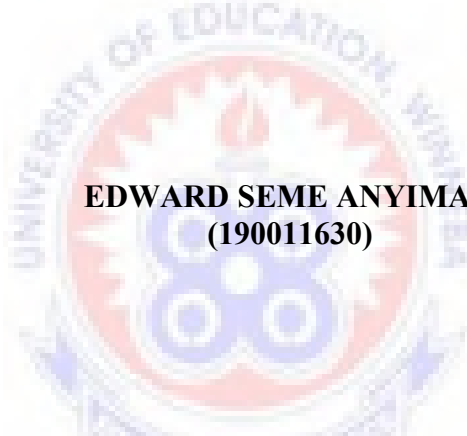


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE IMPACTS OF THE USAGE OF SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH ON
STANDARD ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY OF AVE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



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**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Teaching English as a Second Language)
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

OCTOBER, 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **Edward Seme Anyimah**, 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 another 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 dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

Name of Supervisor.....

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all education heads, teachers, students and Ghana Education Service (GES) who are working hard to uplift and upgrade the country's educational system.



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There are a number of people whose support, advice, supervision and contribution made this work possible and a bit easier, for which I want to appreciate. I wish to express my utmost gratitude to God almighty for His wisdom, favour and grace which has seen me throughout this period of study. I also want to appreciate the effort of my supervisor, Dr. Fofu Lomotey, who provided me the necessary guidance and direction I needed, making time to offer support whenever I requested for it till this work has been brought to a completion. I also want to appreciate the effort of my family and friends, Mr. Emmanuel Anyimah Bangoto, Amos Ampah, Anastasia Arpelleh, and all students and teachers of Ave Senior High School for their assistance, the needed information, direction and support from the beginning of the work to the end. Thank you.



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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the impacts of Ave Senior High School students' usage of Substandard English (SSE) on their Standard English (SE). Using both descriptive and qualitative research designs, a cross section of 100 students and 8 teachers were randomly drawn from Ave Senior High School. Also, well vetted questionnaires consisting of students' and teachers' demographics, questionnaire on the purpose for which students use SSE, the extent at which students use SSE, interview questions guide on the effects of the usage of SSE on SE and the frequency at which students use SSE. There was also interview questions that was designed to source data from the teachers on their observations and perceptions on students use of SSE. These were used to collect data from students and teachers who agreed to partake in the study in classrooms, and staff common room. The findings were discussed within the framework of the Usage-based Theory, Krashen's Monitor Model of language acquisition and other relevant reviewed literature. The study's findings which indicated that consistent use of SSE negatively impacts students' performance in SE contradicts Omari (2010), and Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) conclusion that there is no correlation between students use of SSE and their poor performance in SE. Limitations and recommendations for further studies were however also discussed.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Introduction

The influence of Substandard English has been one of the major reasons alleged to be the cause of poor performance (writing and speaking) in Standard English among high school students. This problem has been a source of worry over the years as English is a discipline which poses great challenge to learners at all levels as far as the Ghanaian educational system is concerned. This has also engaged the attention of the major stakeholders (teachers, parents, educationists and the authorities of the Ghana Education Service) of the Ghanaian educational system as the phenomenon continues to gain root among the present generation of students. This stems from the fact that English has become the platform on which other disciplines stand to survive in Ghana. That is to say, English language has been the only instructional language recognised in all formal and some informal educational institutions in Ghana and also the formal language of administration, business, medicine, law and other professional careers in Ghana (Curriculum Research Unit, Ghana Educational Service, 1996) since it was introduced as a result of the country's contact with the British in the late 15th century. Hence, the influence of Substandard English on it poses a great threat to students because successes in any form of education, training and work in the Ghanaian formal setting depends largely on the learners' ability to comprehend and use the Standard English language effectively and proficiently. For example, in Ghana, admissions to the tertiary is granted on the grounds that potential students have a good pass in English language. This also means that one is not allowed to enter into any tertiary institution of choice if he or she fails in English language but passes in other subjects.

As has been mentioned earlier, Standard English in Ghana is learnt and taught through formal education and the Ghanaian schools through the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service are explicit on the instructional language used in teaching.

This study has become very necessary as a result of the public outcry against students' use of non-accepted English and the adverse potential effects of polluting students' ability of grasping the rubrics of Standard English which consequently hinder their performance (writing and speaking) in the Standard English which is a key subject and a ticket for admission to the tertiary institutions in Ghana.

1.1. Background to the study

English language has been one of the major languages that have stayed with Ghanaians since the era of colonisation as a result of the linguistic connection with the British. As a result of British colonial administration, English language has supplanted the other local languages in Ghana in terms of importance. For instance, English Language is the only official language of communication and to a large extent the official language of school instruction. Also, knowledge needed for social, economic, medical and technological advancement of the country is found in books written in English. In addition, almost all competitive exams or tests for entry into educational institutions or occupation are written in English language. More so, even warnings designed to caution us from danger are all written in English language. In effect, English in Ghana has shown formidable resilience as the language of formal education and a medium for cross-ethnic communication in predominantly multilingual environment (Adika, 2012).

Given the fact that British English (Standard English) is the official language of Ghana, it exists in an environment surrounded by other local languages. Hence, its infiltration and influence by the local languages to form pidgin is inevitable. This has made the standard of English language in Ghanaian high schools a topical issue on the Ghanaian linguistic scenes because of the abysmal performance in English language by students in final external exams [Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) and West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (W.A.S.S.C.E)].

This has attracted a lot of criticisms and comments from a section of academicians, educationists, the public and other stakeholders of education in Ghana on the causes of students' consistent poor performances in English language and other subjects of which the influence of substandard English is not excluded. That is to say, while social, political, cultural and pedagogical problems are recognised as may be the cause of students' abysmal performance in English language and other subjects of study in the high schools, Substandard English also stands to be an additional cause.

According to Bludon (2016), among scholars in the area of language variation, it is broadly accepted that children who speak a nonstandard version of language in schools are at an educational disadvantage. Moreover, Biddle (2013) reports that the majority of the Australian Aboriginal students who spoke the nonstandard form of the Standard Australian English failed to reach the same level of academic achievements as compared to students who spoke Standard Australian English even in the absence of other causes such as socioeconomic status, school sector, and the participants' geographic areas. Hudley and Mallison (2011) also argue that speakers of nonstandard English may have fewer "academic" and "literary" Standard English words, or may not know that the vocabulary they use in day-to-day situations differ from what is expected at school. Ankrah (2018) also reports that the impact of Pidgin English on Standard

English is more negative than positive. According to him, the effects come about as a result of students' inability to identify and grasp the different structures of the Standard English, especially at the beginner level. Hence, they use Pidgin structures when writing in Standard English. According to him, the effects of Pidgin English on accepted English is evident in students transliteration and omission errors, Pidgin English induced pronunciation, and spellings, and wrong use of words.

A reflection of the above claims though in different research environments indicates that the impacts of Substandard English cannot be left out as one of the major setbacks hindering students' performance in Standard English Language. As some scholars and teachers have complained and blamed ill performance of students in English Language and other subjects on students inability to use Standard English Language to communicate, others also blame colleague teachers at the lower levels of the Ghanaian education (Basic and the Secondary level) as the source of students failure. The situation becomes very overwhelming because students live and study in multilingual societies and their first languages (L1) still find their ways in the learning of the second language [English Language, (L2)] hence interferences or influences from their L1 on their L2 is inevitable.

It is therefore explicit that there is a general demand for improvement in the standard written and spoken English Language in Ghana. This is the more reason why considerable attention and time is needed to be given to learners to help them acquire the standard writing and communication skills while they are in school.

The researcher is of the view that, to be able to develop effective communication and writing skills, it is imperative to investigate the impacts of Substandard English on the proficiency of students during the speaking and writing of Standard English.

1.2. Statement of the problem

The rationale behind the study and use of Standard English in Ghanaian schools is to promote accuracy and fluency (communicative competence) in writing, reading and speaking. In Ghanaian formal schools, Standard English (SE) is expected to a large extent be used by learners and teachers for teaching and learning whereas Substandard English (SSE) is mostly frowned upon. However, by no one's fault, the sudden appearance and usage of SSE among students is becoming so common in the senior high schools that has created a feeling among tutors and scholars that it is a major factor in the recent degrading performance of students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) English language exams. This implies that the usage of SSE by students has an adverse potential of polluting their SE. For instance, the Chief Examiner's Report of (2012/2013) on students' performance in the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) examinations, especially in the English language exams, indicates that some of the candidates could not use the appropriate registers in SE so they resorted to the use of pidgin English. It is in light of the negative effects of students' SSE usage on their SE that has attracted various campaigns to kick against students' use of SSE. For instance, Professor Assenso Okyere, an ex-Vice Chancellor of the University of Ghana, cautioned the 2002/2003 fresh students against the use of SSE that its usage would be harmful to their academic performance (Rupp, 2013). In the same vein, the University of Beua, Cameroon, also mounted a campaign against pidgin and erected signboards around campus that bore the following inscription (Eta, 2006).

NO PIDGIN ON CAMPUS, PLEASE!
BE MY FRIEND, SPEAK ENGLISH
PIDGIN IS TAKING A HEAVY TOLL ON YOUR ENGLISH. SHUN IT
IF YOU SPEAK PIDGIN, YOU WILL WRITE PIDGIN

This illustrations creates the awareness that the use of SSE has the potential of the accepted English that is learnt in school.

Although in their respective studies, Omari (2010) and Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) drew a conclusion that there was no correlation between students' use of SSE and their poor performance in SE, Huber (1999) and Mireku-Gyimah (2014) present a contrary view on this. Huber's (1999) findings indicate that the use of Pidgin English adversely affects SE and Mireku-Gyimah (2014) observes that the use of Pidgin English has the likelihood to negatively affect students' SE.

Therefore, given the essence and vital role Standard English language play in students' academic progress and formal social settings, it is therefore important to investigate the possible impacts that the intrude (SSE) may have on students' use of SE because the extreme negative influence of SSE on SE may dangerously hinder the academic prowess and progress of students.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

- To investigate the purpose for which students use SSE to communicate.
- To determine the degree to which students use SSE to communicate.
- To investigate the impacts of students' use of SSE on their SE.

1.4. Research questions

The need to investigate into the use of SSE and how it impacts students in their use of SE forms the justification of the current study. The questions serve as a guide for the study.

1. What is the extent to which students use SSE?

2. What is the purpose for which students use SSE?
3. How does the use of SSE impacts students' performance in SE?

1.5. Significance of the study

This study shows the extent and purpose for which Ave seniopr high school students use SSE to communicate. The outcome of the study provides insights into whether students' use of SSE enhances or hamper their performance in SE. Finally, the research also contributes to a better understanding of students usage of unaccepted English (SSE) after many attempts and anti-SSE campaigns to deter them of its usage and further appreciate better ways to help students to improve on their performance in SE.

