thailand. Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna.
- Jiang, M. C. (1995). *An analysis of Chinese ESL learners' errors in prepositions*. Journal of Communication. Retrieved from <http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol02/08/06.pdf>
- Kaweera, C. (2013). *Writing error: A review of interlingual and intralingual interference in EFL context*. *English Language Teaching*. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n7p9>
- Khanom, R. (2014). Error analysis in writing task of higher secondary level of Bangladesh. *International journal of education*. (2)1: 231-258.
- Khansir, A. A. (2013). *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*. pp. 363-370.
- Kothari, C. (2008). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. Victoria: Open Press,
- Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers*. Accra-New Town: Emmpong Press
- Leki, I. (1990). *Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Maddox, M. and Scocco D. (2009). *Basic English Grammar*. Daily writing tips. Retrieved from <http://www.dailywritingtips.com>.

Mahmoud, A. (2011). *Interlingual Transfer of Idioms by Arab Learners of English*.

Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/>

Maree, J. (2007). *First Steps In Research*. Pretoria :Van Schaik Publishers.

Mireku-Gyimah, P. B. (2014). *Journal of ELT and Applied Linguistics*. Pp. 23-46.

Mitchell, R. and Myles, M. (2004). *Second language learning theories*. New York: Hodder Arnold.

Moskel, B. M. &Leyden, J. A. (2000). *Virtual Education: cases in learning and teaching Technologies*. Ideal Group Inc.

Msanjila, Y.P. (2005). *Nordic Journal of African Studies*. Pp. 15–25

Myles, J. (2002). *Second language writing and research: The writing process and error analysis in student texts* Queen's University.

Nation, P. (2005). *The role of the first language in foreign language learning*. *Asian EFL Online Journal*.

Ngangbam, H.(2016). *An analysis of syntactic errors committed by students of English language class in the written composition*. Retrieved from <http://www.jallr.com/index.php/JALLR/article/download/406/pdf406>

Ningsih, R. (2004). *Error analysis in the students' English writing: a case study with the second year students of SLTPN 239 Tanjung Barat*. Jakarta: Syarif. Retrieved from http://heaig.org/images/proceedings_pdf/H0317446.pdf

Karim, N. S. (1978). *BM syntax: some aspects of its standardization*. Kuala Lumpur:Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

- Nokia, P (2002). *Are you ready for multimedia messaging service: An evolutionary approach to implementing*. Retrieved from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ass/article/download/14047/9791>
- Nzama, M (2012). *Error analysis is a study of errors committed by isiZulu speaking Learners of English in selected*. Retrieved from <http://www.academypublication.com/issues/past/jltr/vol04/06/06.pdf>
- Obi E.I.(2009). *An error analysis of the English concord of students of Onitsha urban*. Retrieved from http://www.jeltal.com/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/4.338102625.pdf
- Oluikpe, B. (1981). “Agreement” in *The Use of English for Higher Education*. Ed. Benson Omenihu A. Oluikpe. Onitsha. Africana.
- Onuigbo, S. (2005). *Concord in English: English Language: A Grammatical Description*. Ed. Sam Onuigbo.
- Owu-Ewie, C. & Lomotey, C. F. (2016). L1 (Akan) *interference errors in L2 (English) writing: the case of three junior high school students in Ghana*. Retrieved from <http://www.asraresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/A1-A18-L1-Akan-Interference-Errors-in-L2-English>
- Ozioko, N. (2007). A. L. *The Misuse of English Articles in Nigerian Newspapers*, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Parrot, M. (2000). *Grammar for English Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Pazever, D. & wang, C. (2009). *Grammatical errors committed by upper secondary school*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137462.pdf>
- Penny, W. K. (2001). *An analysis of student error patterns in written English: Suggested teaching procedure to help*. Birmingham, England. University of Birmingham,
- Polit, D. F. and Beck, C. T. (2004). *Nursing Research: Appraising Evidence for Nursing Practice (7th ed.)*. Philadelphia: Wolters Klower/Lippincott Williams and Wilkins.
- Qashoa, H. (2006). *Motivation among Learners of English in the Secondary Schools in the Eastern Coast of the UAE*. Retrieved from http://www.asian-efl-journal.com/thesis_Sulaiman_Hasan_Qashoa.pdf
- Quagie, J.K.(2010). *English a tool for communication*. Tesano, Accra.
- Rahmawati, S. (2014). *Error analysis of using punctuation made by Students writing*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137462.pdf>
- Rama, D. H. (2015). *Error analysis of written English essays*. Retrieved from <http://euroessays.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/EJAE-150.pdf>
- Randall, M. (2005). *Orthographic knowledge and first language reading: evidence from single word dictation from Chinese and Malaysian users of English as a Foreign Langugae*. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/003368829702800201>
- Rattanadilok, P. and Othman, N. B. (2015). *Understanding EFL students' errors in writing*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083531.pdf>

- Richard J. C. & Schmidt R. (2002). *Longman Dictionary of language teaching and Applied Linguistics*. 4th ed. Pearson. New York
- Richard, J.C. and Renandya W.A. (2002). *Methodology of language teaching: an anthology of current Practice*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.
- Richards, J. & Rodgers, T. (2003). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- .Richards, J. C. (1997). *Error analysis, Perspectives on SLA*. London: Longman.
- Scheider, P. & McCoy, K. F.(2002) *Socio – Cultural Theory and Second Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sekwo, C. (2011) *Using process approach to assist the first year students of E.P. College of Education to overcome their writing disabilities*. University of Education, Winneba (Unpublished thesis)
- Sercombe, P. G. (2000). *Learner language and the consideration of idiosyncracies by students of English as a second or foreign language in the context of Brunei Darulsalam*. Faculty of Education: University Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi
- Shoebottom, P. (2014). *Second language acquisition- essential information*. Retrieved from <http://esl.fis.edu/sk-krash.html>.
- Stark, L. (2001). *Analyzing the interlanguage of ASL natives*. Newark: University of Delaware
- Touchie H. Y. (1986). *Second language learning errors their types, causes, and treatment*. The University of Texas. Austin.

- Verma, K. Mallick, K. (1999) *Researching Education: Perspectives and Techniques*. Psychology press.
- Watcharapunyawong, S., & Usaha, S. (2013). *Thai EFL students' writing errors in different text types: The interference of the first language*. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1083531.pdf>
- Weaver, M. R.(2006). *Do students value feedback? Students perception in a higher education*. Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/imhe/43977633.pdf>
- Weireesh, S. (1991). How to analyze interlanguage. *Journal of Psychology & Education*. Pp.13-22
- Welman, C. et al (2005). *Research Methodology*. New York. Wiley.
- Wilga, R. M. (1993). *Interactive Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Wiredu, J. F. (1996). *Organized English Grammar*. Accra: Academic Publications Ltd.
- Woods, G. (2010). *English grammar for dummies*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc
- Yakubu, M. (2005). A Guide to Effective Writing in English.” *Journal of Quantitative Education*. Benin. University of Benin.
- Yule, G. (2006). *The study of language*. London. Cambridge University press.
- Zafar, A. (2016). *Error analysis: A tool to improve English skills of undergraduate students*. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Science*. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.02.122>

Appendix

Appendix 1A





Appendix 1B





Appendix 2A





Appendix 2B



