

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**PUNCTUATION ERRORS IN THE WRITINGS OF ABETIFI PRESBYTERIAN**

**SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, ABETIFI-KWAHU**



**2020**

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SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS, ABETIFI-KWAHU**



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

**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, Bertha Anima Gyau, declare that this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and 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 research work is dedicated to my husband, Mr. Samuel Ayetey Chaitey, my children; Juanita D.W. Chaitey, Bertha N. Nyarko Chaitey, Franklin Ayertey Chaitey, and Marilyn Birago Chaitey.

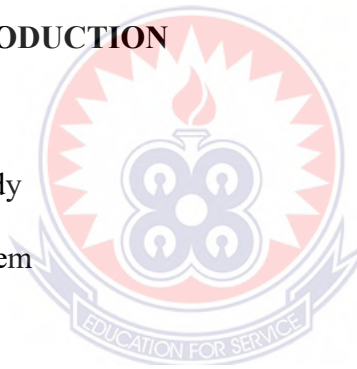


## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

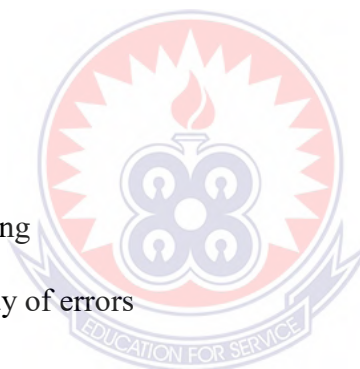
Great is the name of the Lord who has brought me this far. To him alone is the praise. His protection and favor has brought me this far throughout the research. I like to acknowledge some people who have contributed to the success of this research. I am most grateful to my supervisor and head of department, Dr. Fofo Lomotey for her immense contribution throughout the supervision of this research. May God richly bless you in all your endeavours Mama Fofo. I also acknowledge Mr. Samuel Anim Addo, Head of Languages Department, Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School for his support, Rev. Asamoah Boateng (former chaplain APSEC), my loving husband, Mr. Samuel Ayetey Chaitey for his great support and encouragement, my parents Mr. & Mrs. Okyere Gyawu, Mr. & Mrs. Chaitey, and my family members for their immense contribution. Another gratitude goes to Dr. Kwaku Ofori of the Applied Linguistics Department for his contribution to my learning, Mr. & Mrs. Appiagyei for their support, my niece, Akua Takyiwaa Appiagyei, for helping me to care for my baby; Marilyn in the course of study on campus, Mr. Bimpeh Isaac Oduro (APSEC) for your relentless support and all those who helped in diverse ways to bring this research to a success. I pray that the good Lord richly blesses you all.

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## ABSTRACT

This research was designed to examine the punctuation errors in the writings of SHS 2 student of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School. Although a number of students in the Senior High School can express themselves in oral and written English, they have problems in punctuating their writings well to communicate effectively. The research sought to identify how the errors occur in students' work with the use of punctuation marks so that appropriate measures can be put in place to curb the problem. The researcher considered activities such as class test, class exercise to observe how the various texts in the said materials have been punctuated. The result indicated that students used some punctuation marks such as the comma, semi-colon at the expense of others such as colon and the apostrophe. Also, the result is an indication that teachers of English Language do not treat punctuation as a main topic in grammar from the findings, the researcher recommended that teachers of English as well as curriculum developers should attach much attention to punctuation when preparing the syllabus and other related teaching materials



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

The chapter is an introduction to this dissertation. It presents the various elements considered in the study; background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the research, limitations of the study and organization of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

In order to enlighten the good people of Ghana in this period of digital migration and the world becoming a global village, the education of every citizenry from the basic level to the second cycle has become a priority. This has led to the implementation of the free education from the Basic School to the Senior High School. As a result, the queen's language is used as the main medium of instruction. Ghana has consequently designed a second cycle educational system with emphasis on English Language which has always been the medium of instruction throughout all the educational levels right from the beginning of school education in Ghana. Among the second cycle institution in Ghana is one that is located on the top of Kwahu mountain which has the core priority or mandate to equip students with the four macro skills- speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School located at Abetifi-Kwahu in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

Since the inception of the SSS/SHS programme, the school has been performing better with most of the students gaining admission into the university and other tertiary institutions. The level of discipline is quite good. In 2013 WASSCE, the school was

ranked 12 out of the 1761 government assisted schools in Ghana, 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Eastern Region and 1<sup>st</sup> in Kwahu. That notwithstanding, students in the school have various challenges in learning due to the variation in the characteristic and backgrounds of students who get admission yearly. Among the difficulties is the appropriate and judicious use of punctuation in their writing. The structure set up for formal education in Ghana began with English Language as a form or means of instruction because we were colonized by the British. The structure has gone through a lot of reforms after independence. At a point in Ghana's history, education was structured closer to an American model in the 1980s. Most people who learn English as a second language may either learn American English or British English. The worldwide use of English became reality when British created worldwide empire. As a result, most people use British English language as a second language. British has a longstanding interest in English teaching and are able to promote this with her publishers and institutions. English language has become international language and indispensable on the international front. Recently, Ethnology counted at least 79 different languages in Ghana. Other language experts claim there are more than 100 of them. The major languages spoken are Akan, Ewe, and Ga. However, there is no part that is ethnically homogeneous. Every community has different ethnic groups with various dialects. Recently the use of L1 as a means of instruction at the lower primary is emphasized. In Ghana, there is the Basic Education, second cycle education and tertiary education. After the basic school, pupils are enrolled at the Senior High School (or technical/vocational) schools for a three-year program that prepares them for the tertiary: Universities, Nursing training colleges, Colleges of Education and Technical universities. Previously, the study of Ghanaian Language was mandatory at the Senior Secondary (Senior High) until it was abandoned

because of the low proficiency in reading. However, a study in Mozambique demonstrates that children benefit much when they use mother tongue for classroom participation, building self-confidence and literacy. This helps build their second language acquisition (Kamwarigamalu, 2004). The findings may indicate that poor performance in English as a second language in some Ghanaian schools is due to lack of foundation in the child's local language (Owu-Ewie, 2006).

Some students in Ghana are unable to communicate fluently or learn effectively in English because they often come from non-English speaking homes and backgrounds. The educational system should be structured or modified instruction in both the English language and academic courses. Like any other language, proficiency in speaking, reading and writing prepares the learner to become communicatively competent in the use of English Language. The communicative approach to teaching is concerned with communicative competence and fluency as the key element. Proficiency in English whether written or spoken should function at the level of correct grammar. Therefore, the integration of grammar into all the skills is a necessity. The writing skills especially have grammar as the key to the mastery of writing in English. An aspect of grammar that has to do with punctuation marks enhances writing skills and effective communication. When it comes to the oral skills, apart from a speaker using correct grammar and being fluent in English during conversation or speech, makes good use of body characteristics such as body movement, gestures, facial expressions, tone or voice etc. to deliver a piece of information (Wiredu, 2005).

These body characteristics are able to help the listeners decode the message. Thus, during verbal or oral conversation, listeners listen to the discourse or message as well as see some gestures to add to meaning. Meaning can also be deduced from one's voice.

However, when it comes to writing, there is the difficulty in emphasizing changes that come as result of voicing in speech. Thus, the correct use of punctuation marks to depict voicing (when we pause and raise or lower our voices) in writing is indispensable. Punctuation accuracy is however a problem in writing especially among students. It is therefore necessary to examine the case of punctuation marks more critically. As a result, the correct use of punctuation in the written skills really counts. Punctuation has a major role in the written discourse, for this reason, there is the assertion that “punctuation marks are symbols which are used to separate and join units of language into a cohesive text” (Kirkpatrick, 2007, p. 47). Thus, punctuation marks are certain established marks or symbols within a written sentence. Amoako, (2010) defined a sentence as a group of words expressing a complete thought. Punctuation prevents these groups of words from just being string of words by breaking them up into meaningful units (Kirkpatrick, 2007). The use of accurate punctuation in students’ writings is a difficulty in the learning and teaching of English language in various schools in Ghana. For this reason, the Chief Examiner’s report has over the periods hammered on punctuation errors in students’ final exams in English language and no proper attention has been given to the problem or any concrete solution given. For the second cycle schools, such as Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School the problem is even bigger because the students that get admission have wide range diverse indigenous language coupled with their socio-economic backgrounds that influence the problem at hand. Consequently, it has become imperative to critically have a new look at punctuation errors in the writings of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School students. There is the need to dive into this serious issue of punctuation errors in order to make a way out to help students communicate effectively in writing in which

voicing and body gestures are not present to add meaning. Thus, it is the punctuation that adds to the meaning of written text.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Many academic institutions all over the world point to the teaching and learning of English Language and Ghanaian academic institutions are no exception. English Language is the official language of Ghana and a language of instruction from the upper primary to the highest level of education in the country. The focuses are on orals, reading, comprehension, summary, grammar and writing skills. The competencies in these areas are judged by students' outcome. The underline fact to this is to effect communication positively. When speaking, the pauses or variations that occur in the voice add to the meaning one intends to carry. This should also be seen in writings with good punctuation marks. This will enable the reader to feel those pauses or variation in the tone of the writer.

The lack of competence in the use of punctuation marks in the writings of second year students of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School distorts the meaning behind their writings. This is because most teachers would have to read meanings into their writings. The evidence is seen in their class exercises and exams scripts. Some teachers are compelled by the situation to read aloud their sentences to the hearing of other colleagues. In some instances, it is realized that, there are omission of some punctuation marks, others occur at where they are of no use and many more. The researcher realized that the problem is not always on the sentence construction but the inappropriate use of punctuation marks was a major factor in their sentence construction. It is to this effect that the researcher aims at investigating the punctuation errors in the writings of Abetifi



Presbyterian Senior High School. The study will help to identify the punctuation errors that the students make, causes of such error and the way forward to mitigate such challenges.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to critically look at the punctuation errors in the writings of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School in the Kwahu-East District of education. Examine the errors that occur in students' writings as far as punctuation errors are concerned, causes of the challenges and the way out to improve upon their use of punctuation marks in their writings.

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The main objective of the study was to find out:

- a) the types of punctuation errors that students make in their writings.
- b) the causes of punctuation errors in students' writings.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The researcher was poised to finding answers to the following questions:

1. what type of errors do students make with punctuation marks?
2. what are the causes of such errors?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

Punctuation is an essential element of writing skills. Effective communication takes place when a written text is well punctuated. In this regard, the study seeks to bring to light the punctuation errors that occur in students' writings and the causes of such errors. The outcome of this study, would provide a useful insight on punctuation errors for both

teachers and students. Students' attention would be drawn to the errors they make and teachers would be able to adopt suitable strategies in the teaching and learning process to resolve or minimize punctuation errors in students' writings. This would boost students' writing competence for effective communication.

### **1.7 Delimitation of the study**

Generally, from the chief examiners report on WASSCE English Language, students over the years have problem with punctuation and the target school is no exception. This is evidence in the sentences that students punctuate and their ability to punctuate well a given passage.

The study did not focus on all punctuate marks but the basic and most common ones that would help students write good sentences and be able to express themselves meaningfully in writing. These include; comma, quotation marks, apostrophe, full stop, exclamation, colon, hyphen and question marks.

### **1.8 Limitation of the research**

Though the research began well, sampled students exercise books were collected where data on particular class exercise taken. The books given back to students to continue with their usual class exercises after lessons. The first 30 and second 30 exercises used were taken in turns. However, exercises on other aspects were not collected because of the double truck system in the school where students needed to go on breaks coupled with COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world at large. Schools were asked to close down and all the students had to go home. Therefore, the two exercises that were collected were used. The information gathered on them were very useful for the study therefore, the

double truck and the pandemic effects were not enough to render the result of the study invalid.

### **1.9 Organization of the study**

The rest of the dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews the literature. It discusses the difference between errors and mistakes. It also discusses the taxonomies of errors. These are the classification of errors according to certain criteria. The types of error taxonomy identified are linguistic category classification, the surface structure taxonomy, the classification taxonomy and the communicative effect taxonomy. Additionally, the causes of errors as identified by Brown (2000) are considered. They are the interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies. Additionally, it examines the concept of interlanguage proposed by Selinker (1972). The chapter also presents the importance of errors in language learning as well as related studies of punctuation error and the need for good punctuation. Chapter two ends with a conclusion. The Chapter 3 introduces the procedure in conducting the research. It deals with the research design, which is qualitative in nature, the sample, and sampling procedure. The chapter also discusses the research instrument used as well as the data collection procedures and finally the data analysis procedure. Chapter 4 presents the results from the analysis. The errors identified are grouped into categories of omission, wrong selection, wrong replacement and redundant punctuation. Chapter 5 gives the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains review of related literature to the study. Punctuation plays a very vital role in written communication, without which writings will be a mere chain of words. However, punctuation errors in writings distort and confuse readers. Carey, (1978, p. 15) asserts that the purpose of punctuation is to do away with vagueness and make clear relationship between words. Dawkins, (1995, p. 422) argues that punctuation of a good writer exhibits “meaning in-depth, not grammar-dependent”.

#### 2.1 The concept of error

In any learning situation, errors become an inevitable part of the process. Thus, one cannot skip errors if the person is interested in learning to perfection. As a result, errors are part of the learning process. According to Edge, (1989) errors are defined as the forms that languages users cannot correct by themselves although they have been taught. Thus, the learning of English language and for that matter punctuation errors are inevitable. In addition, Ellis, (1994) asserts that errors are the deviation from the norms of the target language. However, when there is acquisition of enough knowledge on the target language, the lesser the errors and learners are able to correct their errors, become conscious of the target language and competence in the language unfolds. Thus, “errors are integral part of language learning and not evidence of failure to learn” (Davis & Pearse, 2002, p. 103)

## 2.2 Errors and mistakes

On a broader perspective, errors and mistakes may seem to have similar meaning but on a critical assessment, the two have distinct meanings. One is technically different from the other. According to James, (1998, p. 1) language error is an unsuccessful bit of languages. That is, learners are unsuccessful in the language because they have not acquired enough knowledge. Once they acquire additional knowledge in the area, they are able to correct their own errors. However, mistakes according to Ellis, (1997, p. 17) reflects occasional lapses in performance. These happen because the learner in some instance is unable to do what he or she knows.