1.6 Delimitation of the study

There are many varieties Substandard English – any English that violates the norms of standard English. The current study focused on the SSE used in Ghana and its influence on students' academic perfomance in SE. Also this research is strictly focused on only senior high school students and for that matter Ave Senior High School students in the Volta Region of Ghana. Though the target population for the study was the entire students and teachers of Ave Senior High School, a section of the students (100) in form 1, 2, and 3 and teachers (8) were selected for the study due to feasibility, accessibility and time constratints.

1.7 Limitation of the study

Like most studies, this study is not without limitations. All the results are based on self-reporetd data which are subjected to all kinds of bias. Moreover, the sample

size for the study was small and the demographic variables used were limited to only four variables namely age, gender, educational level and region of residence. Furthermore, time and finance were also a limiting factor because the study was conducted alongside normal teaching time. Therefore, the researchers could not include other schools for the study. Finally, the generalizability of this study is limited because data for the study was taken from only Ave Senior High School.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

1.8.1 Substandard English

In this study, Substandard English refers to the Non-Accepted English that are frowned upon in Ghanaian official settings. They include; Pidgin English, Dialect or Creole formed from a mixture of any of the words from local Ghanaian languages and English words. Such English do not conform to the vocabulary and grammar of SE. Examples are displayed below.

Substandard English	Meaning in Standard English
I go see u this gbɛkɛ	I will see you this evening.
Elipklim waz here kpɔ	Eliklim was also here.
I go sound you rattanow	I will slap you right now.
I go kam here ɛtwɔ	I will come here tomorrow.
Morrow be ma bofdae	Tomorrow is my birthday.
Dem commot the timetable for the noticeboard top.	The timetable has been removed from the notice board.
Biz am say he take my book anaa?	Ask if he has taken my book.
Abi you no say she be shark.	You know she is very brilliant
Gbele the dooor give me.	Open the door for me.

I biz am say when she go come.

I asked hime when he will come.

I dey hia money waa.

I seriously need money.

You dey teaseε?

Do you understand?

1.8.2 Standard English

In this study, Standard English is the British English which was adopted since the era of coloinisation and has been used in all Ghanaian formal settings such as schools, parliament house, meadia stations (Television, Radio etc. stations) etc. in Ghana.

1.9 Organization of the study

The report on this study is presented in five chapters namely, chapter one to chapter five. The first chapter presented the introduction which includes the background of the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, the significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study, definition of terms used in the study, and the organization of the study.

The review of related literature was captured in chapter two under two sub-headings, the theoretical framework and related research work or empirical studies on Substandard English and Standard English.

Chapter three also discussed the methodology employed for the study whereas analyses of the research data were captured in chapter four. The final chapter, chapter five discussed the major research findings, recommendations for future or further research and conclusion.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2 Introduction

This chapter examines some relevant literature on Standard English and Substandard or non-standard English in Ghana and their usage in Ghanaian senior high schools. It touches on theories/literature on language acquisition and approaches used to describe non-native varieties of English and description of Standard English and Substandard English and their usage in Ghanaian Senior High schools.

2.6 Theoretical framework

2.6.1 The Usage-based Theory of language acquisition

The Usage-based theory of language acquisition developed Tomassello (2003), posits that, language structure emerges from language use, and children build their language by relying on their general cognitive skills. According to Tomassello (2003), it is these cognitive skills that enable children to identify the intentions of adult speakers as well as the distributional patterns of the language. Tomasello (2003) concluded by summarising the theory in two aphorisms namely,

- Meaning is use.
- Structure emerges from use.

According to Ghalebi (2015), the Usage-based Theory of language acquisition rests on two main principles. The first principle represents an approach to the semantic dimension of linguistic communication. That is, this principle stresses on how people use linguistic conventions to achieve social ends. The second principle represents an approach to the structural or grammatical dimension of linguistic communication that focuses on how meaning-based grammatical constructions emerge from individual acts

of language use. Drawing from the above theory, it can be said that the fundamental context for language acquisition involves joint activities where speakers and listeners share common ground and can make inferences about their partners' communicative goals.

2.6.2 Krashen's Monitor Model of language acquisition

Krashen's Monitor posits that language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill; hence, the acquisition of a target language requires meaningful interaction in the target language in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding. Therefore, the best methods for the acquisition of a second language are those that supply comprehensible input in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are ready, recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production (Krashen, 1982). Out of this theory, Krashen proposed five hypotheses;

- The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,
- The Monitor hypothesis,
- The Natural Order hypothesis,
- The Input hypothesis, and
- The Affective Filter hypothesis.

2.1.2.1 The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis

According to Krashen (1982), the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis draws a dichotomy between acquisition and learning. This hypothesis argues that language acquisition is a subconscious process similar to that which children undergo with their first language. Therefore, the focus of the learner is centred on meaning of messages and not on the form of the language. This is contrasted with learning, which involves a conscious process resulting in knowledge acquisition of the target language.

2.1.2.2 The Monitor hypothesis

In Krashen's scheme of things, the acquisition system is the utterance initiator, whereas the learning system performs the role of the 'monitor' or 'editor.' The monitor helps people to make corrections to their speech or writings. This means that the ability to produce utterances in a target language is derived from the learner's acquired competence (subconscious knowledge) whereas 'learning' (conscious knowledge) also known as the monitor helps the learner to make corrections to the utterances.

2.1.2.3 The Natural Order hypothesis

Krashen argues that the rules of language are acquired in a predictable order, which might be different from the order followed in class instruction. This means that for any given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others are acquired late. Therefore, learners will need more repeated exposure to natural-sounding language input over a longer time to acquire these elements of the target language.

2.1.2.4 The Input hypothesis

In this hypothesis, the learner progresses along the 'natural order' as he/she receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current linguistic competence. If a learner already has acquired language competence 'i,' they will acquire more language through exposure to comprehensible input 'i + 1.' It is by this that Krashen (1982) believes that *natural communicative input* will provide all learners with 'i + 1' regardless of each learner's current level of competence.

2.1.2.5 The Affective Filter hypothesis

Krashen (1982) claims that learners with low motivation, low self-esteem, or debilitating anxiety can 'raise' the affective filter and form a 'mental block' to their progress. This means that, 'affect' which refers to non-linguistics variables such as motivation, self-confidence, anxiety boredom etc., effects acquisition, but not learning, by facilitating or preventing comprehensible inputs from reaching the language acquisition areas of the mind. Hence the affective filter accounts for individual variation in the acquisition of a second language.

2.7 Substandard English and Standard English

2.7.1 Standard English

The Merriam-Webster online (2019) defines Standard English as the English with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary which is substantially uniform though not devoid of regional differences, that is well established by usage in the formal and informal speech and writing of the educated, and that is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood. According to Walker (1990), Standard English is not just a neutral form for the expression of

independent meaning: it is a discursive practice that makes possible for the sharing of a particular meaning among privileged members of a community. To Walker, effective use of Standard English is an unavoidable curriculum goal and hence Standard English should be taught, not exclusively, but along with respect for and acceptance of non-standard forms of English that children, and especially young children, have acquired from their communities. As such, teachers should see non-standard forms not as errors and bad grammar, but as systematic representations of meaning and experience.

Stevens (1981) also explains that Standard English is not:

- an arbitrary, *a priori* description of English, or of a form of English, devised by reference to standards of moral value, or literary merit, or supposed linguistic purity, or any other metaphysical yardstick--in short, 'Standard English' cannot be defined or described in terms such as 'the best English,' or 'literary English, or 'Oxford English,' or 'BBC English.'
- defined by reference to the usage of any particular group of English-users, and especially not by reference to a social class--'Standard English' is *not* 'upper class English' and it is encountered across the whole social spectrum, though not necessarily in equivalent use by all members of all classes.
- statistically the most frequently occurring form of English, so that 'standard English' will not mean 'most often heard.'
- imposed upon those who use it. Its use by an individual may be largely attributed to the result of a long process of education; but Standard English is neither the product of linguistic planning or philosophy (for example as exists for French in the deliberations of the Academie Francaise, or policies devised in similar terms for Hebrew, Irish, Welsh, Bahasa Malaysia, etc); nor is it a closely-defined norm whose use and maintenance is monitored by some quasi-official

body, with penalties imposed for non-use or mis-use. To Strevens, Standard English was not produced by conscious design but rather it evolved (p.1).

Trudgill (1999) argues that Standard English is not an accent, a style, prescriptive rules, nor a register. To Trudgill, Standard English is rather a dialect and hence can be classified as one of the varieties of English.

2.7.2 Grammatical idiosyncrasies of Standard English

To further differentiate Standard English from other nonstandard English, it will be prudent to compare the grammatical features of Standard English which may be common or different from other nonstandard dialects. According to Trudgill (1999), when Standard English is compared to other nonstandard English, it seems to have the idiosyncrasies which include the following:

1. Standard English fails to distinguish between the forms of the auxiliary verb *do* and its main verb forms. This is true both of present tense, where many other dialects distinguish between auxiliary *I do, he do* and main verb *I does, he does* or similar, and the past tense, where most other dialects distinguish between auxiliary *did* and main verb *done*, as in *You done it, did you?*
2. Standard English has an unusual and irregular present tense verb morphology in that only the third-person singular receives morphological marking: *he goes* versus *I go*. Many other dialects use either zero for all persons or *-s* for all persons.
3. Standard English lacks multiple negation, so that no choice is available between *I don't want none*, which is not possible, and *I don't want any*. Most nonstandard dialects of English around the world permit multiple negation.

4. Standard English has an irregular formation of reflexive pronouns, with some forms based on the possessive pronouns, e.g. *myself*, and others on the objective pronouns, e.g. *himself*. Most nonstandard dialects have a regular system employing possessive forms throughout: *hisself*, *theirselves*.
5. Standard English fails to distinguish between second person singular and second person plural pronouns, having *you* in both cases. Many nonstandard dialects maintain the older English distinction between *thou* and *you*, or have developed newer distinctions such as *you* versus *youse*.
6. Standard English has irregular forms of the verb *to be* both in the present tense (*am, is, are*) and in the past (*was, were*). Many nonstandard dialects have the same form for all persons, such as '*I be, you be, he be, we be, they be, and I were, you were, he were, we were, they were*'.
7. In the case of many irregular verbs, Standard English redundantly distinguishes between preterite and perfect verb forms. Unlike many dialects which differentiate these simply by using auxiliary *have* – *I have seen* versus *I seen* – Standard English employs both the auxiliary '*have*' and distinct preterite and past participle forms – *I have seen* versus *I saw*.
8. Standard English has only a two-way contrast in its demonstrative system, with *this* (near to the speaker) opposed to *that* (away from the speaker). Many other dialects have a three-way system involving a further distinction between, for example, *that* (near to the listener) and *yon* (away from both speaker and listener) (p.117-128).

2.7.3 Standard English in Ghana

Mufweme (2010) raised the questions: ‘Who counts as Anglophone?’, ‘What demographic or ethnographic criteria’ and ‘what proportion of its population, with what level of competence’ a country should have in order to consider itself as an English-speaking country? Ghana’s contact with English can be traced to the days of British colonialism. As part of a colonial package, the British English gradually became the official language of communication in Ghana. History has it that in 1844, parts of the Gold Coast had been formally taken over by the British colonial administration; and since that time, English has superseded the local languages in importance since it became the language of government and administration, and many other activities of national character (Omari, 2010). The 2007 estimate made by the United Nations indicated that only about 31.8% of Ghana’s population can be said to have English proficiency. Presently, the British Standard English (BSE) is the written target language of education in Ghana. For instance, from primary four to the tertiary level of education in Ghana, the BSE is the language of instruction in all subjects, except Ghanaian Language (Adika, 2012). Also, Received Pronunciation (RP) is an examinable spoken norm and therefore the target in spoken English in Ghana. This is because the British accent has always been the official target in all the Ghanaian schools. This assertion is based on the fact that Oral English is part of the syllabus for the senior high schools and colleges of education in Ghana (Dako, 2001).

2.7.4 Substandard English

According to Nordquist (2019), Substandard English refers to any dialect of English other than Standard English and is sometimes referred to as nonstandard dialect or non-standard variety. The term Nonstandard English is sometimes used

disapprovingly by non-linguists to describe "bad" or "incorrect" English. Parker and Riley (2000) are of the view that a standard dialect draws no negative attention to itself whereas nonstandard dialect does draw negative attention to itself such that educated people might judge the speaker of such a dialect as socially inferior, lacking education, and so on. A nonstandard dialect can thus be characterized as having *socially marked forms*, such as 'ain't' etc. According to Essays (2018), expressions such as "I don't want no drink", "still, You gotta admit", "C U later", "I am gutted to be injured" are examples of substandard English used mostly by students. Parker and Riley (2000) also note that a socially marked form is one that causes a listener to form a negative social judgment of the speaker. Therefore, it can be deduced that identifying a dialect as standard or nonstandard is a sociological judgement, not a linguistic one.

Forson (1996) observes that the use of non-standard English by students of Ghanaian secondary schools is not an accidental happening. It is a theoretical legitimacy in sociolinguistic which relates to the school as a speech a speech community. Fromkin and Rodman (1978) have classified the various aspects of the use of language as pidgin by stating that people tend to adopt one lingua franca as a communicative tool if there are many languages spoken by the people. Fromkin and Rodman (1978) also state in their work that in some cases the different languages spoken by two or more groups of people in a state may be simplified lexically, phonologically and syntactically to become a pidgin. Hence, when a pidgin, borne out from the other languages, becomes the language learned natively, it is creolized.

A comparison of the above definition and the code of speech used by students in most Ghanaian senior high schools clearly indicate that the code cannot be classified as a pidgin but rather, a substandard code which deviates from the Standard English used by students as a way of easing communication with their peers. This assertion is

justified to the work of Brown et al (1992). According to them, Pidgin English evolved as a mixture of English nouns and verbs arranged within the sentence structure of Chinese. To them, pidgin has no native speaker and so they see it to be a similar simplified form of the language devised by any two language groups in order to communicate.

According to Sey (1973), the pidginized version of English is used in secondary schools and in the universities, typically among male students. He posits that the usage of Pidgin English seems a new variety of English has emerged in Ghana since it has been a fashionable trend used by students even after school when the contemporaries meet. These claims are supported by the work of Edu-Buandoh (1996). According to her, the low level of proficiency in the use of English language has caught the attention of Ghanaian parents, educationists, educational policy makers and the general public in the sense that the effects of low level of proficiency in the use of English language by students is visibly manifested in the results of the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE). Moreover, the “Daily Graphic” of Monday, September 25, 2006 page 11 on the caption “The Ghana Association of Teachers of English, (GATE) attributed the decline in the standard of education to students’ poor understanding of the English language.

In addition, in a report by Glover (2006) on the 9th Annual Delegates’ Conference of GATE held at Bolgatanga, the national secretary complained bitterly that a greater number of students left school without being able to communicate fluently in English, write anything intelligible in English, while some are totally handicapped when it comes to using English for any purpose. He alluded to the fact that they take a detour to the use of Pidgin English where no grammatical mistakes are made - everything anyone says is always correct. According to the BBC (2005), it was noted

that the use of slang expressions such as “gonna, ain’t and shouda, wanna,” in the year 2005 General Certificate School Examination (GCSEs) was surprisingly regular in the students’ writings coupled with unforgiveable basic errors made by apparently bright pupils.

2.8 Sources of Substandard English

2.8.1 Code switching as a source of Substandard English

According to Nordquist (2019), code-switching (CS) is the practice of moving back and forth between two languages or between two dialects or registers of the same language at one time. Code switching occurs far more often in conversation than in writing. Gardner-Chloros (2009) also intimates that code-switching refers to the use of several languages or dialect mostly nonstandard dialect within the same conversation or sentence of bilingual people. Owing to the fact that most Ghanaian English speakers are bilingual with at least one local language [70% of Ghanaians can speak an Akan dialect (Twi or Fante)] in addition to English (Dako, 2001) and code switching is a feature of multilingual societies, people are likely code-switch to enable effective communication and understanding. This assertion is justified by Cook’s (1991) claim that code-switching indicates not only proficiency in both languages but often a higher level of linguistic sophistication since it necessitates simultaneous processing of the rules of two or more languages and relating them to each other.

2.3.2 General attitudes to English in Ghana

According to Darko and Quarcoo (2017), Ghanaians are proud of their competence in English, hence, competence in English is highly regarded by Ghanaians. The response from the students in the Department of English, University of Ghana,

interviewed over the years have been close to unanimous in the view that the Ghanaian speaks better English than any other English-speaking African (Darko & Quarcoo, 2017). According to Darko and Quarcoo (2017), the reference points for most of the students are restricted to Nigerian English and Liberian English. But the same view tends to be expressed by Ghanaians in the African Diaspora. On the other hand, newsreaders and reporters in the Ghanaian media are not often publicly taken to task for shortcomings in either pronunciation or usage or structure but privately, the Ghanaian will complain about the inadequate English performance of our TV and FM stations. Additionally, Sey (1973) claims that the Ghanaian aims at perfection and therefore would not accept anything other than educated British Standard English may face a great deal of doubts and criticisms in the current state of education as far as standard English is concerned.

2.9 Review of related studies

There are several studies that have investigated the impacts of substandard English on Standard English in high school settings. Some of the research works have focused on the factors that necessitate the use of substandard English by students in high school settings, the domains in which substandard English operates, and the extent to which substandard English has affected students' communication and academic performance in English.

2.9.1 Domains and purpose for which Substandard English is used

Onjewu and Okple (2015) investigated the preference for pidgin instead of Standard English by students of English as a foreign language in Kaduna State University, Kaduna Polytechnic and Good Shepherd Major Seminary. In their study, they randomly selected as participants responded to a ten-item questionnaire which

contained both open ended and direct questions used for gather the participants' views on whether they spoke Pidgin English regularly to their colleagues in school, friends outside of school, their family at home and everywhere. The questionnaire also requested the students to state whether they realised that speaking Pidgin English could hamper their mastery of Standard English, to list all the occasions when they spoke Pidgin Instead of Standard English as well as the reasons for their preference to speak Pidgin instead of Standard English. Onjewu and Okple (2015) found that majority of the participants representing 59% and 86% confirmed their preferences to speak pidgin to friends outside school, and everywhere respectively whereas 94% of the participants accepted that speaking Pidgin English could affect their mastery of Standard English.

According to the researchers, the participants posited that they preferred to use Pidgin English in the following occasions:

At home, while chatting with friends, with people who do not understand Standard English Outside of the classroom, Informal environments, In the market, when cracking jokes

On social media: Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter, With family members, In church, At parties whereas the other participants who denied that the speak Pidgin language also confirmed that they speak Pidgin English in order to communicate easily with people who do not understand Standard English, make communication effective, because Standard English is rigid, because most people around or relate to them understand Pidgin English, it is entertaining and easy to learn and the fact that there is no fear of making grammatical error in speaking Pidgin English.

Although the study took into account the domain at which substandard English operates, little attention was paid to negative effects substandard English on students' performance in Standard English in terms of writing and comprehension.

A study conducted by Black (2008) on Non-standard English in GCSE level students in England where participants consisting of 2098 students enrolled on English GCSE were made to recognise and produce the acceptable standard versions and non-standard written statements from a group. The results from Black's research showed that participants' rates of recognition (except two instances) were lower than their rates of correction which was due to the fact that they were not bothered or did not realise they had to circle the relevant words even though they had recognised the presence of the non-standard form. In this, there was evidence that over 50% of the participants who did not correctly recognise any non-standard English form scored above 20 marks in terms of correction, producing the accepted Standard English version of the non-standard English forms. Adding to this is that, the participants did not consciously realise because they did not interfere with their comprehension but they naturally altered them at the point of production. In Black's research, the non-standard English forms 'there is' + plural ('There isn't any seats) and the double negative (I didn't break no vase) had the highest recognition rates than the production rates. However, the participants who recognised that target non-standard English form 'more + er' (More easier) found it difficult to produce the standard English version of it.

Elega (2016) also investigated the use and perception of West African Pidgin English among West African university students in Northern Cyprus. In the study, 129 West African students made up of 64 male and 65 female students from Eastern Mediterranean University were recruited as participants for the study. The participants responded to 45 questions in-house questionnaire that was organized into six different

categories namely, questionnaire on demographic characteristics (sex, age and nationality), background information on the use of West African Pidgin English (The items in this section were based on personal usage of Pidgin English, traditional media inclined usage of Pidgin English and computer mediated communication inclined use of West African Pidgin English), Perception of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English, Attitudes of West African students studying in North Cyprus towards Pidgin English and questions on the importance of Pidgin English.

Elega (2016) indicated in the findings that on the Likert two-point scales (Yes, No), 58.1% of respondents agreed that they spoke Pidgin English excellently, 60.5% of them agreed that they watched Pidgin English Films and 74.4% indicated that they watched Pidgin English comedy video clips. Also, those who spoke Pidgin English when they converse on mobile phones were 66.7%, the respondents who accepted that they read social media posts that are written in Pidgin English were 80.6% and finally, 65.9% also agreed that they chat in Pidgin English on social media. In addition, many of the students agreed that Pidgin English is of great importance to them because it connects West African students together and it has less grammatical rules while it allows for easy code-switching. On the perception of the participants on Pidgin English, the respondents accepted that Pidgin English is easy to learn. They added that even though it is underrated, Pidgin English is valuable and has been recognized internationally. They also agreed that Pidgin English hinders their mastery of the Standard English.