Language acquisition is a gradual process through which competency and skills are achieved. Errors and mistakes are part of the gradual process before the skills and competencies are achieved. This makes them (errors and mistakes) important components of the learning process. In order to develop any communicative skills: verbal or written, attempts are made towards such goal or achievement. Through the attempts, errors and mistakes set in because they are inevitable part of the process. Thus, while errors are made because learners do not have enough or lack knowledge about the grammar rule, correct use of sentences or words and many more, mistakes happen because of occasional lapses or inattention in performance. Moreover, errors are the flawed side of the speech or writings of a learner because of lack of enough knowledge while mistakes are the lapses that occur in speech or writing though knowledge is acquired. Finally, Edge, (1989) asserts that mistake can be accessed in three broad categories. One is “Slips” according to Edge, this is the mistake when pointed to learners can correct themselves. Secondly, “Errors” are the mistakes that learners cannot correct themselves but need

guide or explanation. The last is “Attempts” ; these are instances when learners make efforts to say something but do not know the right way out.

## **2.3 Types of errors**

Errors are classified on the bases of particular criteria. This is evident in James, (1998, p. 48) where James looks at the four suggested kinds of error taxonomy from Burt, Dulay and Krashen. These include the linguistic category classification, the surface structure taxonomy, the comparative taxonomy and the communicative effect taxonomy. Each of them is explained in the subsequent sub headings.

### **2.3.1 Linguistic category classification**

This category deals with the language level of the error. Accessing errors under this category would be looking also at the class of the error, its rank and the grammatical system of the error. These have to do with the specification of the error in terms of linguistics categories, the location of the error in the general target languages base on the particular linguistics items affected by the error (James, 1998, p. 105).

### **2.3.2 The surface structure taxonomy**

Many researchers are in support of Burt and Krashen (1982) which proposes the surface structure taxonomy. This taxonomy is described based on the learner’s perspective. In that, it looks at how learners alter the surface structure of the language when used incorrectly. Anytime the language is used wrongly, its structure changes and therefore an error occurs. As a result, four categories were proposed as to how learners’ change of the surface structure affects the correct forms. These are omission, additions, misinformation and disordering.

Omission is the missing or absence of an item that ought to appear in the sentence structure, e.g., “who there? instead of “who is there?”

“The teacher gives out the students books.” instead of “The teacher gives out the students’ books.” In these two sentences, there were omission of “is” and “ ’ ” (apostrophe) after “who” and “students” in the two sentences respectively. Also, addition is experience with the availability of unwanted item. e.g., “If you go, you would be punished, severely.” Instead of “If you go, you would be punished.” “I must to come over.” instead of “I must come over.” The comma “ , ” after “ punished” and the “to” before “ come” in the two sentences are unwanted.

Misordering is the mispositioning of certain items in sentence. e.g., Is there who? Instead of the arrangement: Who is there? It is clearly seen that misordering is a form of error that affects the surface of the correct form. Lastly, misinformation which is the wrong choice or use of certain morphemes at a particular instance or time. e.g., “The book was given to I” instead of “The book was given to me.”

### **2.3.3 Communicative effect taxonomy**

The taxonomy deals with the effect that errors have on the listeners or readers. It tries to distinguish errors that bring about miscommunication and those that do not (Dulay et al, 1982). Errors are classified into global and local errors

#### **2.3.3.1 Global error**

Errors that had to do with the general sentence organization that effect communication. As a result of the wide syntactic scope of the error, it had the name “global”. The global errors include:

1. A wrong order or major constituents e.g. The school headed old students. The sentence calls for different interpretation. It should be written as, “Old students headed the school”
2. The missing and misplacing of sentence connectors e.g.
  - a. “The man came here, you asked him to.” Instead of “The man came here because you asked him to.” The connector “because” was missing
  - b. “So I am late must hurry up” instead of “I am late so must hurry up.” The connector “so” was misplaced.
  - c. “I enjoyed the first episode though would like to watch it again.” Instead of “I enjoyed the first episode yet would like to watch it again.”
3. Missing cues to signal obligatory exceptions to pervasive syntactic rules. e.g., “I excited her comments”. The missing cues in the passive sentence are; “am” and “by”. Their absence makes readers have different interpretation to the sentence. It should be “I am excited by her comment.”

#### **2.3.4 Local errors**

These errors do not significantly influence the meaning and the structure of the overall sentence. The errors are in the following categories.

##### ***3.2.4.1 Errors in nouns and verbs inflections***

*He sit quietly in class.*

*There are many structure in the school.*

The inflection “s” should be added to “sit” and “structure”. The correct sentence should be:

*He sits quietly in class.*



*There are many structures in the school.*

### **3.2.4.2 Errors in the articles**

*This is an girl.*

The article should be “a”, therefore should be written as

*This is a girl.*

### **3.2.4.3 Errors in auxiliary**

*Ama have taken the key to the office.*

The auxiliary “has” should be used instead. The correct sentence should be:

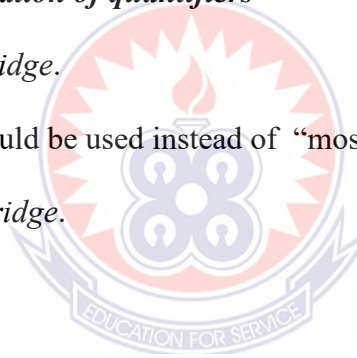
*Ama has taken the key to the office.*

### **3.2.4.4 Errors in the formation of quantifiers**

*I have most water in the fridge.*

The quantifier “some” should be used instead of “most”, the correct sentence should be:

*I have some water in the fridge.*



## **2.4 Punctuation errors**

Punctuation errors occur when there is wrong or faulty use of punctuation marks in the written language. The intended meaning of the message is distorted due to the wrong use of punctuation marks. Thus, the aspect of intonation and meaning are not conveyed in the written language because the punctuation symbols are used wrongly or unused.

### **2.4.1 Types of punctuation errors**

According to Carl James (1998), it is very necessary for English Language teachers to know the types of punctuation errors committed by their students. This will inform what to teach and what students are expected to learn. In the light of this study, I will consider some types or categories of punctuation errors committed by students in reference to

Corder (1981) and other studies. According to Corder (1981), students sometimes omit some punctuation marks because of their complexity in production. Students do so as a result of poor ability towards the use of punctuation. Thus, poor insight in the use of particular punctuation marks prevents students not to use them at all. This brings about omission of some punctuation marks. Samhon and Abidal (2016) shared the same idea that students sometimes omit them (punctuation) in reference that they lack the necessary ways of learning how to punctuate. Also, Corder (1981) adds that students do not only omit punctuation marks, but they also add needless or redundant punctuation marks. Robinson (2002) agrees with Corder (1981) that the omission and wrong use of punctuation marks by students of secondary schools are very common in students' writings.

Another, kind of punctuation error made by students is selection. Student commit errors in punctuation due to wrong selection of punctuation marks, Corder, (1981) example; *The student's are in the dining hall*. This statement does not show any possession and therefore does not need an apostrophe. In addition, Stevenson (2005) laments that many students are unable to place the right punctuation mark in the appropriate place. Stevenson explains that errors are committed due to incomplete acquisition of target skill; in this case, punctuation marks, exigencies of the teaching and learning environment and errors made as a result of the normal problem of punctuation performance. Zedeh-Dabbagh (2009) indicates that, learners are inconsistent in using commas and periods. Mann (2003) is of a different view that there is difficulty in learning punctuation. This is explained by Carrol and Wilson (1993, p. 191) that learners "encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation". Byrne (1988) agrees with them that, punctuation is very problematic as it has never been standard.

In addition, Gomez (2010) reports in his study that some Arabs English learners struggle in writing and particularly in punctuation. Gomez explains that Arabic has fewer limitations in the use of punctuation marks, such as commas and periods than English. Therefore, there is the L1 transfer and interference with their learning of English. Thus, the errors made by students as far as punctuation is concerned can be categorized into omission, addition and selection of punctuation though there can sometimes be mis-ordering of punctuation which is not common or frequent.

### **2.5 Causes of errors**

Brown (2000) grouped the causes of errors into four categories. These are interlingual transfer, intralingua transfer, context of learning and communication strategy. It is essential to identify the causes of errors in students' writings. This would be a guide as to how to help them correct such errors in their writings.

#### **2.5 Interlingual transfer**

The kind of error in the inter-lingual transfer is by mother tongue interference. Learners learn their new language on the bases of the first language they come into contact with. Example, "I have a sheep black" instead of "I have a black sheep." The noun appears before an adjective in the mother tongue. Therefore, the idea is transferred to the forming of the sentence in the second language.

#### **2.5.2 Intra-lingual transfer**

These errors are made as a result of the difficulty or problems with the target language itself. The error is also seen in the process of learning a language when one has not acquired in-depth knowledge. This brings about overgeneralization and misuse of the second language.

### 2.5.3 The context of learning

It is concerned with the classroom situation or social situation as well as the teaching material in the classroom. The teacher and the textbook are sources of information that can lead the learner to make faulty hypothesis about the second language. James (1998) shared similar ideas on the causes of error in the second language by Brown (2000). Additionally, Richards (1974, p. 124) states that “the causes of error in studying a language might be derived from the interference of the learners.” The errors that emanate from the general characteristics of the rules of learning according to Richards are known as intralingual error while the errors made as a result of the learner’s mothers tongue interference is interlanguage errors.

Again Richard (1970) subdivided intralingual errors into four divisions. These are overgeneralization error, ignorance of the rule restriction, incomplete application of rules and developmental error. Overgeneralization errors occur when a learner forms or create a deviant structure or based on other structures in the target language. E.g., “She must comes home.” instead of “She must come home.” Secondly the ignorance of the rule of restrictions occurs when learners apply rules of context where they are unacceptable. E.g., “He made me to sing.” instead of “He asked or ordered me to sing). Also, the incomplete application of the rules, explains how learners are unable to fully develop some structures in the target language. Example: “Ama is happy?” instead of “Is Ama happy?” Lastly, a developmental error is as a result of faulty comprehension of distinction in the target language. Learners try to form hypothesis with their limited experience in the classroom or textbook. Examples: “The noise is very much” instead of “The noise is too much.

## **2.6 Approaches to the study of errors**

Latiff and Bakar (2007) propose four approaches to the study of errors. These are Contrastive analysis hypothesis (CAH), Error analysis (EA) the contemporary approach, Interlanguage analysis (IA) and Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). The study would consider the error analysis (EA), and the interlanguage analysis (IA) approaches.

### **2.6.1 Error analysis**

This is the process of determining the incidence, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language acquisition. That is, it is a linguistic analysis that focuses on the comparison between the errors learners make in the target language and that of the target language itself. Hourani (2008, p. 39) explains error analysis as the study of linguistics ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance. In addition, Crystal (1999) asserts that error analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms of a target language produced by someone learning the language, especially a foreign language. According to Brown (2000), there are two main sources of error. These are interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual transfer is the errors made as a result of the first language interference on the second language acquisition. The situation is explained by Kavaliauskiene (2009, p. 4) that the transfer may occur because the learner lacks the required information in the second language or may lack attentive capacity to achieve the appropriate language routine.

Hamza (2012) suggests that error analysis is different from the correction. Thus, error analysis makes a scientific study of errors made by a group of people with same mother tongue in the study of the second or foreign language. According to Hamza, students“

errors inform teachers, researchers and the student themselves. The teacher is informed of how far the learners have gone and what the learner must still learn. Additionally, the learner has the benefit of using the errors as instruments to test his hypothesis concerning the language he learns. For this reason, Starks (2001, p 19) explains that teachers need to view positively the errors made by students and should not regard them as learner's failure to acquire the rules and structures. The errors should be seen as the process of learning. Additionally, Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) contribute that error analysis helps to identify the types and causes of errors to effectively help in minimizing errors made by second language learners.

Despite the positives, error analysis according Brown (1986) has some major problems that affect the precise analysis of learner's errors. If too much attention is placed on errors, positive reinforcement of free communication may be left behind. Also, Brown (1980) asserts the production of data is overstressing in error analysis. The last of the problem is avoidance in which a learner may avoid the use of a word, structure or discourse that is not similar to his native language. The situation of avoidance is also confirmed by James (1998) that indicates that error analysis does not consider the avoidance strategy in the second language learning. Finally, Ellis (1985) asserts that language learning is a developmental process and error analysis has failed to help the understanding of how learners develop knowledge of the second language over time.

### **2.6.2 Inter language**

Errors are part of the language learning process and as such inevitable especially at the early stages of target language acquisition. Selinker is of the view that there is a clear difference in the utterances of a native speaker and the second language learner. According him, this difference emanates from a language system known as inter

language. Thus, the theory of interlanguage was proposed by Selinker in the year 1972. Selinker's concept is of the assumption that there is a *psychological structure latent in the brain* that is activated when one tries to learn a second language. Therefore, interlanguage is a term coined by Selinker that refers to the systematic knowledge of a language that is independent of both the target language and the learner's native language. Thus, interlanguage falls between the native language and the target language. The system is based on the best attempt of learners to provide order and structure to the learning of languages around them. Through practices, errors and testing of hypothesis, learners draw closer and closer to the system used by the native speakers of the target language.

Larsen Freeman and Michael (1991) regard "interlanguage as a continuum between the native language and the target language. The learner language is systematic and any change or difference may be as a result of the learning experiences. Thus, interlanguage has an unstable system and it is permeable to new linguistic forms because of its dynamic quality. It also allows a set of variable rules to be revised to suit another. Selinker (1972, p. 71) defines interlanguage as the separate linguistic system that is evidenced when an adult learner attempts to express meaning in the target language. Selinker makes the assumption that the "adult" learning the second language uses what he terms as latent psychological structure. Ellis (2012, p. 350) explains interlanguage as both the internal system a learner constructs at a point in time and the series of interconnected systems that is evidence in the learner's progress over time. Again, Ellis is of the view that interlanguage is the starting point of explaining the nature of acquiring the second or foreign language.

Additionally, Selinker coined the term fossilization which states that there is a mechanism that also exists in interlingual unit (native language, interlanguage and the target language) and it will be present no matter how old or young the learner is or how much teaching or instruction is given. Thus, fossilization is a kind of error that is difficult to get rid of because it has been in existence for a long period of time. Example, it is common with Ghanaians to say, “my best pepsodent is colgate” or “the pampers I prefer is softcare.” According to Selinker, there are several factors that lead to fossilization. These are the native language, transfer of training, strategies of the second language learner, strategies of L2 communication, and overgeneralized rules as learners acquire the target language.

## **2.7 Importance of errors in language learning**

Error can occur between two languages or within a particular language. They are said to be unintended but may affect meaning at various points in communication. Yet errors are not entirely problematic because they help in the learning process. The significance of errors are discussed by many researchers. Hourani (2008) is of the view that errors are significant in three different ways. The benefit is to the teacher, the learner and the researcher. It tells the teacher how far the goal or objective the learner has achieved and what remains for them to learn. To the learner, the error they make can be used as a device to aid their learning. Hamza (2012) provides evidence that learner errors are effective means of providing grammatical accuracy. To the researcher, errors provide evidence of how language is learnt or acquired.