2.9.2 Nonstandard dialects and educational achievement

Many students who speak a nonstandard dialect have lower educational achievement than peers that speak the standard (Blundon, 2016). For instance, Briddle (2013) reported that Australian Aboriginal students, the majority of whom speak non-

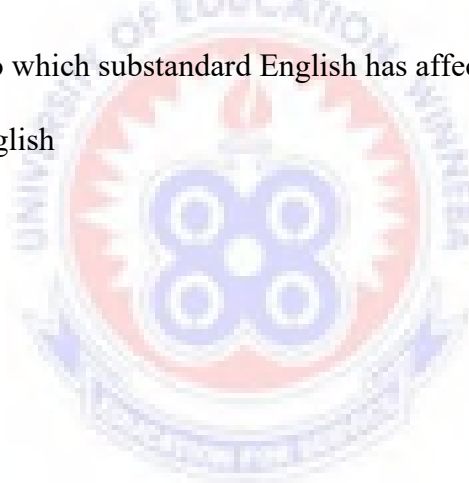
standard Australian Standard English, failed to reach the same level of academic achievement as students who speak Standard Australian English, even when factors such as socioeconomic status (SES), school sector (Government, Catholic, or other Independent schools), and geographical location were held constant. In 2015, in Arizona, US, only 66% of Native Americans graduated, the lowest rate among ethnic groups in the state (Arizona Department of Education, 2016). Charity and Mallinson (2011) argue that speakers of nonstandard dialects may have fewer “academic” and “literary” Standard English (SE) words, or may not know that the vocabulary they use in day-to-day situations differs from what is expected at school.

Also, having fewer Mainstream American English (MAE) words in one’s lexicon has been found to interfere with comprehension. For instance, Edwards et al. (2014), in their study of the relationship between dialect and lexical comprehension among African American English (AAE)-speaking children aged 4 to 8 years, found that children with fewer MAE words had more difficulty with comprehension of such words in school, and higher use of AAE was also associated with greater difficulty. However, in the case of vocabulary, low SES may also be a factor for children. In their study of White and African-American dialect-speaking children in Grade 1, Terry et al (2010) found that for children attending schools of low SES (measured by the percentage of children who qualified for the Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program [FARL]), the relationship was negative and linear. Since poverty has been found to be associated with lower vocabulary achievement Hart & Risley (2003) have suggested that the home learning environment may be a more critical factor for vocabulary development for children from low socio-economic status homes than dialect per se.

The above reviews indicate students’ use of substandard English in their conversation either at home with the relatives or friends on campus but not in official

capacities. The review also revealed that students' use of substandard English hinder the mastery of Standard English. However, the reported studies are limited to specific countries, cultures and universities and hence cannot be generalised to other cultures, countries and other educational environments or all levels of education. Also, the reported studies paid no attention to the extent to which Substandard English usage has negatively affected students' academic performance in Standard English. Therefore, the current aimed at investigating the impacts of the usage of substandard English on Standard English. The study investigated:

- The domain in which substandard English operates.
- The factors that necessitates the use of substandard English, and
- The extent to which substandard English has affected students' performance in Standard English



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the method and procedures used in carrying out the study which is purposed to investigate the effects of Substandard English (SSE) by students in Senior High Schools in Ghana affects their Standard English (SE) or Accepted or School taught English. This also chapter encompasses the research setting, research design adopted by the researcher, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instruments, method of data collected and method of data analysis.

3.1 Research design

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1995), qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Hallower and Wheeler (2002) also referred to qualitative research as a form of social enquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experience and the world in which they live. Qualitative research design includes one-on-one interview, focus groups, process observational research method, case study model, ethnographic model, historical model and narrative model. Ihmere (2006) notes that descriptive research refers to that type of research that aims at describing a phenomenon and its characteristics. It therefore employs the use of survey tools and observations to gather research data from research participants.

Based on the on the characteristics of the above research designs, the researcher deemed it appropriate to employed both the descriptive and qualitative methods for the study. The above methods were used because they gave the researcher a more holistic and rich data from the participants. Moreover, the two methods are used because the

researcher wanted to have an- depth knowledge on the possible effects of the usage of substandard English on Standard English and the fact that they are not expensive and has little or no researcher bias. Hence the reliability of the study is enhanced.

3.2 Research instruments

Research instruments are measurement tools such as questionnaires or scales etc. designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. Therefore, the instrument used to collect data from the respondents were a combination of opened and closed ended questionnaires which took participants less than fifty minutes to respond one-on-one interview, and observation.

3.3 Population

The population for the study was Senior High School Students and teachers. However, the target population of this study was the entire students of Ave Senior High School (form one, two and three) students and some selected teachers who teach English language and other social science subjects in Ave Senior High School. Students selected for this study were those who admitted that they have used and were still using substandard English in their daily interactions for both formal and informal activities on campus and their localities.

3.4 Sampling and sampling technique

3.4.1 Sampling technique

The convenience sampling technique will be employed in selecting participants for the study. The convenience sampling method was employed because of the research participants' accessibility, their convenience and proximity to the researcher.

Moreover, this sampling technique was used because of the limited time span of the study's completion and cost consideration.

3.4.2 Sample size

The sample size for the study was 100 students and 8 teachers. This was based on Cohen's statistical power. From Cohen's statistical table, the sample size necessary for .80 power at .05 level of significance for Pearson r is 85 and for Independent t-Test is 64 (Cohen, 1992). The sample size chosen was more than what Cohen stated. Hence the sample size had a higher possibility of helping the researcher to detect effects and made accurate predictions. That is to say, all the questionnaires distributed to hundred (100) students and those distributed to the ten (10) teachers who participated in the study were filled and returned representing a response rate of 100%.

Moreover, this sample size was chosen because, a larger sample increases the likelihood a sample statistic is representative of the population. In addition to the above, both sexes were carefully considered to prevent gender bias. That is to say, out of the hundred students who participated in the study fifty (50) of them were females representing 50% of the total sample size whereas fifty of the participants were male also representing 50% of the total sample size. The side of the teachers who participated in the study, 4 were females whereas 6 were males.

3.5 Data collection procedure

The researcher first of all sought permission from his supervisor before proceeding to the institution where data was collected for the research. According to Knapp VandeCreek (2003), the American Psychological Association's Ethics Code (2002), pertaining to having the informed consent of participants, the researcher sought

the consent of the research participants through the headmaster of the school before the participants were recruited for the research.

Furthermore, the researcher then moved to the research participants and collected research data following the go-ahead permission from the headmaster of Ave Senior High School. Before the participants responded to the questionnaires, the researcher explained to participants some technical terms that the researcher thought may be problematic for the participants. In this regard, the questionnaire for the students' participants was administered by the researcher to participants who volunteered to take part in the study for their individual response in their classrooms outside their normal lesson hours whereas the questionnaires meant for the teachers who took part in the study was also administered by researcher in their staff common room.

In addition, since took participants less that fifty minutes to respond to the questionnaires, the researcher retrieved the questionnaire from participants when they fully filled the questionnaires. Adding to this is that, participants who were not be able to finish within the anticipated time were given enough time to respond to the questionnaires before retrieval.

Moreover, the research subjects were debriefed on the purpose of the research and the rationale behind the data that were collected from them right after they all respond to the questionnaires.

3.6 Method of data analysis

The method adopted to analyse the collected data in this research was qualitative in nature. Therefore, statistical tables were used to categorise the respondent with respect to their answers from the questionnaires and interviews for the purpose of data

analysis. Also, simple statistical tools were used in most cases, frequency in tabular form and percentage were also used. These were necessary because the data obtained are qualitative.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has looked at the research design, research instruments, population, sample and sampling technique size, data collection procedures and method of data collection. The next chapter aims at analysing the collected and discussion of the analysis.



CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data that were collected for this research. Both open-ended question, closed-ended questions and interviews were used to gather information from teachers and students on students' use of Substandard English and the possible effects it has on their Standard English. Also, the researcher gathered information from students through observation of how students communicate with each other in their daily activities on the school premises and monitored students' performance in their essay tests. The statistical technique employed for this study is the frequency count and simple percentage.

Out of the total of 110 questionnaires distributed to participants, 110 were completely filled and retrieved from the participants representing a response rate of 100%. Below are the information and opinions obtained from the research participants.

4.1 Background and analysis of participants' response to questionnaires

4.1.1 Demographic characteristics of student respondents

The participants of the study were senior high school students and teachers of Ave Senior High School. The total number of participants was 110. This comprised of 100 students and 10 teachers. The analysis of the student participants' gender indicated that 50% of the participants were males and 50% were females. This is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participant's gender

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male: Students	50	50
Female: Students	50	50
Total	100	100

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of participant's age

Students' Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
13-17	36	36
18-22	63	63
23+	1	1
Total	100	100

The table above presents the data on students' ages. From the table above 36% representing 36 of the student participants were between the ages of 13 to 17, and 1% representing of the student participants 1 of the student participants fell within the age range of 23 and above. In addition, more than half of the participants (63%) were between the ages of 18 to 22. From the above analysis is can inferred that, substandard English is spoken widely by teenagers.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of participant's educational level

Educational level / Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Form 1	35	35
Form 2	13	13
Form 3	52	52
Total	100	100

The table above presents data on the educational level of the student participants. From the table, 35 students representing 35% of the participants were in form one, 13 students representing 13% of the respondents were also in form two, and more than half of the participants (52%) representing 52 students who were part of this research were in form 3. This simply indicates that students in form three and form one constitutes the majority of students who use Substandard English.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of student participant’s region of residence

Participants Region of Residence	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Greater Accra Region	25	25
Eastern region	5	5
Ashante Region	3	3
Volta Region	67	67
Total	100	100

The table above presents data on the participants’ place of residence. Participants place of residence were categorised with respect to the regions they hailed from. From the table above 25 students representing 25% of the participants came from the Greater Accra Region and 5 students representing 5% of the participants were from the Eastern Region. Moreover, 3 students representing 3% of the participants hailed from the Ashante Region and 67 students representing 67% of the participants were from the Volta Region. It can be inferred from the analysis of the data above that Ave Senior High School enrolls students from large cities and towns in Ghana with large intrusion of immigrant population. Hence students contact with such communities may have led to their acculturation of the nonstandard English which may be spoken by the other inhabitants of the communities they live.

Table 5. I Substandard English students frequently used

Students' view	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	32	32
Disagree	9	9
sometimes	59	59
Total	100	100

The table above presents the frequency at which students use substandard English (SSE) within the school premises (classrooms, dining hall, etc.). The analysis of the response from the students indicated that 32 of the participants representing 32% of the total student participants agreed that they frequently use SSE within the school premises whereas 9 (9%) of the participants disagreed with and stated emphatically that they solely use the accepted English with the school premises. Finally, 59 (59%) indicated that they sometimes use SSE within the school Premises.