In addition to the strategies, the learner uses to the discovery of the language, Corder (1967) confirms that the errors are useful for the teachers, learners and researchers and



reflect the language learners develop. Another importance is expressed by Jamil and Kamran (2016) that knowing more about how grammar works is to understand more about how grammar is used and misused. It is a way to help learners to test the hypothesis about the nature of the target language. Also, Akhter (2011) confirms that giving feedback and correcting errors do not only inform learners to know how well they have performed but also help increase motivation and help build classroom environment.

## **2.8 The need for accurate punctuation**

Punctuation marks are important aspect of English grammar and writing. Punctuation is often essential to convey meaning. Poor punctuation contributes to unorganized writing and confuses readers. It is an indisputable fact that, coherence and structure in any piece of writing are influenced by punctuation marks (Gamarott, 2000; Shaughnessy, 1977). In my readings, I came across a researcher who intended to correlate the relationship between punctuation errors and the academic levels (major in the English Language) and gender of students in a university. I wondered; what punctuation error has got to do with gender until I came across Truss (2004) an English Professor who asked his students to punctuate the sentence: A woman without her man is nothing. The males punctuated the sentence as: “A woman, without her man, is nothing”. However, the females punctuated it differently: “A woman: without her, man is nothing”. The above example demonstrates the power of punctuation as far as gender is concerned and its role in resolving ambiguity. Though, the same words in structure, punctuation marks give different meanings to the same group of words without changing their sequence.

The significance of punctuation as expressed by Carely (1978) is that the purpose of punctuation is to eliminate vagueness and make clear relationship between words. This is

confirmed by Truss (2003) that appropriate meaning can be conveyed through proper punctuation. In addition, the importance of correct marks of punctuation is brought out clearly with examples from an article by Singh (2015). In the article, Czar Alexander III had once sentenced a man to death by writing on the warrant: Pardon impossible, to be sent to Siberia. Alexander's wife saved the man's life by changing the position of the comma on the warrant: Pardon, impossible to be sent to Siberia. It is told that, authorities set the man free. This is a clear evidence of the power or importance of punctuation. Other instances are cited in the following sentences:

*Let us eat, daddy.*

*Let us eat daddy.*

*Hang him, not let him free*

*Hang him not, let him free*

*The criminal, says the judge, should be hanged.*

*The criminal says, the judge should be hanged.*

All the three sets of sentences do change meaning by omitting or shifting the comma by just one place forward or backwards from what the sentence ought to be in the first sentences to something different in the second instances. Meanings are completely changed. These are confirmed by Rumki, (2005) that wrong use of punctuation can interrupt the flow of ideas and change meaning. Punctuation is more than an incidental aspect of writing; It is an essential skill that helps you to express yourself clearly, directly and effectively. "It is essential to accurately use punctuation as it helps to strengthen arguments made in a text, especially in academic writings. In addition, Amelia (2008) is of the view that, without terminal punctuation marks, ideas and sentences would not move together and the writing might be very difficult to comprehend.

Moreover, Moore (2016) asserts that the silent reader uses punctuation marks as an instruction (guide) in a saccade to focus on the end of a unit in a discourse which obviously signals or locate subsequent new information. He adds that information structure is defined as dividing the flow of discourse into units, each containing important information in writing. The punctuation marks show these divisions in sentences to effect communication. Elliot (2006) is of the view that punctuation marks do the same assignment as road signs do on a highway. They order students when to speed, slowdown, or when to stop.

Samson (2014, p. 23) is of the view that “punctuation enables us to clarify statements and communicate better with readers.” Ritter (2001, p. 112) is of a similar opinion and observes that “punctuation exists to clarify meaning in the written word and to facilitate reading”. According to him, too much of it can hamper meaning of a text and too little can lead to misreading. In addition, Metcalf and Astle (1980, p. 76) note that “punctuation literary means pointing”. According to them, punctuation in grammar exhibits division of statements, or collections words, into sentences, clauses, phrases, questions etc. Banjo (1985) is in agreement with Metcalfe and Astle and adds that punctuation marks are simply a system of pointing that is used to interrupt communication. Banjo is of the view that, the main purpose of punctuation is to clarify a piece of writing for easy reading and listening. Also, when punctuation or capitalization are used wrongly or omitted could completely alter the meaning of a written piece.

A different idea of punctuation is expressed by Schiffhorst and Schell. Schiffhorst and Schell (1991, p. 10) argue that “punctuation marks represent much of the information we convey in speaking when we pause and raise or lower our voices; information such as where a sentence ends and where the sentence is a question or statement”. To them,

punctuation signals things that are sometime not well communicated in speech; an example is quoting someone directly. The quotation marks appearance is obviously seen in writings. However, this evidence may be lacking in the voice or tone in speech if not well communicated.

## **2.9 Related studies**

The consensus in the education arena is that errors are inevitable. This is because errors are part of the learning process. Therefore, punctuation errors are inevitable in students' writings. Other researchers have found these in students' writings. Awad (2012) conducted a study to find out the most common punctuation errors made by English students at An-Najah National University in writing. Awad concluded that there was overuse of commas at the expense of the full stop. Also, there were the wrong use of quotation marks and misuse of semicolon. In addition, Sudilah (2015) conducted a study on Punctuation errors by the Fourth semester student of the English Department (Almed Dahlan University Yogyakarta). Some of their final examination papers were used as samples. The errors detected covered four kinds of punctuation marks: full stop, commas, apostrophe and quotation marks. Comma had the highest punctuation error recorded. In addition, Al-Mutib (1989) is of the view that, the comma is the common mark that confuses students in its use among words and sentences.

Wati (2014) indicates in a study that addition errors made with punctuation marks in essay writing are: comma, apostrophe, question marks exclamation marks and colon. The comma recorded the highest punctuation error made by students. This confirms the study by Sudilah (2015) which also had the comma having the highest number of punctuation error. That means students make a lot of mistake with the use of comma in their writings.

Afrin (2016, p. 109) also states that “sometimes their long sentence became proper loaded sentence without proper punctuation.” This implies that students make mistakes in using punctuation when they write too long sentences.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter communicates the procedures that were followed in conducting the research. The chapter therefore deals with the research design, the population, the sampling techniques and procedure, the data collection instruments and the data collection procedure, and data analysis.

#### 3.1 Research design

Research design is the process of planning and structuring the form of the research to elicit valid and reliable information. The qualitative research design is used for the study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative research design involves relatively small-scale studies for in-depth investigations, with the aim of understanding social phenomena from participants' perspectives, using interactive strategies in real life situations. The qualitative design is suitable for the study though the approach will be descriptive in nature as there is the use of frequency counts to rate the errors identified in the study. According to Babbie (2007), descriptive studies are often cross-sectional and so it will offer me the opportunity to observe, assess and describe the extent of students' punctuation difficulties in Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School. Amedahe (2002) maintains that in the descriptive approach, accurate description of activities, objects, processes and persons is objective.

### **3.2 Population**

Alhassan (2012) explains population as the entire group of people, objects, animals, institutions, establishments which the researcher intends to study. In this case, whatever the basic unit, the population always comprises the entire aggregation of elements in which the researcher is interested. The population for this study was the students of Abetifi Presby Senior High School. In the school, there was total number of 1650 students. The focus was on form two students of about 602.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling procedure**

The sample is simply a subset of the population. The researcher may not be able to test all the individuals in the given population. As such, a sample size is used and must be a representative of the population. Thus, the population gives the sample and then it (population) takes the conclusion from the results obtained from the sample. Sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population, and to obtain a representation of the whole target population. In fact, Sarantakos (1997) intimates that “samples are expected to be representative. For that reason, samples are expected to be chosen by means of sound methodological principles” (p. 140). Simple random sampling was used to select the respondents.

For the purpose of the research a sample size of about 30 students were used in the study. Out of the Form 2 students, 3 students from each class of the 10 classes were randomly selected for the purpose of the study. This allowed every student a chance of being selected. The researcher wrote 3 “YES” and a number of “NO” depending on the class size on pieces of papers for the students to pick randomly. Those who picked the “YES”

formed the sampled population. This was to save time and get accurate information for the study. In the end, 30 students were selected for the study.

### **3.4 Research instrument**

According to Gay (1992), all research studies involve data collection. The Data for the study was largely qualitative derived from systematic enquiry, analyzed and interpreted to make sense of the problem of Punctuation among students in the selected school. The researcher used error analysis for the study. Error analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. It is concerned with the analysis of the error committed by L2 learners by comparing the learners' acquired norms with the target acquired norms and explaining the identified errors (Sawalmeh, 2013). The main instrument used in this research is students' work that was common in their exercise books with regard to the use of punctuation marks. The researcher was able to identify some punctuation errors or difficulties in their exercises.

### **3.5 Data collection procedure**

Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypothesis and evaluate outcome. The data was collected personally. Before the data collection, a copy of an introductory letter from the University was sent to the Headmistress of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School. In addition, discussions were made with the teachers involved for the selected classes. The aim of the study was to investigate the punctuation errors form two students of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School made in their writings. To this end, the researcher used a class test and an exercise given to the selected students that instructed them to punctuate using the



required punctuation marks. The researcher categorized the punctuation errors identified into omission of punctuation marks, wrong placement, redundant punctuation and wrong selection of punctuation marks for the two exercises. Analysis is also made per the errors of the individual punctuation marks.

### **3.6 Data analysis**

In analyzing the data from the work on punctuation, the researcher used data analysis procedure suggested by Gass and Selinker (2008). To them, there are identification of errors, classification of errors, and quantification of errors. Thus, the first step was to identify the errors that were produced by the students. In this step, the researcher tried to identify all the punctuation errors found in the students' writings. Then the researcher classified and categorized the errors made by students into several items; omission of punctuation marks, wrong placement, redundant punctuation and wrong selection of punctuation marks as well as analyzing the punctuation marks used. The researcher then found out the number of punctuation errors in each category and calculated them in order to get the number of errors that were made for the 60 exercises. Similarly, analysis was made on students' ability to use expected punctuation marks in the dialogue comprehension class exercise. The two exercises are put together for analysis.

In the analysis, the written text used composed of sentences without punctuation marks and a dialogue comprehension passage read in class and re-written without punctuation marks this time around to test the students. Each student was expected to use 21 punctuation marks in the different sentences of the first exercise. This gives a total of 630 punctuation marks from the 30 exercises of the selected students. Additionally, each was expected to employ 53 punctuation marks in the dialogue comprehension passage. This also requires a total number of 1,590 from the 30 exercises of the students. The dialogue

passage had already been read in class, so this exercise was to test their ability to bring to life the pauses in the conversation between the two characters (the two brothers). In all, 2,220 punctuation marks were expected from the 60 exercises of the 30 sampled students



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the result of the research. It analyses the test results on punctuation exercises administered to the students. A total of thirty (30) students' work was analyzed. Sixty (60) exercises were used. The exercises were in two folds: one was a test on punctuation of sentences and the other an exercise on punctuation of a dialogue. For better explanation, the test on punctuation of sentences is named *exercise 1* and the punctuation of a dialogue is named *exercise 2*. The chapter also discusses the results of the findings. Some punctuation marks expected at particular places in their exercise were missing. Therefore, they were categorized as omission of punctuation marks. These include commas apostrophe, colons, hyphen, full stop, quotation marks, exclamation marks and question marks. Also, some punctuation marks were used wrongly. For example, instead of a sentence demanding a colon, a comma was used. This was categorized as wrong selection of punctuation marks. In addition, wrong placement was the category that catered for punctuation marks that were wrongly positioned. Lastly, redundant punctuation was the category for punctuations that were of no use. Thus, where there was no need for punctuation, one was forced in there, making the punctuation mark redundant. Table 4.1 represents the categories of errors that the researcher used in grouping the errors as identified.

**Table 4.1. Punctuation errors in students' work**

<b>Punctuation error</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Omission	957	86.4
Wrong selection	47	4.2
Wrong placement	90	8.1
Redundant	14	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,108</b>	<b>100</b>

The information in Table 1 is presented in Figure 4.1 as follows:

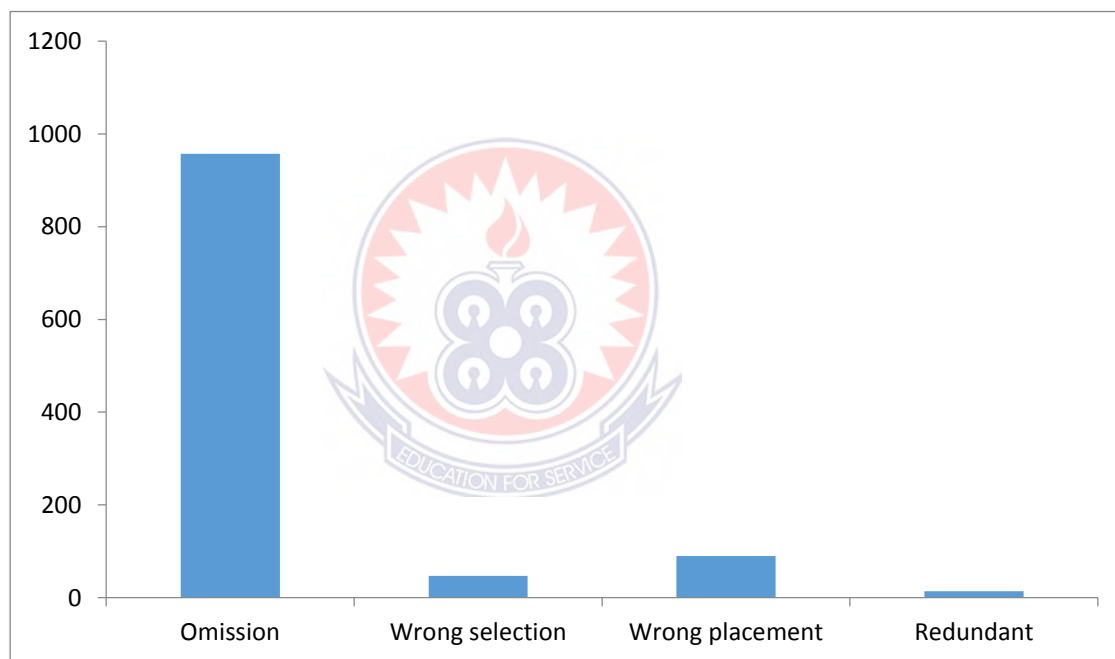
**Figure 4.1. Punctuation errors in students' work**

Table 4.1 indicates the categories of punctuation errors made by sampled students. Here, different types of punctuation marks are grouped into these categories. The omission of punctuation marks recorded the highest number of 957 punctuations that were not present at their expected places. This represented 86.4% of the total number of punctuation errors. Thus, omission took the chunk of the total number of punctuation errors. The least

category was the redundant punctuation which had a total of 14 errors, representing 1.3% of the total number of errors. Wrong selection and wrong placement categories recorded 47 errors and 90 errors representing 4.2% and 8.1% respectively.