Table 6. It is easier for me to communicate using easily with my colleagues using Substandard English than standard English

Students' view	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	59	59
Disagree	26	26
sometimes	15	15
Total	100	100

The above table presents the type of English (Standard English and Substandard English) used to communicate on campus. From the table, 59% of the students agreed that they find it easier communicating with others using SSE than Standard English (SE) whereas 26 of the student participants were of the view that they only used the accepted English solely when communicating with others. Finally, 15 of the student participants representing 15% of the total student participants asserted that they sometimes used SSE when communicating with others.

Table 7. I started using Substandard English at

Students' view	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary school	21	21
Junior high school	43	43
Senior high school	36	36
Total	100	100

The table above presents the different times of the respondents' level of schooling at which they started using SSE. The analysis of data collected indicated that 21 student participants constituting 21% of the total students' sample size started using SSE at primary school, 43 of the participants 43% started using SSE at the Junior high school and 36 of the participants representing 36% of the entire student participants asserted that they started using SSE at the Senior high school. It can be inferred from the analysis that majority of the students started using SSE at the junior high school and senior high school. This confirms Omari's claim that "Students speak non-standard forms of English, especially as they go to the secondary schools where they use a non-standard code (Pidgin English) outside the classroom but within the school system" (Omari, 2010). This means that junior high schools and senior high schools are the proliferation ground proficiency in SSE rather primary school.

Table 8. Whom do you communicate with using substandard English?

Students' view	Frequency	Percentage (%)
friends	95	95
classmates	3	3
teachers	2	2
Total	100	100

The table above presents data on whom students communicate with using SSE. The analysis of the data indicated that 95% of the participants were of the view that they used SSE to communicate with friends. Moreover, 3% representing 3 of the

participants and 2% representing 2 of the participants also indicated that the communicated using SSE with other classmates and teachers respectively.

Table 9. I understand teachers who use substandard English than standard English

Students' view	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Agree	10	10
disagree	81	81
sometimes	9	9
Total	100	100

From the table above, 10% of the participants were of the view that they understand teachers who use SSE during lesson delivery than teachers who use only SE to deliver their lessons. Also, 81% of the participants disagreed with assertion above. They were with the view that they only understand teachers who use SE throughout the delivery of their lessons.

Finally, 9 of the respondents representing 9% of the total participants were of the view that they sometimes understand teachers who use SSE in the delivery of lessons. This may be as a result of the fact that these students are not well versed in the use and comprehension of SE.

Table 10. I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in the SE

Students' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	24	24
Disagree	33	33
Sometimes	26	26
Agree	12	12
Strongly Agree	5	5
Total	100	100

The above table presents the rationale behind the participants' use of SSE. When the participants were asked that they use SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in SE, 24% of them strongly disagreed with the statement that

stated that “I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in the SE.” and 33% of the participants disagreed with the same statement. Furthermore, 26 of the participants constituting 26% of the participants were of the view that they sometimes used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE.

Moreover, 12 of the participants representing 12% of the total student participants agreed that they used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE whereas 5 of the student respondents representing 5% of the total student respondents strongly agreed that they used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE. This analysis indicates that though majority of the respondents (53%) disagreed with the statement that “I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in the SE.”

Table 11. Shortage of Standard English words when expressing myself compel me to communicate using SSE

Students' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	18	18
Disagree	18	18
Sometimes	25	25
Agree	36	36
Strongly Agree	3	3
Total	100	100

In responding to the statement “Shortage of Standard English words when expressing myself compel me to communicate using SSE”, 18 of the respondents constituting 18% of the total students' sample size strongly disagreed that they use SSE because they normally fall short of Standard English words when expressing themselves in SE. Therefore, they are compelled to communicate using SSE.

Moreover, 18 participants representing 18% of the total student participants also disagreed to the statement “Shortage of Standard English words when expressing myself compel me to communicate using SSE”.

Furthermore, 25 participants constituting 25% of the entire student participants were of the view that they are sometimes compelled to use SSE during their communication with others because sometimes they fall short of Standard English words when communicating with others.

In addition, 36 participants representing 36% of the participants agreed to the statement “Shortage of Standard English words when expressing myself compel me to communicate using SSE” whereas 3% of the participants strongly agreed to the same statement. This analysis indicated that majority of the students (64%) are either not well versed in the usage of SE or do not practice much in using SE to communicate hence they are compelled to switch to the usage SSE to ease their communication with others.

Table 12. My friends communicate to reach each other using SSE so I have learnt it in order to communicate easily with them.

Students' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	8	8
Disagree	9	9
Sometimes	20	20
Agree	49	49
Strongly Agree	14	14
Total	100	100

In responding to the statement “My friends communicate to reach each other using SSE so I have learnt it in order to communicate easily with them”, 8 of the participants representing 8% of the total student participants strongly disagreed with statement above whereas 9 participants representing 9% of the total student participants disagreed with the statement “My friends communicate to reach each other using SSE so I have learnt it in order to communicate easily with them”.

Moreover, 20 student participants representing 20% of the whole student participants were of the view that their friends sometimes communicate using SSE so

they have also learnt it so that when their friends are communicating in SSE, they can also easily communicate with them.

Also, 49 student participants representing 49% of the whole student participants agreed to the statement “My friends communicate to reach each other using SSE so I have learnt it in order to communicate easily with them” whereas 14 student participants representing 14% of the whole student participants strongly agreed to the same statement. It can be inferred from the above analysis that peer influence also pushes students to usage of SSE in communication.

Table 13. I communicate using SSE understood by my friends only in order to access information which should kept secret from people outside our group.

Students' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	11	11
Disagree	13	13
Sometimes	11	11
Agree	36	36
Strongly Agree	29	29
Total	100	100

From the table above, 11 students representing 11% of the entire student participants strongly disagreed with the statement “I communicate using SSE understood by my friends only in order to access information which should kept secret from people outside our group” whereas 13 students representing 13% of the entire student participants disagreed with the same statement.

Furthermore, 11 students representing 11% of the entire student participants were of the view that they sometimes communicate using SSE understood by their friends only in order to access information which should kept secret from people outside their group.

Finally, 36 students representing 36% of the entire student participants agreed with the statement “I communicate using SSE understood by my friends only in order to access

information which should kept secret from people outside our group” whereas 29 students representing 29% of the entire student participants strongly agreed with the same statement. This analysis confirms the fact that peer influence also lures students to the use of SSE.

Table 14. I have other students speak it and I have developed interest in it so that when I face difficulty in speaking the SE with friends, I quickly switch to the SSE.

Students' views	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	17	17
Disagree	17	17
Sometimes	29	29
Agree	24	24
Strongly Agree	13	13
Total	100	100

In response to the question that stated that “I have other students speak it and I have developed interest in it so that when I face difficulty in speaking the SE with friends, I quickly switch to the SSE”, 17 of the participants representing 17% of the student participants strongly disagreed and 17 representing 17% of the student participants disagreed that they have other friends who speak using SSE and hence they have developed interest in it so that when they face difficulty in speaking the SE with friends, they quickly switch to the use of SSE.

Moreover, 13 of the participants representing 13% of the student participants strongly agreed and 24% representing 24% of the student participants agreed that they have other friends who speak using SSE and hence they have developed interest in it so that when they face difficulty in speaking the SE with friends, they quickly switch to the use of SSE.

Finally, 29 of the participants representing 29% of the student participants were of the view that they have other friends who speak using SSE and hence they have developed

interest in it so sometimes they use SSE when they are faced with difficulty in speaking the SE with friends.

4.2 Interview with Student participants on the Effects SSE has on their SE

Some of the participants (15) were interviewed on the influence SSE has on their accepted English or SE.

In response to the interview question 1 that stated “Does speaking of substandard English benefits you?” almost all the participants (12) responded ‘yes’ whereas three (3) of the participants responded with a ‘No’

Responses to the follow up question that states “How does it benefit you?” indicated that the participants in one way or the other have benefited from the use of SSE. Among some of their responses were;

- Easy communication with friends with different ethnic background and strangers who cannot communicate in SE or accepted English.
- Keep secret information through coded messaging and communication.
- Encourages group discussions among students who study together.
- It makes you famous on campus.

Similar responses from 5 of the participants indicated that the use of SSE is not as difficult as SE. This was deduced from their responses that SSE does not have rigid rules as compared to SE. Therefore, expressions in any local language can be blended with common expressions in SE to convey meaningful information to others or make communication with people (Semi-literates) who are not good at using SE possible.

One of the participants also stated that “my friends and I understand ourselves perfectly well when we speak using our ‘mix-mix’ English (SSE). It facilitates our communication and makes us feel less nervous when speaking in public”.

Moreover, some of the participants gave similar view that indicated that their use of SSE makes group discussions lively and interesting. According to the participants, their group members are and able to make meaningful contributions during study group meetings without being lampooned by other colleagues as it sometimes happens if they used the accepted English due to errors they made.

Some of the participants were also of the view that, the use of SSE to communicate makes them famous and easily recognised by friends on campus. One of the respondents stated that “I famously known on campus by many because I flow in Pidgin English. Some of my colleagues call me ‘most-fa’ because I am found mostly conversing with my friends in pidgin especially in the dormitory”

Furthermore, three of the participants were of similar view that SSE benefits them negatively. According to them, despite the fact that SSE is easy to speak, it corrupts their perfection in the use of SE.

One of the participants who responded ‘No’ stated that “SSE spoils my accepted English. Sometimes I mistakenly use some of the pidgin words when writing essays in English test. I also find myself using some pidgin words and expressions when communicating in accepted English with teachers. In fact, SSE is spoiling my school taught English”

4.2.1 Interview Question 3: Do you think the use of Substandard English will hinder your school taught English?

In response to the interview question above almost all the participants who were interviewed (13) were of the view that the use of SSE negatively impacts their school taught English (SE). However, two (2) of the participants who were interviewed were of the view that their use of SSE does not hinder their school taught English.

4.2.2 Interview Question 4: Why do you think communicating in SSE can interfere with school taught English?

In response to the interview question above, some of the participants who were interviewed were with varied responses. However, majority of the participants responded that the use of SSE disturbs their communication and writing skills in the standard English language.

One of the participants stated that “the use of SSE especially pidgin disturbs my performance in English language and social studies. Sometimes I forgetfully use some if the pidgin words in my English essay. Sometimes too, I when I read my marked essay script, I find out that I use short hands in writing some of the sentences in my essay. In fact, my scoring of low marks in English and other reading subjects may be as a result of regular use of pidgin instead of my school taught English.”

Another participant was also with the view that “sometimes I seem to have good idea on a given essay question but how to put them on the answer sheet becomes a problem. This is because I am not good at writing better English. I have been using pidgin and other ‘rough - rough’ English to communicate with friends. Sometimes I even write words depending on how I hear it or it sounds. In terms of formal communication, I am not able to face crowd because I am afraid my colleagues will laugh at me. Simply put my English before I entered senior high school was very poor hence my interest in substandard English. My contact with SSE has resulted in my poor performance in standard English test and other subjects.”