Table 4.1.1 shows the omission of punctuation marks; the punctuations that were left out or omitted in students' work.

**Table 4.1.1. Omission of punctuation marks**

<b>Punctuation marks</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Comma	87	9.1%
Apostrophe	184	19.2%
Colon	8	0.8%
Hyphen	21	2.2%
Full stop	168	17.6%
Quotation mark	329	34.4%
Exclamation	88	9.2%
Question mark	72	7.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4.1.1 Represents the Information in Table 4.1.1.

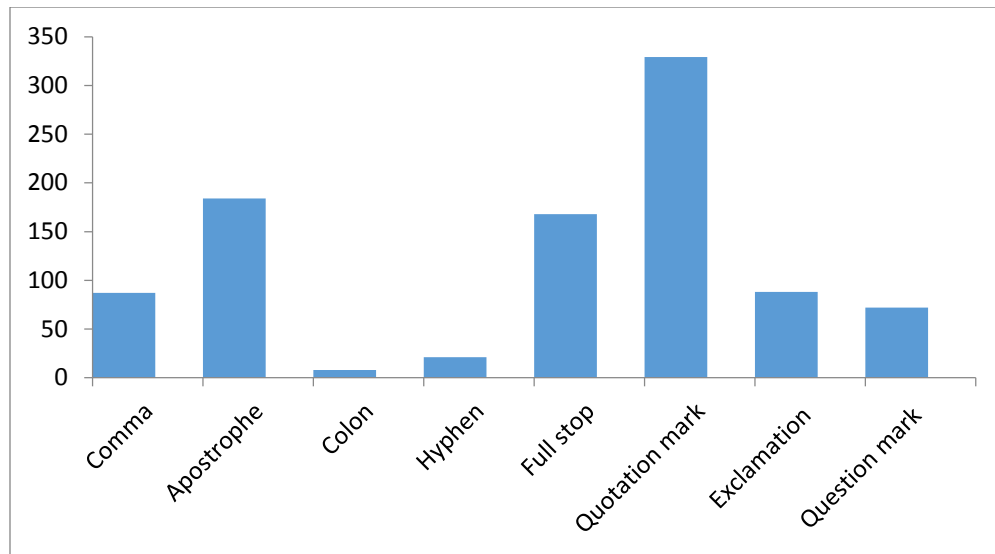
**Figure 4.1.1. Omission of punctuation marks**

Table 4.1.1 indicates the various punctuation marks that were omitted at expected places in the students' exercises. The omission of quotation marks recorded the highest. A number of 329 quotation marks were not found or were lacking in students' work, representing 34.4% of the total number of punctuation errors made under omission category. It is followed by apostrophe which recorded 184 omissions, representing 19.2%. This is closely followed by full stop which had 168 of them not appearing, representing 17.6%. Additionally, 88 exclamation marks, 87 commas and 72 question marks were also not found in their work. Also, 21 hyphens and 8 colons were nowhere to be found. Thus, the students did not use the punctuation marks in the category though they (marks) were expected of them (students). Examples of the errors are:

- a. *If you go you will be punished.*
- b. *The teacher gave out the girls books.*
- c. *Don't you know you're hurting me Efo cried out?*
- d. *I can hear someone coming, Efo whispered softly.*

e. *Aren't his footsteps loud?*

**Expected responses**

a. *If you go, you will be punished.*

b. *The teacher gave out the girls' books*

c. *"Don't you know you're hurting me!", Efo cried*

d. *"I can hear someone coming", Efo whispered softly.*

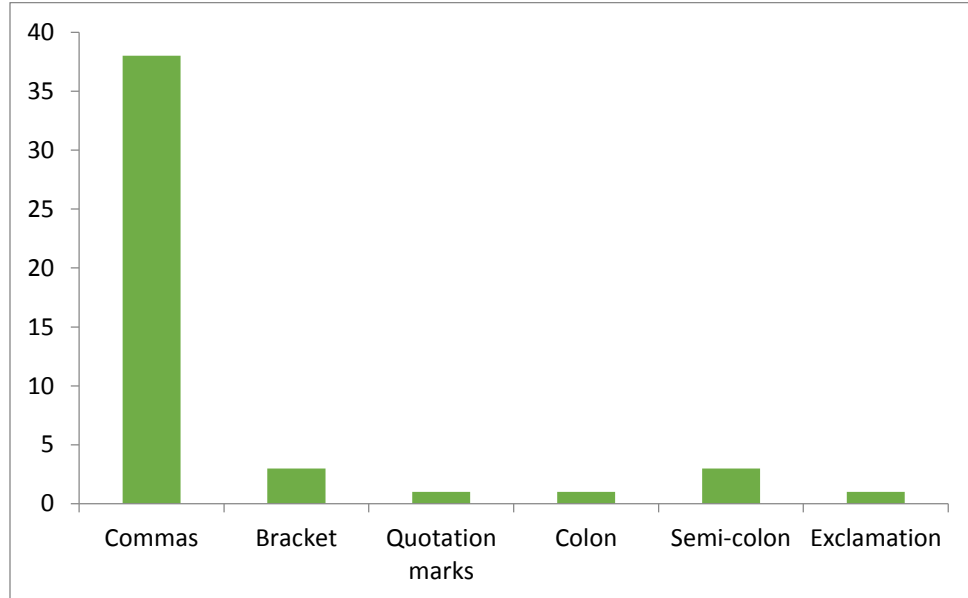
e. *"Aren't his footsteps loud?"*

Table 4.1.2 represents the wrong selection category. In the category, students' ability to use punctuation at a particular space was right. However, the punctuations used were wrong. Therefore, the wrong choice or selection of punctuation marks occurred.

**Table 4.1.2. Wrong selection of punctuation**

<b>Punctuation marks</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Commas	38	80.85%
Bracket	3	6.38%
Quotation marks	1	2.13%
Colon	1	2.13%
Semi-colon	3	6.38%
Exclamation	1	2.13%
<i>Total</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>100</i>

Figure 4.1.2 is a representation of the data on Table 4.1.2.



**Figure 4.1.2. Wrong selection of punctuation**

Table 4.1.2 represents the wrong selection category. Sampled Students used wrong punctuation mark to punctuate their exercise. The errors in this category were at their minimum. It has an overall number of 47 punctuations that were used wrongly. The comma was used wrongly in 38 appearances. The quotation mark, colon and the exclamation mark appeared on an occasion each at places that demanded different punctuation marks. Thus, the wrong use or selection of a particular punctuation mark was not frequent as compared to the omission of some punctuation marks. Examples of Students' errors are:

- a. *I want you to buy these things, a new tooth-brush, some soaps, tooth paste and some aspirin.*
- b. *I want you to buy these thing (a new tooth-brush, some soap, tooth paste and some aspirin)*
- c. *“Go on. Under the bed” he ordered him, Then he crept under the bed himself*



d. *“Go on Under the bed,” he ordered him*

e. *He puts his hand over Efo’s mouth, Do you want him.....*

### **Expected responses**

*(a. & b) I want you to buy these things: a new toothbrush, some soap, toothpaste and some aspirin.*

*(c.& d.) “Go on. Under the bed!” he ordered him. Then he crept under .....*

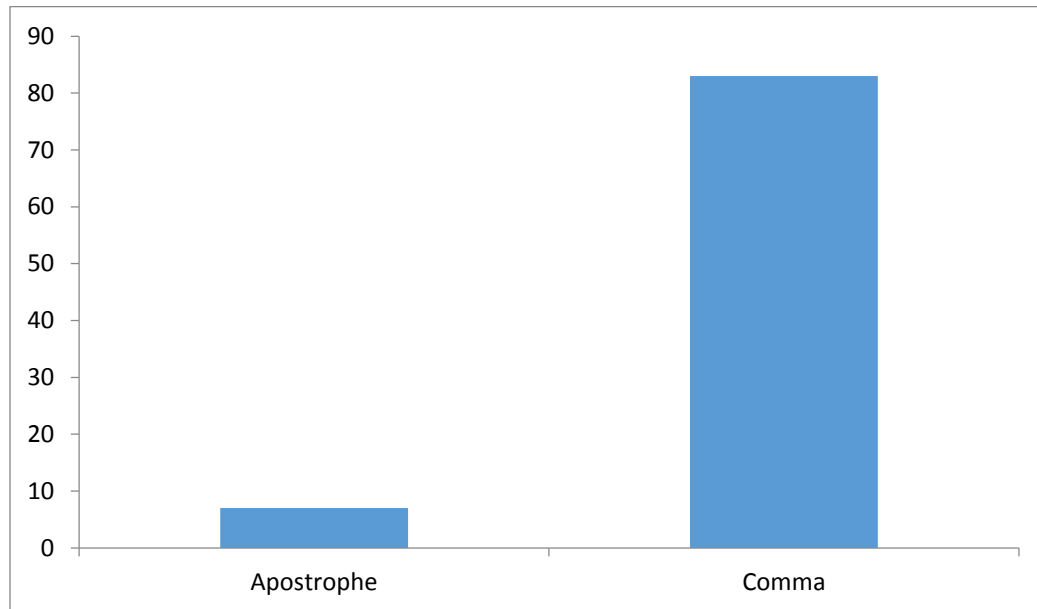
*e. He puts his hand over Efo’s mouth. Do you want him.....*

Table 4.1.3 comes in with the wrong placement grouping. This is the students’ inability to put the punctuation marks at the right or required places. The researcher therefore grouped such errors under the wrong placement category.

**Table 4.1.3. Wrong placement of punctuation**

<b>Punctuation marks</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Apostrophe	7	8%
Comma	83	92%
<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4.1.3 is a graphic representation of Table 4.1.3.



**Figure 4.1.3. Wrong placement of punctuation**

Table 4.1.3 represents the wrong placement category. Here the researcher recorded the apostrophe and the comma in the category. From the first exercise, though, the students had the idea of a „possession“ in the particular sentence, yet, they could not place the mark to show possession at the expected place. Seven (7) out of thirty (30) students had problems with this particular sentence. They changed the intended plurality of students possessing something to a single student possessing something by the wrong placement of the apostrophe. This obviously affected the intended meaning.

In the dialogue passage, 180 commas were expected in all the 30 scripts. Out of the number, 109 commas were rightly placed. That means 71 commas were left out to other categories of errors. However, in reality a total of 118 commas appeared as errors. Out of the number of errors that appeared, 83 of them appeared in the wrong placement category and 35 to the other categories. If this 35 is deducted from the assumed number of 71 comma errors, then the remaining 36 are expected in the wrong placement category.

However, there are 83 of the comma errors in the wrong placement category. This gives an excess of 47 comma errors in the wrong placement. This is evidence that the comma is abused by the students, due to the overwhelming number of wrong placements of the commas. Examples of students' errors are:

- a) *The teacher gave out the girl's books.*
- b) *"I think it's the man, who comes to collect the rent" Foli suggested.*
- c) *"Because we haven't the money to pay him"*
- d) *Then, he added "will you please take your....."*

#### **Expected responses**

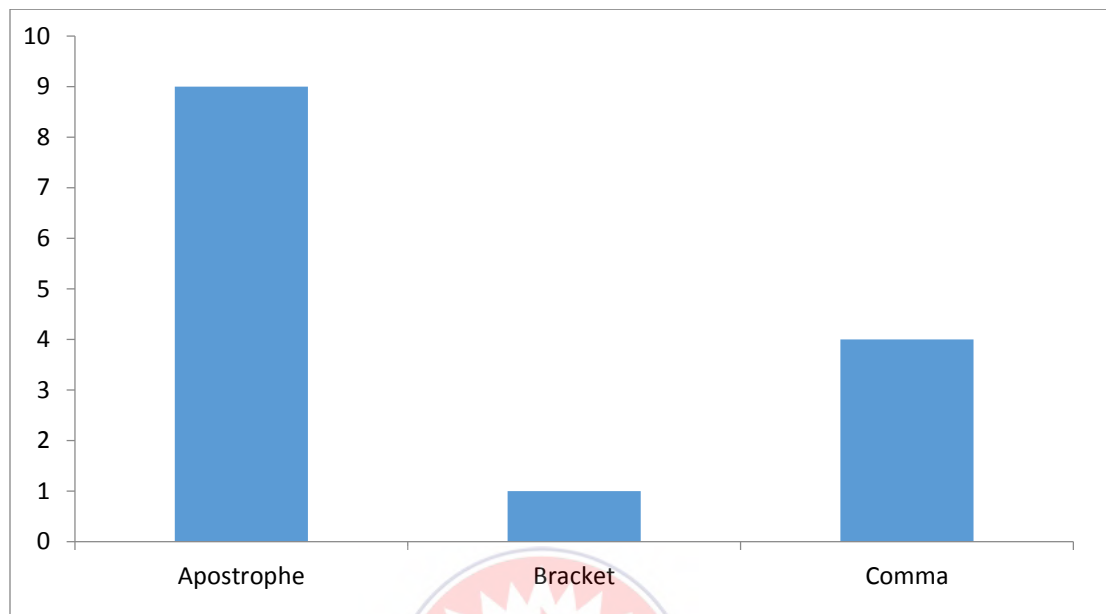
- a. *The teacher gave out the girls' books.*
- b. *"I think it's the man who comes to collect the rent," Foli suggested*
- c. *"Because we haven't the money to pay him!"*
- d. *Then he added, "will you please take your hand off my mouth."*

Table 4.1.4 represents redundant punctuation. The researcher grouped the last category of punctuation errors as redundant punctuation. Here, punctuations that were not needed or were of no use in sentences appeared in the students' work.

**Table 4.1.4. Redundant punctuation**

<b>Punctuation marks</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Apostrophe	9	64%
Bracket	1	7%
Comma	4	29%
<i>Total</i>	<b>14</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4.1.4 is a graphic representation of Table 4.1.4.



**Figure 4.1.4. Redundant punctuation**

Responses from the first exercise indicate that 9 students employed 9 apostrophes that were not needed to show possession in a particular sentence. The sentence did not indicate any possession for the apostrophe to be used as such. Thus, the use of the apostrophe is redundant because it was not needed in the sentence. Also, there was once use of the bracket or parenthesis which was not necessary. Additionally, in the dialogue exercise, there were 4 uses of commas that were unwanted. The sum of the errors in the category is 14. This means, in the 60 exercises, 14 number of punctuation marks were used redundantly. Examples of students' errors are:

- a. The clocks" were altered by Ernest ....
- b. The clock"s were altered by Ernest....
- c. I bought some(matches, milk, sugar and bread)
- d. "Don't you know you're hurting me!,"Efo cried

e. “who is coming ?”, Efo asked softly.

### **Expected response**

a. The clocks were altered by Ernest ....

b. The clocks were altered by Ernest....

c. I bought some matches, milk, sugar and bread.

d. “Don’t you know you’re hurting me!” Efo cried.

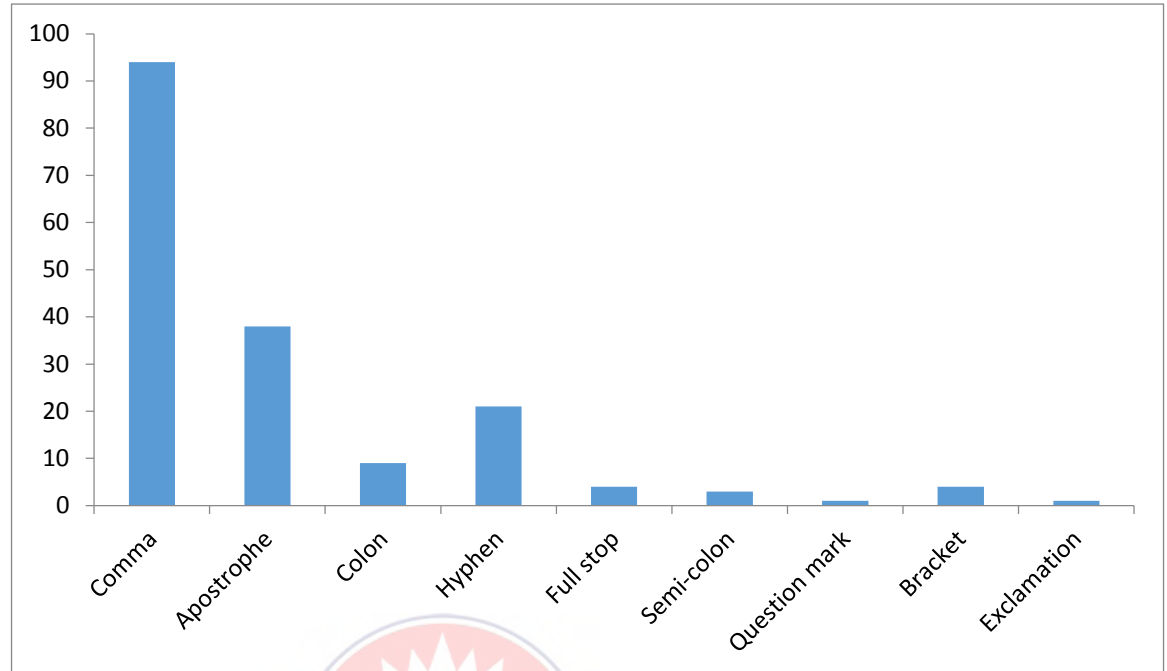
e. “who is coming?” Efo asked softly.

Tables 4.1.5 and 4.1.6 depict the expected punctuation marks from the different exercises appearing purposely to aid further discussions in the analysis. The tables provide the expected responses and the errors made from the 60 exercises. Table 4.1.5 presents punctuation errors and expected punctuations from the first 30 exercises.

**Table 4.1.5. Results from Exercise 1**

<b>Type of punctuation</b>	<b>Number of errors</b>	<b>Percentages</b>	<b>Expectation from students</b>
Comma	94	53.71	9
Apostrophe	38	21.71	1
Colon	9	5.14	1
Hyphen	21	12	2
Full stop	4	2.29	7
Semi-colon	3	1.71	-
Question mark	1	0.57	1
Bracket	4	2.29	-
Exclamation	1	0.57	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>

Figure 4.1.5 represents the punctuation errors in Table 4.1.5.



**Table 4.1.5. Results from Exercise 1**

Table 4.1.5 presents the general punctuation errors made by students in the first exercise: a written test that had no punctuation marks. In all, 21 punctuation marks were expected to appear in each of the 30 students' exercises. That makes a number of 630 punctuation marks expected from the 30 students' test. A total of 175 punctuation errors were made by the students. Thus, 455 punctuation marks were used correctly by all the 30 students. Nine (9) different punctuation marks were recorded with the errors identified. They were commas, apostrophes, colons, hyphens, full stops, semi-colons, brackets or parentheses, a quotation mark, and an exclamation mark. The punctuation with the highest number of errors was the comma which recorded a total number of 94 errors of the overall 175 errors made in the first exercise. This is followed by 38 apostrophe errors, 21 hyphen errors, 9 colon errors, 4 full stops errors, 4 bracket errors, 1

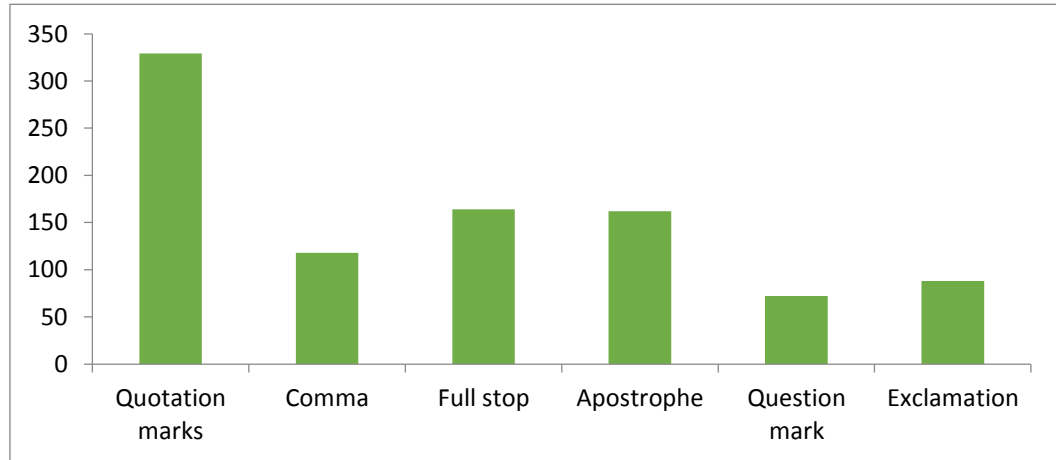
exclamation mark and 1 quotation mark errors found in students' exercise. Thus, students committed many errors with the use of the comma.

In Exercise 2, students were asked to punctuate a dialogue to test their ability to bring to life variations invoicing of a conversation between two brothers. The passage had already been read in class and is brought this time round without any punctuation mark. Fifty-three (53) punctuation marks were expected from each student and a total of 1590 from all the 30 sampled students. This is presented in Table 4.1.6.

**Table 4.1.6. Results from Exercise 2 (Class Exercise on punctuation of a dialogue)**

<b>Punctuation marks</b>	<b>Number of errors</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Expected individual punctuations</b>	<b>All expected punctuations</b>
Quotation marks	329	35	13	390
Comma	118	13	6	180
Full stop	164	18	19	570
Apostrophe	162	17	8	240
Question mark	72	8	4	120
Exclamation	88	9	3	90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1590</b>

Figure 4.1.6 is a graphic representation of the errors in Table 4.1.6.



**Figure 4.1.6. Results from Exercise 2**

**Table 4.1.7. Results from both exercises**

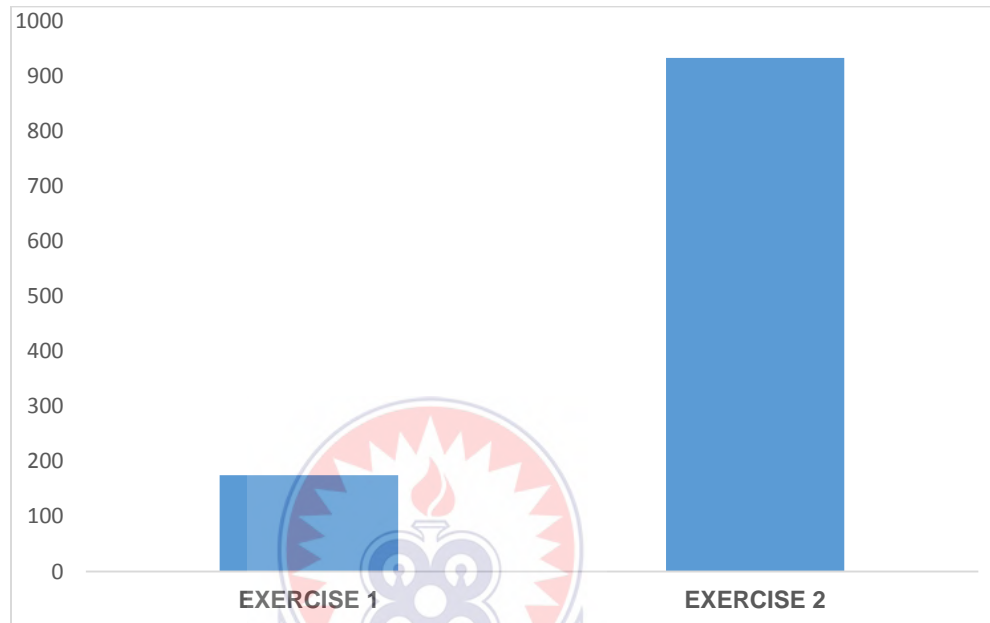
Exercises	Number of exercises	Punctuation errors	Expected punctuation
1	30	175	630
2	30	933	1590
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>2220</b>

Figure 4.1.7 is a graphic representation of the errors from the two exercises.

Table 4.1.7 represents the general punctuation errors made by student from the two exercises. In all, 630 punctuation marks were expected from the 30 students' first exercise. In addition, a total of 1590 punctuation marks were also expected from all the 30 students' second exercise. A total of 2220 punctuation marks were expected from the 60 exercises of the 30 selected students. The total errors identified in the first exercise were 175 out of the expected 630. The errors constitute about 28% of the expected marks. Also, the punctuation errors found in the second exercise were 933 out of the expected



1590 punctuation marks. This also represents about 59% of the expected punctuations. A total of 1108 punctuation errors were made out of the 2220 expected punctuations. This represents 49.91% which is approximately 50% of the expected punctuation from sample student exercises.



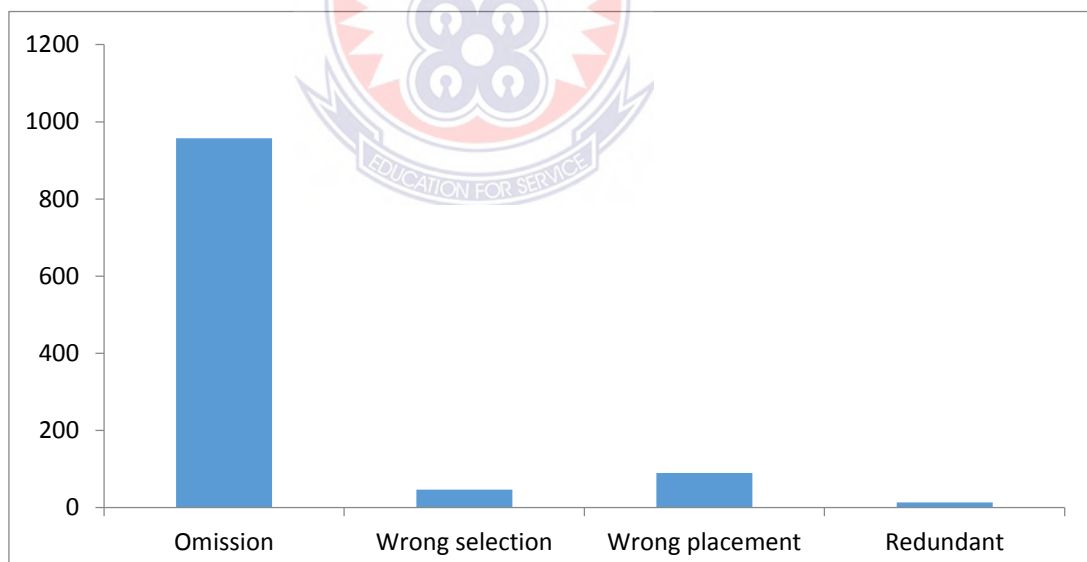
**Figure 4.1.7. Results from both exercises**

**Table 4.1.8 represents all the punctuation errors found in the various categories from the two exercises**

**Table 4.1.8. Errors in the categories**

<b>Categories of errors</b>	<b>Total number</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Omission	957	86.4
Wrong selection	47	4.2
Wrong placement	90	8.1
Redundant	14	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 4.1.8 is a graphic representation of the information in Table 4.1.8.**



**Figure 4.1.8. Errors in the categories**

Table 4.1.9 presents all individual punctuation mark errors found in the 60 exercises from the 30 selected students and below the table is a graph representation of the errors.

**Table 4.1.9. Punctuation mark errors in students' work**

Types of punctuation	Number of errors	Percentages
Comma	212	19
Apostrophe	200	18
Colon	9	1
Hyphen	21	2
Full stop	168	15
Semi colon	3	0
Question mark	73	7
Bracket	4	0
Exclamation	89	8
Quotation Marks	329	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1108</b>	<b>100</b>

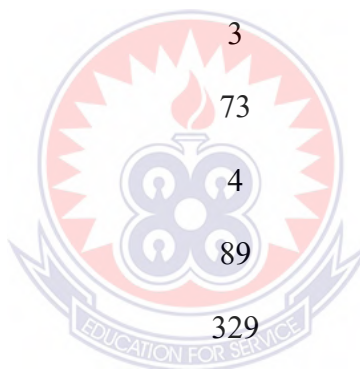
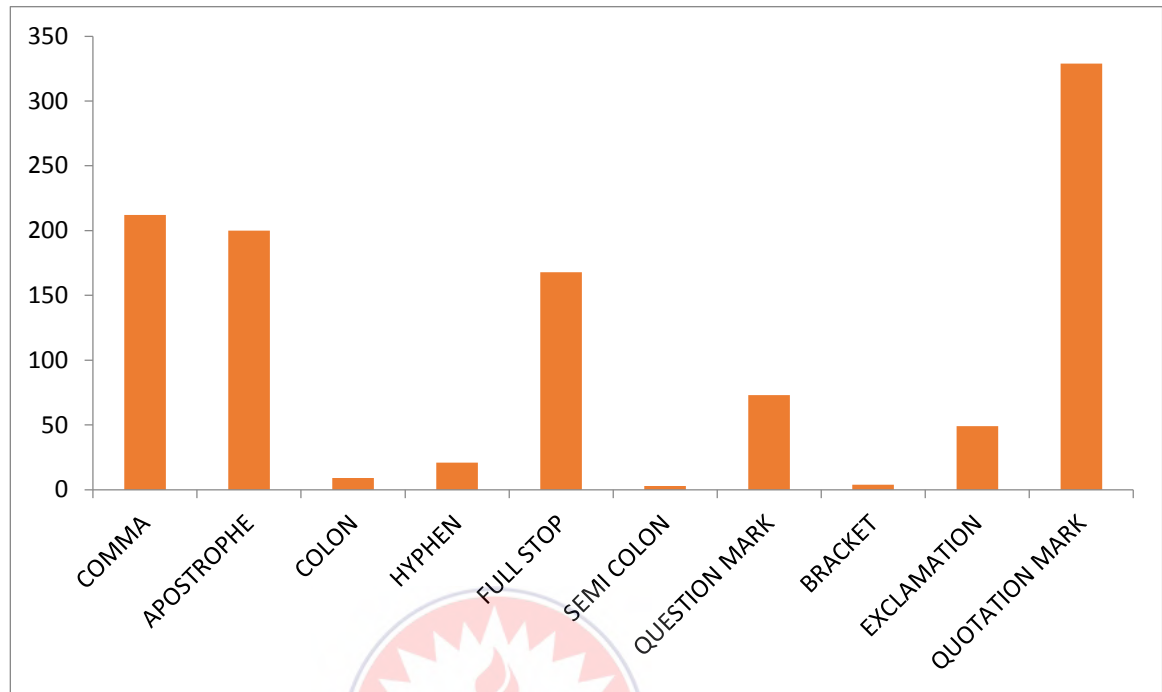


Figure 4.1.9 is a graphic representation of Table 4.1.9.