4.2.3 Interview Question 5: Do you think your performance in SE will improve if you avoid the use of SSE?

In responding to the interview question above, majority of the participants who were interviewed (13) responded that their performance in SE will improve if they stop the usage of SSE whereas two (2) of the participants their performance will improve to some extent.

A response from one of the participants stated “If I stop using substandard English, I will only focus on the accepted English language. Therefore, I will make very good in using proper English which will reflect in writing and speaking skills. I will perform very well in English exams. The red inks that flow through my essay script will reduce. I wish the school authorities come up with a policy that will forbid students from using any form of unacceptable language on campus.”

One of the participants also stated that “‘There is a saying that practice makes man perfect’. Therefore, if I stop using SSE, I will perfect myself in the Standard English language and do well in writing and speaking skills.”

Moreover, the two participants who were of the view that their performance will improve to some extent explained that their foundation in the school taught English was poor and that even if they stop the use of SSE it will take them a longer time to learn the rubrics of standard English language.

Deducing from the responses from the participants above indicate that the use of SSE by the participants hinders their SE in both writing and speaking. In this direction, their performance in any subject that employs the use of Standard English will be negatively affected as well. This answers the reason why majority of the students in Ave Senior High School perform poorly in English tests (internal and external tests).

4.3 Demographic description of teacher participants

The teachers who participated in this research were ten (10). Out of the 10 teacher participants, eight (8) of the participants representing 80% of the teacher participants were males and two (2) them representing 20% of the teacher participants were females. This is summarised statistically in the table below.

Descriptive statistics of teacher participants' gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	8	80
Female	2	20
Total	10	100

Descriptive statistics of teacher participant's Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
20-29	2	20
30-39	5	50
40+	3	30
Total	10	100

The table above presents the age ranges of the teachers who took part of the research. The analysis of the participants age indicated that two (2) of the participants representing 20% of the total teacher participants fell with the age range of 20 to 29 and 5 of the participants representing 50% of the teacher participants were between the age range of 30 to 39. Finally, 3 of the teacher participants representing 30% of the teacher participants were at least 40 years.

Descriptive statistics of number of years teacher participants have taught

Number of years taught	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	2	20
10	1	10
13	1	10
14	2	20
19	1	10
2	2	20
4	1	10
Total	10	100

The analysis of the number year the teacher participants have taught, indicated that 2 of the participants representing 20% of the participants had spent just a year in the teaching profession. Also, 1 of the participants representing 10% had also been in active teaching service for 10 years. Moreover, one of the participants had also been in active teaching service for 13 years whereas two of the participants representing 20% of the total number the teacher participant had also been in active teaching service for 14 years. In addition, one of the participants representing 10% of the teacher participant had also spent 19 years in the teaching profession whereas two of the participants 20% and 10% each had been in active teaching service for two (2) years and four (4) years respectively.

Descriptive statistics of classes teacher participants teach

Classes /Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Form 1 only	2	20
Form 1 and form 2	4	40
Form 1, form 2 and form 3	2	20
Form 3 only	2	20
Total	10	100

The above table presents the class level taught by the teacher participants. The analysis of data gathered from the participants indicated that 2 of the participants

representing 20% of the total teacher participants taught form 1 classes only whereas as 4 (40%) of the participants taught in form 1 and 2 classes. Moreover, 2 of the participants representing 20% of the participants taught in the form 1, form 2 and form 3 classes whereas 2 (20%) of the participants taught in only form 3 classes.

Descriptive statistics of Language (s) used by teacher participants to teach

Language (s) used during lesson delivery	Frequency	Percent
English only	6	60
English, Ewe and Twi	2	20
English and Ewe	2	20
Total	10	100

The table above presents a descriptive summary of the language or languages used by teachers who took part in the research during their lesson deliveries. The analysis of the language used by the participants indicated that 6 of the participants representing 60% of the total teacher participants used only English language (Standard English) during lesson delivery. Moreover, two (2) of the participants representing 20% of the teacher participants claimed that they use English to teach but sometimes use Ewe and Twi to clarify concepts that may not be easily or well understood by students during lesson delivery. Finally, two (2) of the teacher participants representing 20% of the teacher participants also reported that they use English and Ewe almost simultaneously during lesson delivery because of the calibre of students they teach their level of understanding. By observation, teachers use Ewe and Twi alongside the accepted or official language (Standard English) in senior high schools in Ghana because about 80% of the student population of the students of Ave Senior High School (AVESCO) are indigenes of Volta Region who can speak and comprehend spoken Ewe

whereas about 20% of the total students' population of AVESCO can speak and comprehend Twi.

4.4 Interview with Teacher Participants on Their Perceptions and Observation of Students' of SSE.

All the teachers who participated in the study were interviewed to know the observation they had made with regards to the use of SSE on the school premises and also sought their perceptions on the effects of SSE has their students' SE.

In response to the interview question 1 which stated "Do your students use substandard English to communicate on campus?", all the participants were of the view that they had seen students communicating with each other using SSE other than the accepted English language.

4.4.1 Interview question 2: Have you ever noticed any expression, pronunciation or writing that is made by your students as a result of their usage of SSE?

The responses from the participants on the above interview question indicated that the erroneous Standard English pronunciation, writings and expressions made by students are as a result of their usage of substandard English.

One of the participants stated explicitly that "majority of the students in this school perform poorly in English tests because they employ what they normally communicate and pronounce with their friends in their writing. Sometimes certain expressions and pronunciation they make can be traced directly from the kind of English they speak".

4.4.2 Interview question 3: Does your students' use of substandard English reflect in their answers to questions in their end of term exams and class exercises?

In response to the question above, all the participants responded 'yes' indicating that students' use of SSE reflect in their answers to questions in their end of term exams and class exercises.

One of the participants stated that “Yes, it reflects in their writings during exams and sometimes exercises. Expressions such as Abi you that, u will mit the headmaster..., This gbeke ..., make we go ... etc sometimes reflects in students' essays. The most dominant ones are the short-hand writing and pidgin words which are sometimes spelt in deviation from the standard English spellings”

4.4.3 Interview question 4: Does communication and writing using substandard English has any negative effect (s) on your students' performance with regards examinations and social expressions? How has it been affecting your students' performance?

The responses from the participants on this very interview question was highly negative. The participants responded that the use of substandard the use of substandard English by students has become a major communication and writing setbacks and therefore the extent students use substandard English has maximally increase with negative performance in their academic performances.

As stated by one of the participants, a female English teacher – “when they write, there are traces of non-standard English elements like pidgin expressions in their writings. This is mostly observed during marking of students' essays. They seem not to understand nor differentiate between their schools taught English and Substandard

English. This greatly reduces their exam marks in the area of expression, content and mechanical accuracy.”

Again, one of the participants, an accounting teacher stated that “Yes, in my subject area, technical words or terms are used to explain certain concepts. So, if substandard English is used, full marks wouldn’t be awarded to the student. Sometimes, the student may be awarded a zero-mark depending on the particular expression or word (substandard English expression) a student uses to answer a question. This leads to low performances in accounting and business management.”

One social studies teacher and a Geography teacher responded almost same on the above interview question. According to them during class discussions, students find it difficult expressing themselves in the accepted English. Those who do well contribute in class normally do so by combining both English and Ewe and sometimes Twi.

The geography teacher stated that – “Most students cannot spell certain words correctly or construct good English sentences. As a result of this, they normally use substandard English.”

As stated by one of the participants, an economics teacher – “The use of substandard English affects the performance of my students greatly. This is normally exhibited when they are not able to convey their answers to questions in exams in proper English language hence invalidating their answers”

4.4.4 Interview question 5: What is your personal view on the use of substandard English by students and the youth in general?

In response to the above interview question above, most of the teachers who were interviewed were of the general view that

- the use of substandard English is hindering the use of standard English among students.
- Substandard English has no official recognition in the Ghana's education and hence must not be encouraged.

These were the exact words of one of the participants in response to the interview question above-

“My personal view is that it affects the academic performance of y students negatively. Since is not an accepted English so far as education in Ghana is concerned, it should not be encouraged at all. Measures should be put in place by educational heads and teachers to sanction students who will be caught using any form of unacceptable English on mostly the school premises.”

One of the participants, an English teacher was also of the view that, SSE cannot be banned but students must be encouraged and supported in mastering the accepted English. This was what he said- “I think substandard English cannot be banned because we as educationist do not sleep with our students in their dormitories or rooms when they go on vacation so that controlling them to communicate in the accepted English will be easier. I think supportive measures should be put in place to support the mastering of the accepted English. Also, students and the youth should be educated to differentiate between substandard English and accepted English so that they do not use them interchangeably in their writings and expressions in official gatherings.”

According to one of the participants, a social studies teacher, the use of SSE reduces the confidence level of students and the youth in general when speaking in official public gathering where the use accepted English is necessary.

Analysis of the above responses indicates clearly that the use of substandard English hinders the mastering of accepted English or standard English by students and the youth

in general. This can be traced to the responses the students' participants gave on their interview question 3 which stated "**Do you think the use of Substandard English will hinder your school taught English?**" and interview question 5 which stated **Do you think your performance in SE will improve if you avoid the use of SSE?**

To sum up, although the use of substandard English by students is not the only factor that leads to their poor performance in standard English, it can however be said that it accounts for one of the major setbacks in the mastering and performance in standard English language owing to the responses from the participants.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has looked at the analysis of data that were collected from the sample students and teachers of Ave Senior High school on the use of Substandard English and its effects on Standard English. The data were gathered using open ended and closed ended questionnaires and interviews. The next chapter will summarize the analysis of this research, drawing of conclusions and recommendations for further research with respect to the influence substandard English has on Standard English.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion on the analysis of data of this very study, useful recommendations for future research and finally draws conclusion based on the findings of the study.

5.1 Summary of the study

This study aimed at investigating The Impacts of the Usage of Substandard English (SSE) on Standard English through (SE) a qualitative and descriptive perspectives using questionnaires, interviews and observation as instruments for the collection of data. The researcher also adopted the frequency and percentage table to analyse the data.

Also, the population for the study was Ave Senior High School students (form one to form three students). The researcher focused on senior high school students because it was stated emphatically by The Head of Public Affairs for the West African Examination Council (WAEC), Agnes Teye-Cudjoe on July 16, 2018 that over 190,000 students who sat for sat for the exams in 2018 were going to miss University admission due to failure in the English Language caused by the use of ‘pidgin’ and ‘short hands’ which are classified as substandard English (Ghanafuo-Staff, 2018). That is to say, the statement made by The Head of Public Affairs for WAEC, indicates that the use of substandard English is more associated with Senior High School students. Hence the rationale behind the researcher’s choice for the population of the study.

The report on this study is presented in five chapters namely, chapter one to chapter five. The first chapter presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the significance of the study and the organization

of the study. A review of related literature was captured in chapter two under two sub-headings namely, the theoretical framework and related research work or empirical studies on Substandard English and Standard English. Chapter three also discussed the methodology employed for the study whereas analyses of the research data were captured in chapter four. The final chapter, chapter five discussed the major research findings, recommendations for future or further research and conclusion.

5.2 Main research findings

The findings of the study were deduced and inferred from the responses from the participants (students and teachers of Ave Senior High School) on how the usage of substandard English impacts standard English. This was done with reference to the analysis of the questionnaires, interviews and observation from the participants.

5.2.1 What is the extent at which students use SSE to communicate?

In responding to the question “I frequently use substandard English in my daily communication within the school premises”, it was realized that:

Majority of the respondents representing 59% of the student respondents were of the view that they sometimes use Substandard English to communicate, 32% of them also agreed that they use substandard English to communicate whereas only 9% of them were not in agreement with the question. This clearly indicates that the use of SSE is very common among Ave Senior School students.

In responding to the question “It is easier for me communicate easily with my colleagues using substandard English than standard English”, it was found that:

59% of the student respondents find it easier communicating with their colleagues using SSE than Standard English (SE) and 15 of them representing 15% of the total student

participants asserted that they sometimes used SSE when communicating with others. However, 26 of them were of the view that they only use the accepted English solely when communicating with their colleagues. Moreover, responses to the interview question on how frequent the respondents use SSE in their communication with others indicated that almost all the respondents admitted that they use SSE on regular basis in their communication with others. Some even added that they cohabit with people with different ethnic and language backgrounds hence the use of SSE help them to communicate at ease with them. So the use of SSE has actually part of them.

This finding is in line with D, Oppong-Sekyere; F, Oppong-Sekyere and Akpalu (2013) claim that the kind of extra moral English spoken outside the walls of the classroom can be a source of learning errors and that Pidgin English, for instance can be one of the sources if a learner lives in community in which Pidzin is either in vogue or serve as lingua franca in that community.

Deducing from the above discussion shows that the use of SSE is common among Ave Senior High School students and has made communication easier among them.

In responding to the question on the level of students' education at which they started using Substandard, it was found that majority (79%) of the student respondents started using SSE at the junior and senior high school whereas 21% started using it at the primary level of education.

Deducing from the findings above, it can be concluded that majority of students started using SSE at the junior high school and senior high school. This confirms Omari's claim that "Students speak non-standard forms of English, especially as they go to the secondary schools where they use a non-standard code (Pidgin English) outside the classroom but within the school system" (Omari, 2010).

This also in consonance with Gogovi's claim that some students are heavily influenced by Pidgin expressions instead of Standard English as he carefully observed students' examination scripts and exercises. Gogovi then concludes that Senior High School students are obsessed with Pidgin English hence their spoken and written Standard or Accepted English are highly affected (Gogovi, 2001).

This also means that junior high schools and senior high schools are the proliferation ground proficiency in SSE rather primary school.

The responses of student participants on whether they understand teachers who use substandard English than standard English or otherwise indicated that majority (81%) of the participants do not understand teachers who use substandard English during lessons and outside the classroom.

Observations made by the researcher on the kind of language used by teachers in the classroom indicated that the accepted English mostly used during teaching. However, some teachers sometimes switch to the use of the local dialect with English to make clarifications in class. Some teachers also speak Pidgin English on the school premises with colleague teachers and students.

Hence, students may not understand teachers who use Substandard English to teach because they tune their minds to the accepted language of communication (Standard English) in the classroom.

Moreover, the participants (students) response to the question on whom they communicate with when using substandard English showed that majority (95%) of them communicate with their colleagues in substandard English. 3% indicated that they do use Pidgin when they meet people who can neither flow in the accepted English nor their local Dialect to ease communication whereas 2% of them indicated

that they use it to communicate with teachers. This indicates that majority of Ave Senior High School Students use SSE to communicate.

The discussions above give explanations and largely answer the research question “What is the extent at which students use SSE to communicate”.

5.2.2 What are the purposes for which students use Substandard English?

Participants’ response to the question “I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in SE” indicated that 24% of them strongly disagreed with the statement that stated that “I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in the SE.” and 33% disagreed with the same statement. Furthermore, 26 of the participants constituting 26% of the participants were of the view that they sometimes used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE.

Also, 12% of the student participants agreed that they used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE whereas 5 of the student respondents representing 5% of the total student respondents strongly agreed that they used SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE. This analysis indicates that though majority of the respondents (53%) disagreed with the statement that “I use SSE because I am not confident expressing myself in the SE”, there were traces that indicated that some of student participants (47%) use SSE because they were not confident expressing themselves in the SE.

Moreover, the findings based on participants’ responds to the statement “Shortage of Standard English words when expressing myself compel me to communicate using SSE”, indicated that majority of the participants (64%) use Substandard English to communicate because they fall short of vocabularies that exist in Standard English whereas 36% of the total students’ sample size said that they do not fall short of standard English words when expressing themselves in SE.

The findings also indicated that the majority of the students (64%) are either not well versed in the usage of SE or do not practice in using SE to communicate hence they are compelled to switch to the usage of SSE to ease their communication with others.

Furthermore, the current research findings also indicated that majority of the student participants (83%) have learnt and used Substandard English because their friends use it for communication among themselves whereas 17% of them did not agree to this assertion. Additionally, the findings also revealed that peer influence also induced some of the participants to use Substandard English for communication with friends.

In responding to the research question “I communicate using SSE understood by my friends only in order to access information which should kept secret from people outside our group”, the research findings indicated that majority of the participants (66%) have learnt to use Substandard English understood by their friends so that they can easily access information that is kept secret from other colleagues outside their group. This finding further confirms the fact that peer influence also lures students to the use of SSE.

Finally, the current research findings also indicated that majority of the participants have learnt to use substandard English for communication because their friends use it to communicate. Some of the students also indicated that they live in communities inhibited by people with diverse cultural background. Hence the use of Substandard English such as Pidgin English has made communication with them easier. The above discussion answers the research question “What are the purposes for which students use Substandard English?”

5.3 How does the use of Substandard English impact students' performance in Standard English?

5.3.1 Interview with Student participants on the Effects the usage of Substandard English (SSE) has on their Standard English (SE).

Some of the participants (15) were interviewed on the influence SSE has on their accepted English or SE.

In response to the interview question 1 that stated “Does speaking of substandard English benefits you?”, almost all the participants who were interviewed responded ‘yes’ whereas three (3) of them responded with a ‘No’

Responses to the follow up question that stated “How does it benefit you?” indicated that the participants in one way or the other have benefited from the use of SSE. Among some of their responses were;

- Easy communication with friends of different ethnic background and strangers who cannot communicate in SE or accepted English.
- Keep secret information through coded messaging and communication.
- Encourages group discussions among students who study together.
- It makes you famous on campus.

Similar responses from 5 of the participants indicated that the use of SSE is not as difficult as SE. This was deduced from their responses that SSE does not have rigid rules as compared to SE. Therefore, expressions in any local language can be blended with common expressions in SE to convey meaningful information to others or make communication with people (Semi-literates) who are not good at using SE possible.

One of the participants also stated that “my friends and I understand ourselves perfectly well when we speak using our ‘mix-mix’ English (SSE). It facilitates our communication and makes us feel less nervous when speaking in public”.

Moreover, some of the participants gave similar view that indicated that the use of SSE makes group discussions lively and interesting. According to the participants, their group members are and able to make meaningful contributions during study group meetings without being lampooned by other colleagues as it sometimes happens if they used the accepted English due to errors they made.

Some of the participants were also of the view that, the use of SSE to communicate makes them famous and easily recognized by friends on campus. One of the respondents stated that “I am famously known on campus by many because I flow in pidgin English. Some of my colleagues call me ‘most-fa’ because I am found mostly conversing with my friends in pidgin especially in the dormitory”

Furthermore, three of the participants were of similar views that the use of SSE benefits them negatively. According to them, despite the fact that SSE is easy to speak, it corrupts their perfection in the use of SE.

One of the participants who responded ‘No’ stated that “SSE spoils my accepted English”. Sometimes I mistakenly use some of the pidgin words when writing essays in English test. I also find myself using some pidgin words and expressions when communicating in accepted English with teachers. In fact, SSE is spoiling my school taught English”

5.3.2 Interview Question 3: Do you think the use of Substandard English will hinder your school taught English?

In response to the interview question above, almost all the participants who were interviewed (13) were of the view that the use of SSE negatively impacts their school

taught English (SE). However, two (2) of the participants who were interviewed were of the view that the use of SSE does not hinder their school taught English.

5.3.3 Interview Question 4: Why do you think communicating in SSE can interfere with your school taught English?

In response to the interview question above, some of the participants who were interviewed were with varied responses. However, majority of the participants responded that the use of Substandard English disturbs their communication and writing skills in the standard English language.

One of the participants stated that “the use of SSE especially pidgin disturbs my performance in English language and social studies. Sometimes I forgetfully use some if the pidgin words in my English essay. Sometimes too, when I read my marked essay scripts, I find out that I use short hands in writing some of the sentences in my essay. In fact, my scoring of low marks in English Language and other reading subjects are mostly as a result of my regular use of pidgin instead of my school taught English.”

Another participant was also stated that “sometimes I seem to have good idea on a given essay question but how to put them on the answer sheet becomes a problem. This is because I am not good at writing better English. I have been using pidgin and other ‘rough - rough’ English to communicate with friends. Sometimes I even write words depending on how I hear it or it sounds. In terms of formal communication, I am not able to face crowds because I am afraid my colleagues will laugh at me. Simply put, my English before I entered senior high school was very poor hence my interest in substandard English. My contact with SSE has resulted in my poor performance in standard English test and other subjects.”

5.3.4 Interview Question 5: Do you think your performance in SE will improve if you avoid the use of SSE?

In responding to the interview question above, all the participants who were interviewed (15) responded that their performance in SE will improve if they stop the usage of SSE.

A response from one of the participants stated “If I stop using substandard English, I will only focus on the accepted English language. Therefore, I will be very good in using proper English which will reflect in my writing and speaking skills. I will perform very well in English exams. The red inks that flow through my essay script will reduce. I wish the school authorities come up with a policy that will forbid students from using any form of unacceptable language on campus.”

One of the participants also stated that “There is a saying that practice makes man perfect’. Therefore, if I stop using SSE, I will perfect myself in the standard English language and do well in my writing and speaking skills.”

Moreover, two participants were of the view that their performance would improve to some extent if they stop using Substandard English. They explained that their foundation in the accepted English was poor and that even if they stop the use of SSE it will take them a longer time to learn the rubrics of standard English language.