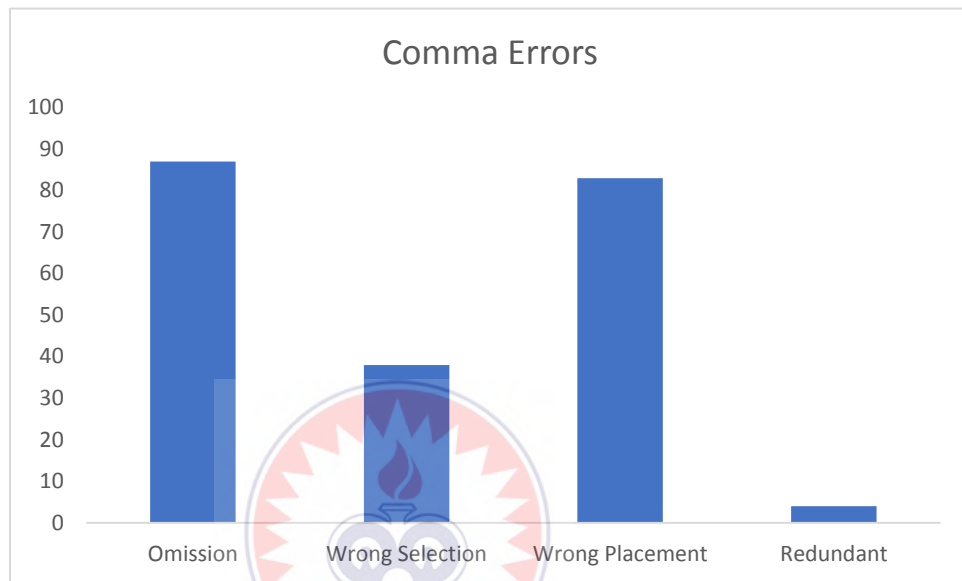


**Figure 4.1.9. Punctuation mark errors in students' work**

#### 4.1.9.1 Comma

The comma errors were found in all the categories of error identified by the researcher. These include: omission, wrong selection, wrong placement and redundant punctuations. These are evidences of how the students are frequent with the use of commas. As a result of its frequent use, it is mostly abused. The second exercise is evidence where 180 commas were expected from the students, yet 109 were correctly used and 118 errors identified. The sum of the correctly used commas with the commas errors is 227, which exceeds the expected punctuation of 180. There is a clear indication that excesses were made. The excesses were mainly found in the wrong placement, wrong selection and redundant punctuation categories.

However, the first exercise had a lot of omissions of commas while the comma errors in the other categories were reduced. The advantage seen with the comma is that most of them were rightly or correctly placed. This may be as a result of much knowledge about them or students' frequent use of them.

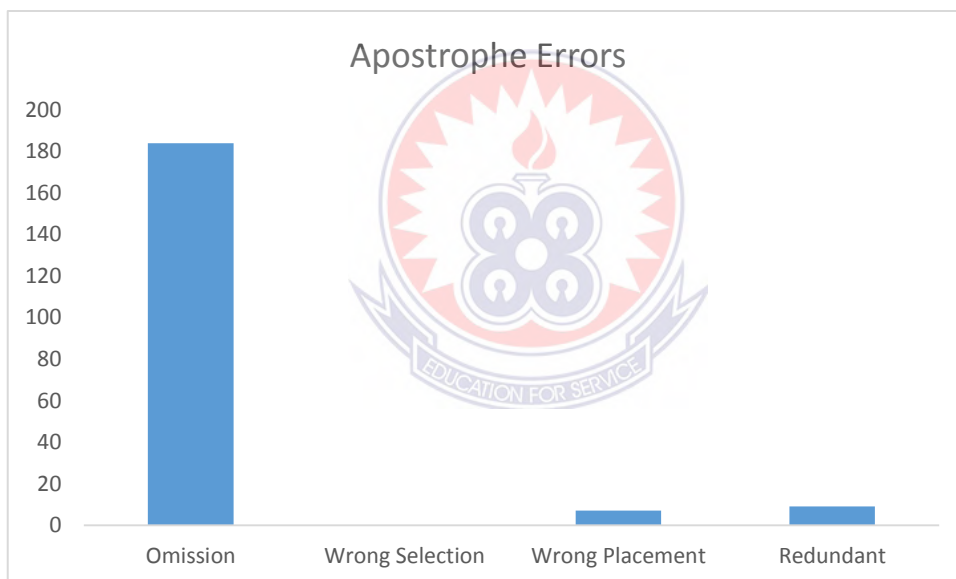


**Figure 4.1.9.1. Errors in the use of comma**

#### 4.1.9.2 Apostrophe

The apostrophe appeared in the omission category, wrong placement and redundant category. The apostrophe did not appear in the wrong category. A total of 38 errors were found with the use of or omission of the apostrophe from the first exercise. Also, a total of 162 apostrophe errors were from the second exercise. This gives a total of 200 errors of the apostrophe from the 60 exercises. The work of the apostrophe is to show possession or indicate contraction of word. It appeared in the redundant category where the words or sentences didn't indicate any form of possession or contraction. It had no role to play in such instances and therefore was a redundant. It was seen with the wrong placement category too where the target position to show possession was mixed. For

example, instance of “girls” the students had “girl’s”. Thus though, the idea to show possession was on point yet the very point to hit the nail was mixed. Therefore, the apostrophe occurred in the wrong placement category. Additionally, there were some students who were unable to indicate a “possession” in the particular sentence that needed possession. This resulted in the omission of some apostrophes. It is also observed that though students made errors with the apostrophe, they were careful in its (apostrophe) use. For this reason, the apostrophe was never selected to replace a different punctuation mark. This is why it did not appear in the wrong selection category.

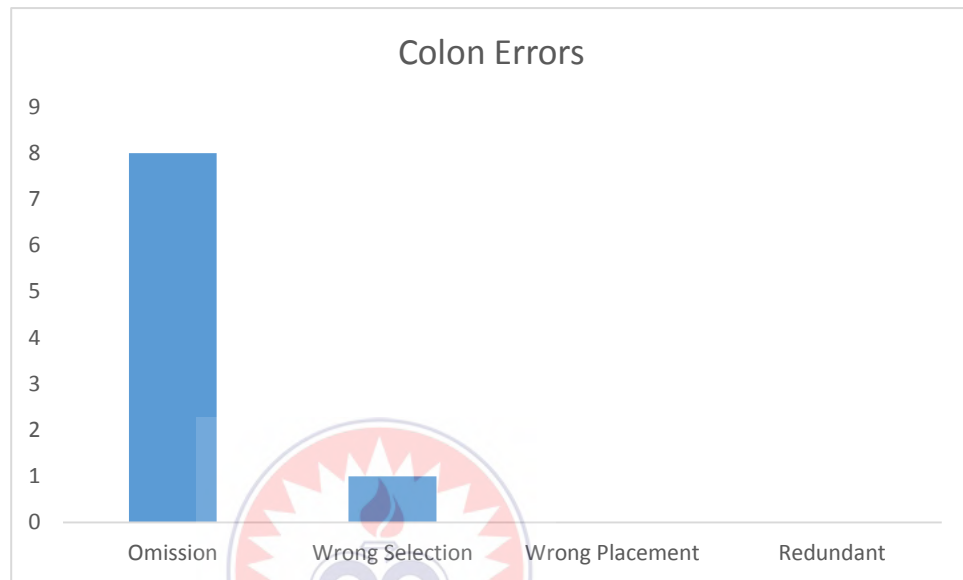


**Figure 4.1.9.2. Errors in the use of the apostrophe**

#### 4.1.9.3 Colon

The colon was expected only in the first exercise. It had only one slot in each of the 30 exercises. Out of these, nine (9) errors were made with the colon. Eight (8) of them were in the omission category and one in the wrong selection category. Almost all the errors were in the omission because learners did not have much idea in its use. The lack of in-

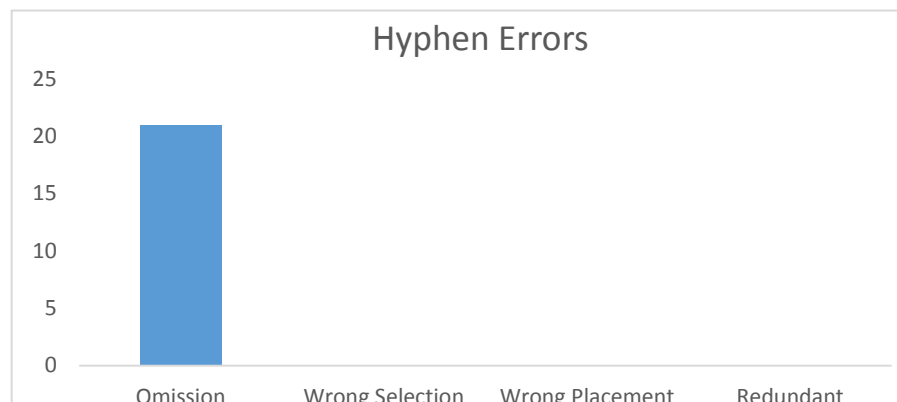
depth knowledge about the use of the colon prevented the students from using it anyhow. This brought about more omissions, one in the wrong selection category and never appearing in the wrong placement and redundant categories.



**Figure 4.1.9.3. Errors in the use of the colon**

#### **4.1.9.4 Hyphen**

A number of 60 hyphens were expected from the first exercise. Out of the 60, 21 errors were made with the hyphen. All the errors made were in the omission category. Thus, about one-third of the expected hyphens were not provided by the selected students. The hyphen was required only in the first exercise.

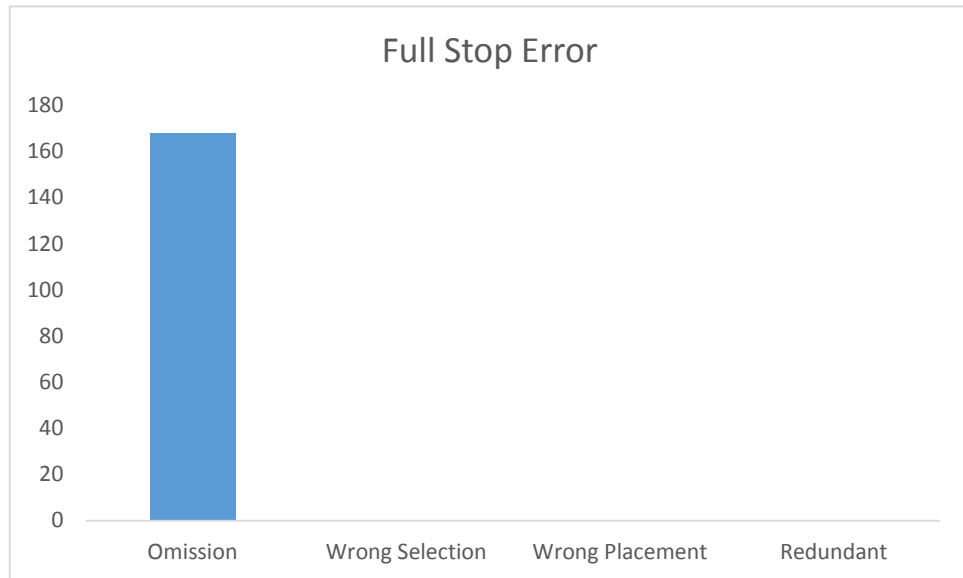


**Figure 4.1.9.4. Errors in the use of the hyphen**

#### **4.1.9.5 Full stop**

The full stop had a major role to play in almost all the sentences of the 60 exercises from the 30 selected students. A number of 210 full stops were expected from the first exercise while the second exercise (dialogue comprehension passage) required 570 full stops. The total number of full stops expected from the 60 exercises was 780. Thus, the full stop has the highest expectancy occurrences from the students' work. Out of the number, 168 errors were made with the full stop. This is encouraging because most students were able to rightly place the mark of the full stop. This indicates that most of them were able to identify the total stops in sentences. A number of seven full stops were expected from each student's work in the first exercise and 19 of them in the second exercise. In all, the selected students were able to place correctly, 612 out of the 780 full stops. This constitutes 78.76%, an approximation of 79%. As a result, the errors identified occupied 21%. It is worth noting that the full stop errors occurred only in the omission category but there is the likelihood of it appearing in the other categories as well.

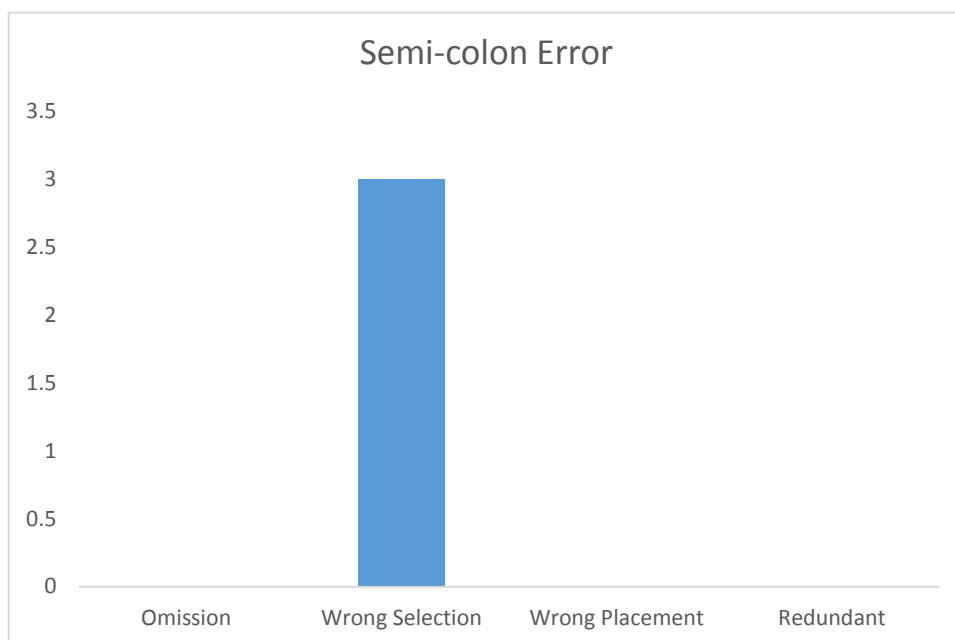




**Figure 4.1.9.5. Errors in the use of the full stop**

#### **4.1.9.6 Semi-colon**

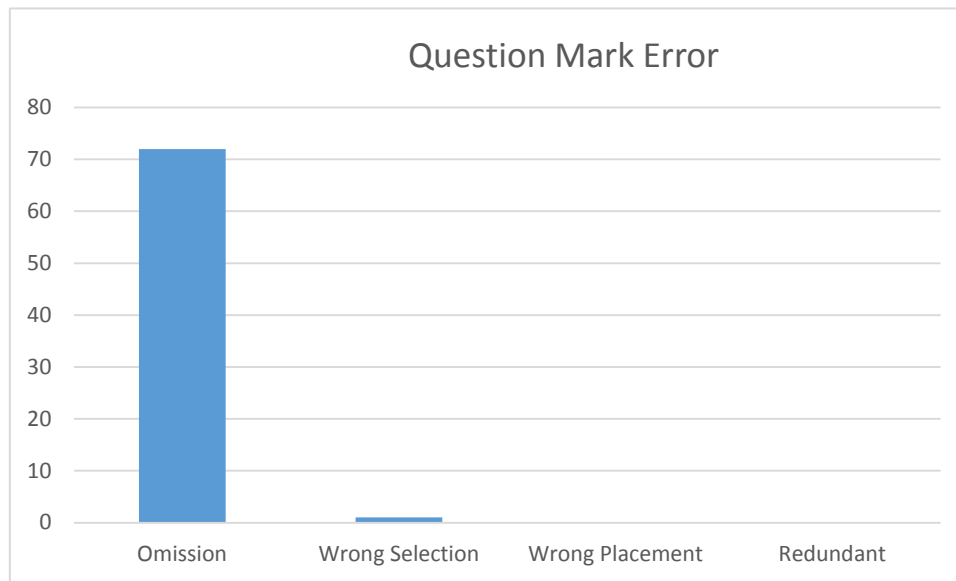
The semi-colon was never invited in any of the two exercises. Thus, no provision was made for the semi colon yet 3 of them appeared in the first exercise. Automatically, 3 errors were made which were found in the wrong selection category. The probability of it appearing in the wrong placement and redundant categories is also high. However, it can never appear in the omission category because it was never expected, therefore, there cannot be omission of it.



**Figure 4.1.9.6. Errors in the use of the semi-colon**

#### 4.1.9.7 Question mark

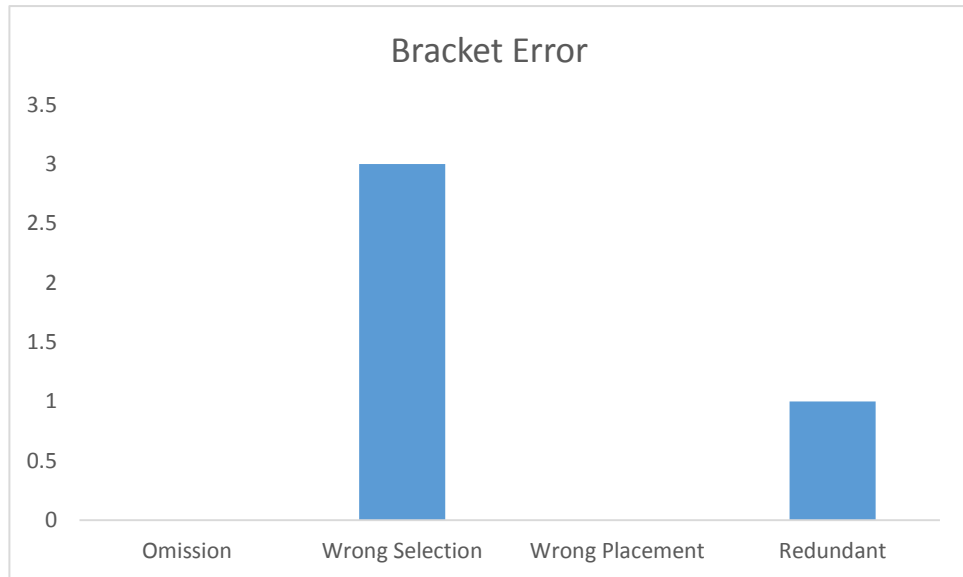
The question mark is an indication of interrogation. Therefore, when a sentence interrogates, it requires a question mark rather than a full stop or any other punctuation. The first exercise demanded a question mark from each of the 30 students and 4 from each of the 30 in the second exercise. This gives a sum of 150 question marks expected from all the 60 exercises. The researcher identified 73 errors of the question mark from all the 60 exercises. The errors occurred in the omission and wrong selection categories. The errors formed almost half of the expected question marks. Some students could not deduce that a sentence was interrogative and therefore demanded the question mark. This brought about 72 omissions in the second exercise and one (1) wrong selection in the first exercise.



**Figure 4.1.9.7. Errors in the use of the question mark**

#### **4.1.9.8 Bracket**

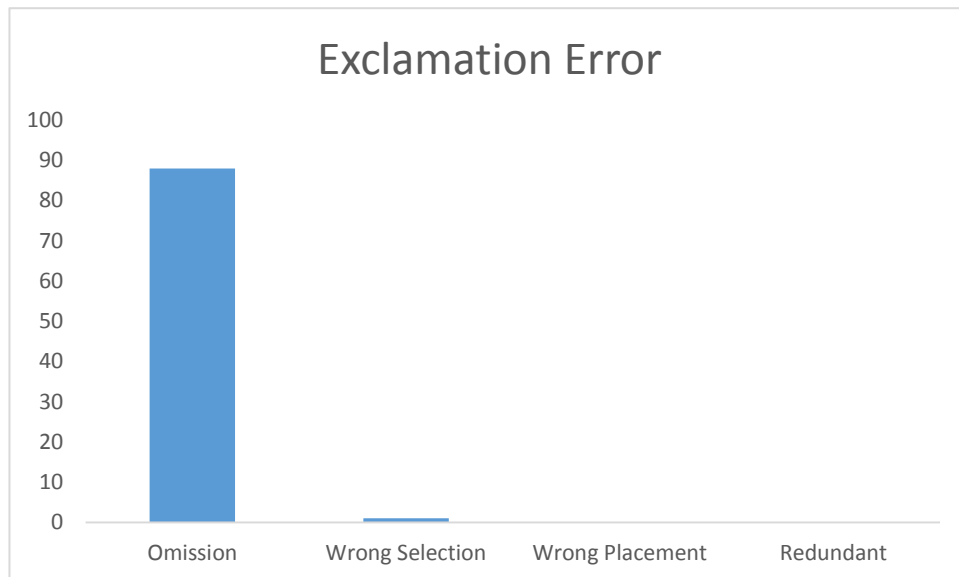
The bracket or parenthesis was uninvited in either of the two exercises yet it found itself in the first exercise of the students. Therefore, the bracket appeared as an error in the wrong selection and redundant categories. It recorded 3 in the wrong selection and once in the redundant category. Again, it could be found in the wrong placement category but never the omission because it was never expected.



**Figure 4.1.9.8. Errors in the use of bracket**

#### **4.1.9.9 Exclamation**

The exclamation mark was expected in the second exercise only. A number of 3 sentences demanded the exclamatory marks. This gives a total of 90 exclamatory marks expected from the 30 students. Out of the number, only two students were able to use one exclamation mark each. That is only 2 exclamatory marks were employed by the two students in the findings. No exclamatory mark was seen anywhere again in the selected students exercises. This means that the remaining 88 exclamatory marks were all left to the omission category. It is an indication that students have lesser idea in the use of the exclamation marks. Apart from the 2 students, the remaining 28 did not feel the presence of the exclamation in the dialogue at all. In addition, although the first exercise did not make provision for any exclamation, a student managed to get one there. As a result 1(one) exclamatory mark appeared in the first exercise in the wrong selection category. This makes a total of 89 errors from the 60 exercises.

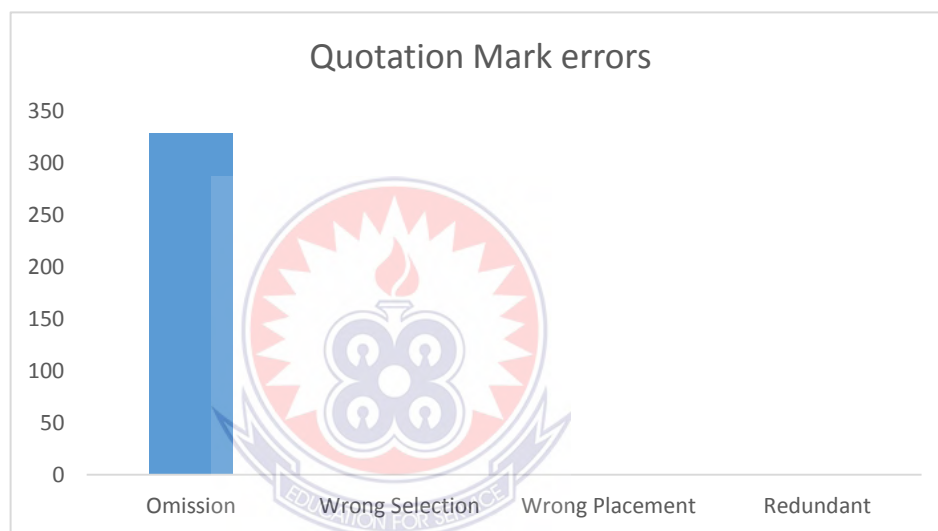


**Figure 4.1.9.9. Errors in the use of exclamation**

#### 4.1.9.10 Quotation marks

A lot of quotation marks were expected from the second exercise because it was a dialogue comprehension passage. It is the only exercise that required quotation marks. A number of 13 quotation marks were expected from each of the 30 students' work. This gives a sum of 390 quotation marks expected from the 30 students work. However, a total of 61 marks were counted from students' work. Those counted were all correctly used which means that 329 exclamatory marks were missing from the student work. As stated earlier, 13 quotation marks were expected from each student's work. Ironically, 13 students were unable to use any quotation mark yet one student was able to use correctly all the 13 quotation marks. Others were able to use 11, 8, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 of the quotation marks.

From the findings, there is an indication that most of the students are unable to identify a direct quote of a speaker in a conversation or passage. This is a big problem because there were indications in the dialogue that suggested a quote from a speaker. For example: “Efo whispered softly” “he commanded” “he ordered him” “Efo asked softly” and many more. The problem even goes beyond identification of quotation to reading. This is because the students will not be able to vary tone when reading, in order to depict the voicing in the sentence or passages. This automatically affects meaning.



**Figure 4.1.9.10. Errors in the use of quotation marks**

The results from the findings indicate that the omission of some punctuation marks were very frequent in students’ punctuation work. This problem was as a result of students’ confusion and difficulty in using punctuation marks. This is confirmed by Alamin and Ahmed (2012) that teachers of English as a second language have identified punctuation to be extremely difficult and confusing for most students. In addition, Samson (2014, pp. 25-26) posits that “many writers have trouble punctuating correctly because they have not read enough well-written prose to internalize the principles of punctuation usage or they were taught by the pause approach”. From Samson and Alamin and Ahmed, one can say

that it is difficult and confusing to students to employ the pauses in oral speech in their writing. This is as a result of them not reading enough well-written prose to master the use of punctuation. Thus, because students had difficulties in the use of punctuation marks, their best option was to leave them out. This brought about a total number of 957 omissions of punctuation marks such as comma, apostrophe, colon, hyphen, full stop, quotation marks, exclamation and question mark.

Out of the 957 omission punctuations, the quotation mark was the most frequent error recording 329 omissions from table 2. This was because the exercise 2 (dialogue comprehension passage) required 390 of them and only 61 were used and correctly placed. The comma was also the highest in the wrong selection category, recorded 38 errors out of the total number of 47 wrong selection errors. It also recorded the highest in the wrong placement category with 83 errors out of the total 90 errors in the category. This represents 92% in the wrong placement category. Moreover, the comma errors were less in number with regards to omission and redundant categories. Also, the number of commas errors identified is quite enormous as compare to the expected commas in the second exercise. The comma errors were found in all the categories. For instance, the commas were found in the wrong placement category where the comma was placed wrongly. Example, then, she added “Will you please take your hand off my mouth.” The comma was redundant in places that required no punctuation and many more. There is the indication that the number of wrongly used commas outnumber the correctly used ones. If the total of the correctly used and wrongly used outnumber the total of expected commas, then the outcome confirms the assertion that the comma is the most frequently abused punctuation mark. Generally, the students did well to locate most of the expected commas. This confirms Zedeh (2009) that learners are inconsistent in using commas and

periods and also the assertion that the comma is one of the most abused punctuation marks.

The unexpected punctuation marks were at a minimum of 4 brackets and 3 semi colons. There is an indication that students had a fair knowledge on the punctuation marks to use. That notwithstanding, what to select and where to place the marks became a challenge to the students. For these reasons, the wrong selection and wrong placement categories of errors were found in the students' work. The redundant category surfaced in the findings because there were some punctuation marks that were of no use where they appeared. They were 3 in number: apostrophe, bracket and comma.

#### **4.1.2 Summary**

The errors identified in the study came in different folds. As the study dealt with the punctuation errors in students' writings, the researcher sought to identify what the errors were. Thus, what errors students commit in the use of punctuation marks. The researcher realized that most of the time some punctuation marks ought to appear in sentences were not seen. Thus, one of the major errors identified is lack of punctuation. Because punctuation marks did not appear an error is made and therefore the researcher grouped such lacks as omission of punctuation marks. This brought about the Omission Category. The punctuation marks identified with the omission category are comma, apostrophe, colon, hyphen, full stop, quotation mark, exclamation mark and question mark. In addition, the researcher found that some spaces in the sentences required punctuation marks and the students were able to identify such spaces alright yet the punctuations used to fill such positions were wrong. Thus, the wrong choice of punctuation marks was used



to occupy those positions. This brought about the Wrong Selection Category. The choice or selection of the particular mark was wrong.