Deducing from the responses of the participants above indicate that the use of SSE by the participants hinders their SE in both writing and speaking. In this direction, their performance in any subject that employs the use of standard English will be negatively affected as well. This answers the reason why majority of the students in Ave Senior High School perform poorly in English tests (internal and external tests).

5.4 Interview with Teacher Participants on Their Perceptions and Observation of Students' use of SSE.

All the teachers who participated in the study were interviewed to know the observation they had made with regards to the use of SSE on the school premises and also sought their perceptions on the effects of SSE has their students' SE.

In response to the interview question 1 which stated “Do your students use substandard English to communicate on campus?”, all the participants were of the view that they had seen students communicating with each other using SSE other than the accepted English language.

5.4.1 Interview question 2: Have you ever noticed any expression, pronunciation or writing that is made by your students as a result of their usage of SSE?

The responses from the participants on the above interview question indicated that the erroneous Standard English pronunciation, writings and expressions made by students are as a result of their usage of substandard English.

One of the participants stated explicitly that “majority of the students in this school perform poorly in English tests because they employ what they normally communicate and pronounce with their friends in their writing. Sometimes certain expressions and pronunciation they make can be traced directly from the kind of English they speak”.

5.4.2 Interview question 3: Does your students' use of substandard English reflect in their answers to questions in their end of term exams and class exercises?

In response to the question above, all the participants responded 'yes' indicating that students' use of SSE reflect in their answers to questions in their end of term exams and class exercises.

One of the participants stated that "Yes, it reflects in their writings during exams and sometimes exercises. Expressions such as 'Abi you that', 'u will mit the headmaster...', 'This gbeke ...', 'make we go ...' etc. sometimes reflects in students' essays. The most dominant ones are the short-hand writing and pidgin words which are sometimes spelt in deviation from the standard English spellings"

5.4.3 Interview question 4: Does communication and writing using substandard English have any negative effect (s) on your students' performance with regards to examinations and social expressions? How has it been affecting your students' performance?

The responses from the participants on this very interview question was highly negative. The participants responded that the use of substandard English by students has become a major communication and writing setbacks and therefore the extent students use substandard English has maximally increase with negative performance in their academic performances.

As stated by one of the participants, a female English teacher – "when they write, there are traces of non-standard English elements like pidgin expressions in their writings. This is mostly observed during marking of students' essays. They seem not to understand nor differentiate between their school taught English and substandard

English. This greatly reduces their exam marks in the area of expression, content and mechanical accuracy.”

Again, one of the participants, an accounting teacher stated that “Yes, in my subject area, technical words or terms are used to explain certain concepts. So, if substandard English is used, full marks wouldn’t be awarded to the student. Sometimes, the student may be awarded a zero-mark depending on the particular expression or word (substandard English expression) a student uses to answer a question. This leads to low performances in accounting and business management.”

One social studies teacher and a geography teacher responded almost same on the above interview question. According to them during class discussions, students find it difficult expressing themselves in the accepted English. Those who do well contribute in class normally do so by combining both English and Ewe and sometimes Twi.

The geography teacher stated that – “Most students cannot spell certain words correctly or construct good English sentences. As a result of this they normally use substandard English.”

As stated by one of the participants, an economics teacher – “The use of substandard English greatly affects the performance of my students. This is normally exhibited when they are not able to convey their answers to questions in proper English language hence invalidating their answers”

5.4.4 Interview question 4: What is your personal view on the use of substandard English by students and the youth in general?

In response to the interview question above, most of the teachers who were interviewed were of the general view that

- the use of substandard English is hindering the use of standard English among students.
- Substandard English has no official recognition in the Ghana's education and hence must not be encouraged.

These were the exact words of one of the participants in response to the interview question above-

“My personal view is that Substandard English negatively affects the academic performance of my students. Since it is not an accepted English so far as education in Ghana is concerned, it should not be encouraged at all. Measures should be put in place by educational heads and teachers to sanction students who will be caught using any form of unacceptable English on mostly the school premises.”

One of the participants, an English teacher was also of the view that, SSE cannot be banned but students must be encouraged and supported in mastering the accepted English. This was what he said- “I think substandard English cannot be banned because we as educationist do not sleep with our students in their dormitories or rooms when they go on vacation so that controlling them to communicate in the accepted English will be easier. I think supportive measures should be put in place to support the mastering of the accepted English. Also, students and the youth should be educated to differentiate between substandard English and accepted English so that they do not use them interchangeably in their writings and expressions in official gatherings.”

According to one of the participants, a social studies teacher, the use of SSE reduces the confidence level of students and the youth in general when speaking in official public gathering where the use accepted English is necessary.

Analysis of the above responses indicates clearly that the use of substandard English hinders the mastering of accepted English or standard English by students and the youth

in general. This can be traced to the responses the students' participants gave on their interview question 3 which stated **“Do you think the use of Substandard English will hinder your school taught English?”** and interview question 5 which stated **Do you think your performance in SE will improve if you avoid the use of SSE?**

5.5 Conclusion

To sum up, the study investigated The Impacts of the Usage of Substandard English On Standard English among Ave Senior High Students. The study has revealed that the use of Substandard English negatively impacts students' academic progress in English Language and other reading subjects and further lowers students' confidence level when speaking in official gatherings. Although the use of substandard English by students is not the only factor that leads to their poor performance in standard English language, it can however be said that it accounts for one of the major setbacks in the mastering and performance in standard English language. Therefore, appropriate measures such as rules that discourages students from using Substandard English to communicate in schools and at home, collaborative efforts by teachers and parents and Ministry of Education to salvage the falling standard of accepted English among others will go a long way to equip students with better communicative competence in both spoken and written Standard English.

5.6 Recommendations

With respect to the findings of the study, it is imperative to make the following suggestions.

- It is evidently clear that students (especially students of rural areas senior high schools) are ignorant of the effects SSE has on their use of SE. It is therefore important for teachers and school authorities adopt either the same method used

by the authorities of University of Beua, Cameroon or different but working strategy such as seminars or special anti-SSE campaign messages across the various senior high school campuses across the country to create students aware of the harm of using SSE in communication.

- Innovative and interesting programs that will directly or indirectly lure students to frequently practice or dialogue using SE should be encourage in the senior high schools. That is to say, programs such as inter and intra class debates, quizzes, drama shows and poetry recitals etc. that will boost the proficiency levels should a routine practice in schools. This is because currently such programs receive just little or no attention at all.
- At home, parents should encourage their wards to read educative books and watch and listen to educative programs that employ SE as a medium of communication.
- The Ministry of education and it associates should come up with a revised curriculum that employs different teaching and learning activities that will encourage the learning and practice of SE. More so, employees who wish to teach English language in senior high schools should be well interviewed and assessed before they are finally posted to schools. Finally, the ministry should strengthen their supervisory role in schools and organize educative seminars which enhance the knowledge and skill base of ESL teachers.
- If stopping students from the use of SSE will be a very difficult task, then students should be educated to carefully consider the setting in which they use SSE.
- English as a second language teachers should also vary their teaching methods. That is to say, teachers should adopt language teaching methods that is more

students centred that teacher centred. Such methods should also focus on equipping students be communicatively competent and not just grammatical competence. They should as much as they can avoid teaching to the test and focus on teaching for life as enshrined in the national curriculum.

- Finally, futures researchers of this topic or topic relating to this topic should investigate the following.
 - ✓ The use of SSE in technical and vocational schools. Much attention should be paid to how SSE impacts the pronunciation, spelling and writing in SE.
 - ✓ Investigate whether SSE can be well developed and adopted as a medium of communication in our educational system.
 - ✓ Since this study was conducted in just one rural school, future studies should compare both rural and urban schools with sample size large enough to justify its generalizability.

5.7 Summary

This chapter focused on the discussion of the findings of the study, conclusion and recommendations for future studies with regards to the usage of SSE and its possible effects on SE.

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APPENDIX

Dear Respondent,

I am Edward Seme Anyimah, a student of the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). As part of my course requirement, I am conducting a research that will examine The Impacts of the Usage of Substandard English On Standard English among Ave Senior High Students. I would therefore humbly seek for your time to participate in this study by providing your personal response to the questionnaire below. Any information provided on this paper will be confidential. I hope you will compassionately cooperate with me. Thank you.

Kindly respond to each statement by ticking (✓) or writing where the appropriate.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Complete the following information by checking or ticking (✓) that which applies to you

1. GENDER: Male Female
2. LEVEL: form 1 form 2 form 3
3. AGE: 13- 17 18- 22 23 +

Respond to the question (4) below by writing the appropriate response.

4. Place of permanent residence (e.g. Tema community 1)

.....

SECTION B

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

S/N	STATEMENT	Agree	Disagree		sometimes	
1.	I frequently use substandard English in my daily communication within the school premises.					
2.	It is easier for me to communicate easily with my colleagues using substandard English than standard English.					
3.	I understand teachers who use substandard English to teach than standard English.					
4.	I started using substandard English at...	Primary School	Junior High School		Senior High School	
5.	Whom do you speak with using the substandard English	Friends	classmates	siblings	teachers	strangers

SECTION C

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

S N	STATEMENT	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Sometimes	Agree	Strongly Agree
6	I use substandard English because I am not confident expressing myself in the standard English language.					
7.	Shortage of English words in expressing myself in the standard English compel me to communicate using substandard English.					
8.	My friends communicate to reach other using substandard English so I have learnt it in order to communicate easily with them.					
9.	I communicate using substandard English understood by my friends only in order to access information which should be kept					

	secret from people outside our group.					
10.	I have other students speak it and I have developed interest in it so that when I face difficulty in speaking the standard English with friends, I quickly switch to the substandard one.					

INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE ON THE EFFECTS OF THE USAGE OF SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH ON STANDARD ENGLISH.

1. Does speaking of substandard English benefits you?
2. How does it benefit you? OR Explain.
3. Do you think substandard English will hinder your school taught English?
4. Do you think your performance in Standard English will improve if you avoid the use of substandard English?
5. Do you think communicating in substandard English can interfere with your usage of the Standard English?
6. Why do you think communicating in substandard English can interfere with your usage of the Standard English?

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS ON THE USE OF
SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH BY STUDENTS**

1. Do your students use substandard English to communicate on campus?
2. Have you ever noticed any expression or pronunciation that is made by your students as a result of their use of substandard English?
3. Does your students' use of substandard English reflect in their answers to questions in examinations and class exercises?
4. What is your perception on the use of substandard English by students and the youth in general?

**INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE ON THE FREQUENCY AT WHICH
STUDENTS USE SUBSTANDARD ENGLISH.**

1. Have you used substandard English in your communication with others?
2. How often do you use substandard English in communicating?
3. Why do you use substandard English to communicate?
4. At what places do you use substandard English?
5. Who do you communicate with when using substandard English?
6. How does your location influence your use of substandard English to communicate?