Punctuation marks seen in the wrong selection categories were mainly comma, question mark, colon, bracket, and exclamation mark. Again, the research saw that there were few punctuation marks that were placed wrongly. Sometimes the choice of the punctuation mark was needed in a particular sentence yet the target space for positioning the mark was not met. The researcher then termed the errors made as Wrong Placement Category. The punctuation errors identified were the apostrophe and comma. Lastly, the researcher realized that some punctuation marks were redundant; their appearance were of no use or were not needed yet they were surfaced. As a result, the researcher termed them as redundant punctuation marks. This brought about the Redundant Category. The punctuation marks identified with the category were the apostrophe, bracket and comma. Thus, the researcher used such groupings to identify all the punctuation errors in the students' writings. Therefore, the errors identified as far as the marks are concerned are omission of some punctuation marks, wrong selection of some punctuations, wrong placement punctuation of marks and the redundant appearance of some punctuation marks.

#### **4.2 Causes of punctuation errors**

It is important to bring to light some of the causes to the error identified in the study. The researcher found out that the omission of punctuation marks were due to the lack of in-depth knowledge of some punctuation marks. Actually, the students were not sure the type of punctuation required of the given space in the sentence. Also, students did not carefully analyze the sentence to know its demands. These brought about the omission of

some punctuation marks. What the researcher termed as multiple-choice challenge was one of the causes of wrong selection category identified by the researcher. Student found it difficult as to which punctuation marks to use at a particular space especially, those that are not common. At the end wrong choices were made to fill given spaces. Additionally, with the wrong placement category, students were not careful in punctuating their work; this resulted in placing the correct marks at wrong places.

Sometimes too, students just felt like inserting punctuation somewhere in a sentence especially when the sentence appeared a little lengthy. Also, some students do not read over their work to do the necessary corrections. Once the choice of the punctuation is right, if the students do not place it well in the sentence an error occurs. This is a cause of the wrong placement category. The redundant category which had the least of the errors was generally due to over generalization on the part of the students. For instance, because the apostrophe “s” (“s”) is used to show possession, when a plural noun was used in a sentence, students forced an apostrophe on the “s” marker. E.g., *The clock’s were altered by Ernest...* in exercise 1. Secondly, because a complete sentence ends with a full stop, when a sentence ends with an exclamation or question mark, a full stop is used after them to end the sentence. Again, because the comma can be used to separate ideas, after the use of questions or exclamation marks, the comma was still use to continue with the sentence. This brought about the redundant use of some punctuation marks. Moreover, there was excessive use of some punctuation marks especially the comma. Generally, some students did not regard punctuation marks as a very important aspect of a sentence.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

The chapter gives a summary of the research and presents conclusions drawn from it. In addition, the chapter gives recommendations and suggestions to help students and L2 learners of English Language to overcome their difficulties with punctuations and improve their use of them in their writings.

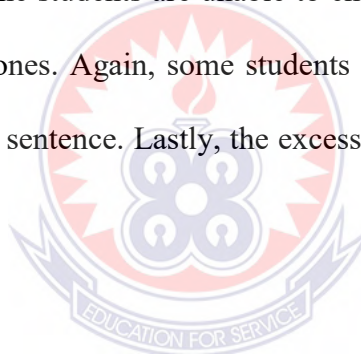
#### 5.1 Summary of findings

The study sought to look at how students make errors with punctuation marks in their writings. Which errors do students make with punctuation marks and the causes of such errors?

In order to achieve the goal of the study, the researcher used the sampled students' exercise books. In their books, students' work on punctuation of sentences in a class test and dialogue comprehension passage was used for the study. After the analysis, 1108 punctuation errors were identified out of the 2220 expected punctuations in the 60 exercises. A breakdown of the errors gives 175 errors out of the expected 630 punctuations from the first exercise. Additionally, students had 933 punctuation errors in the dialogue (second exercise) out of the 1950 expected punctuations marks. Thus, it is evident that students had problems with the use of punctuation marks. For instance, ignorance of the presence of a voice or a person speaking in a dialogue is more than one-third of the total number of errors found in the dialogue passage representing 37%. From

the findings, students did well with the commas and full stops yet did not do well with the other punctuations. It can be said that students are more frequent with commas and full stops than other punctuation marks. Students do not give much attention to some punctuation marks because they are not conversant with them or lack in-depth knowledge on their uses.

The causes were mainly lack of in-depth knowledge of some punctuations, did not know the punctuation demands in a sentence. Also, a careless attitude in applying the punctuation marks caused the errors. Some students do not read over their work to do the necessary corrections. Additionally, over generalization in applying punctuation marks causes errors. Moreover, the students are unable to choose from the correct punctuations from the many available ones. Again, some students do not see punctuation marks as a very important aspect of a sentence. Lastly, the excessive use of some punctuation marks also causes the errors.



## **5.2 Conclusion**

The study was on punctuation errors in the writings of Abetifi Presbyterian Senior High School students. The focus of the investigation was to find out the punctuation errors that occurred in students' writings and the causes of such errors. The study was qualitative in nature involving the analysis of students' class exercises. The students' exercises tested their abilities to punctuate sentences and to bring the active voices in conversation between two brothers in a dialogue. The findings indicate that students have problems with punctuations and therefore make errors in their writings. The errors occurred in different ways. The researcher grouped the errors into omission, wrong selection wrong placement and redundant categories. It is important to emphasize that the findings could

not be fully generalize because the researcher was limited to a single school out of the lot. The researcher wishes that other researchers would use the study as a stepping stone for other researches.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The teaching and learning of punctuations marks have been neglected to the background as though they have no value to be used among words and sentences. I therefore believe it is high time language teachers emphasized the teaching and learning of punctuation marks. I suggest that curriculum developers should spell them out well in the school syllabus from basic 4 through SHS level. The foundation should be well laid right from basic school through to the SHS level. Students should be adequately exposed to the rules of punctuation of the targeted language at the early stages of learning. If the use of punctuation is clearly spelt out in the syllabus, both teachers and learners will attach some importance to the teaching and learning of it. Students should get ample time to play with some punctuation marks among words in sentences to make meaning.

Also, students are encouraged to read extensively. Readings will help with the use of punctuation in students' writings. Extensive reading will familiarize students with the use of punctuation. It has been shown that most of these errors occur due to lack of practice which hindered their ability to punctuate correctly. More exercises are considered to be effective in accruing the correct use of punctuation. Teachers are advised to explain the uses and functions of punctuation marks using examples, rules and exercises for clarification. Teachers need to restructure their teaching and modify their techniques and strategies to focus on punctuations in both written and oral teaching and learning. Students should be made aware that the punctuation marks are major components of

language learning and therefore must appreciate and use them judiciously in their writings. Students should be allowed to explore with punctuations in English lessons and be corrected when the need arises.



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## APPENDIX A

Punctuate the following sentences using (the fullstop, comma, colon, brackets, apostrophe, hyphen and question mark) were applicable

- 1 Jennifer who is only five painted that
- 2 If you go you will be punished
- 3 I bought some matches milk sugar and bread
- 4 The clocks were altered by Ernest who is headboy for a joke
- 5 What did he tell you
- 6 The teacher gave out the girls books
- 7 John visited his mother in law last week
- 8 I want you to buy these things a new tooth brush some soaps tooth paste and some aspirin

## Marking Scheme

PAGE:

DATE: / /

4 These clocks were altered by Ernest, who is head boy, for a joke.

③ I bought some ~~apples~~, milk, sugar and bread.

① Jennifer, who is only five, planted that.

② If you go, you will be punished.

5 What did he tell you?

6 The teacher gave out the girls' books.

7 John visited his mother-in-law last week.

8 I want you to buy these things: a new tooth brush, some soap, tooth paste and some aspirin.

Letitia Lawrence

Punctuate the following sentences using (full stop, comma, colon, brackets, apostrophe and hyphen.)

1. Jennifer, who is only five, pointed that ~~is~~ ( )

2. If you go, ~~will~~ you would be punished.

3. I bought some matches, milk, sugar and bread.

4. The clocks were altered by Ernest, who is head boy for a year.

5. What did he tell you?

6. The teacher gave out the girls' books.

7. John visited his mother-in-law last week.

8. I want you to buy ~~or~~ ~~than~~ these things: (a new tooth brush, some soap, tooth paste, and some aspirin.)

12

2H2 GILD

18th December, 2019

Punctuate the following sentences using  
(fullstop, comma, colon, bracket, apostrophe and hyphen)

- ① Jennifer, who is only five, painted that.
- ② If you go, you will be punished.
- ③ I bought some matches, milk, sugar and bread.
- ④ The clocks were ~~altered~~ authored by James Finest, who is their head boy, for a joke.
- ⑤ What did he tell you?
- ⑥ The teacher gave out the girls' books.
- ⑦ John visited his mother-in-law last week.
- ⑧ I want you to buy these things: a new tooth brush, some soap, tooth paste and some aspirin.

16  
21

2 #2 (14)

Agnes Ankrach

18/12/19

Punctuate the following sentences  
using full stop, comma, colon, bracket,  
apostrophe and hyphen

1. Jennifer, who is only five, painted that.

2. If you go, you would be punished.

3. I bought some maahet, milk, sugar and bread.

4. The clocks were altered by ~~Ernest Ernest~~<sup>Ernest</sup> who is head boy for a joke.

5.

4. The clocks were altered by Ernest, who is head boy, for a joke.

5. What did he tell you?

6. The teacher gave out the girls' books.

7. John visited ~~this mother~~<sup>Father</sup> in-law last week.

8. I want you to buy this things (a new toothbrush, some soap, toothpaste and some



Asante Angela

15th December, 2019

Punctuate the following sentences using (full stop, comma, colon, brackets, apostrophe, and hyphen.)

- 1 Jennifer, who is five, painted that.
- 2 If you go, you would be "punished".
- 3 I bought some matches, ~~nut~~<sup>milk</sup>, sugar and bread.
- 4 The clocks were altered by Ernest, who is head boy, for a joke.
- 5 What did he tell you?
- 6 The teacher gave out the girl's<sup>(s)</sup> book.
- 7 John visited his mother <sup>in-law</sup> last week.
- ~~8 I want you to buy this things.~~
- ~~8 I want you to buy these things: a new tooth brush, some soap, tooth paste and~~

Acheampong

ELV 200

3

18th December, 2019

H<sup>2</sup>

Punctuate the following sentences using full stop, comma, colon, brackets, apostrophe and hyphen, question mark

1. Jennifer, who is only five, painted that. ✓
2. If you go, you will be punished. ✓
3. I bought some machets, milk, sugar and bread. ✓
4. The clocks were altered by Ernest, who is headboy, for a joke.
5. What did he tell us? ✓
6. The teacher gave out the girls' books. ✓
7. John visited his mother last week.
8. I want you to buy these things: a new toothbrush, some soap, toothpaste and some aspirin. ✓

9. ✓

16

Name: Hannah Boatuuwa Asante

Class: 2H2

Date: 18th December 2019.

Punctuate the following sentence using (full stop, comma, colon, brackets, apostrophe and hyphen & question mark).

① Jennifer, who is only five, painted that

② If you go, you be punished.

③ I bought some matches, <sup>milk</sup> ~~meat~~, sugar and bread.

④ The clocks were altered by Ernest, who is head boy, for a joke.

⑤ What did he tell you?

⑥ The teacher gave at the girls' books.

⑦ Then John visited his mother-in-law last week.

15  
—  
21

APPENDIX B

Copy the passage below and punctuate the words in parentheses.

'I can hear someone coming,' Efo whispered softly.  
Foli gripped his younger brother's arm. 'Go and hide,' he commanded. He pushed Efo in the direction of the bed. 'Go on. Under the bed!' he ordered him. Then he crept under the bed himself.  
'Who is it coming?' Efo asked softly. 'Aren't his footsteps loud?' he added.  
'I think it's the man who comes to collect the rent,' Foli suggested.  
'Why are we hiding from him?' Efo asked in a puzzled voice.  
'Because we haven't the money to pay him!' Foli replied impatiently. 'Now do be quiet.' He put his hand over Efo's mouth. 'Do you want him to hear us?' he hissed.  
'No, I don't,' said Efo obediently. Then he added, 'Will you please take your hand off my mouth.'  
Foli kept his hand where it was.  
'Don't you know you're hurting me!' Efo cried.

CS Scanned with CamScanner

**READ AND PUNCTUATE THE PASSAGE BELOW**

I can hear someone coming Efo whispered softly

Foli gripped his younger brothers arm Go and hide he commanded He pushed Efo in the direction of the bed Go on Under the bed he ordered him Then he crept under the bed himself

Who is it coming Efo asked softly Arent his footsteps loud he added

I think its the man who comes to collect the rent Foli suggested

Why are we hiding from him Efo asked in a puzzled voice

Because we havent the money to pay him Foli replied impatiently Now do be quiet He put his hand over Efos mouth Do you want him to hear us he hissed

No I dont said Efo obediently Then he added Will you please take your hand off my mouth

Foli kept his hand where it was

Dont you know youre hurting me Efo cried



READ AND PUNCTUATE THE PASSAGE BELOW

I can hear someone coming, Efo whispered softly.

Foli gripped his younger brother's arm. Go and hide he commanded. He pushed Efo in the direction of the bed. Go on Under the bed he ordered him. Then he crept under the bed himself.

Who is it coming, Efo asked softly. Arent his footsteps loud he added?

I think its the man who comes to collect the rent, Foli suggested.

Why are we hiding from him, Efo asked in a puzzled voice.

Because we havent the money to pay him? Foli replied impatiently. Now do be quiet. He put his hand over Efos mouth. Do you want him to hear us- he hissed?

No, I dont, said Efo obediently. Then he added, Will you please take your hand off my mouth?

Foli kept his hand where it was.

Dont you know youre hurting me Efo cried?



7/53

8

G.A.D

READ AND PUNCTUATE THE PASSAGE BELOW

"I can hear someone coming," Efo whispered softly. ✓  
Foli gripped his younger brother's arm. "Go and hide," he commanded. He pushed Efo in the direction of the bed. "Go on. Under the bed," he ordered him. Then he crept under the bed himself. ✓  
"Who is it coming?" Efo asked softly. "Aren't his footsteps loud?" he added. ✓  
"I think it's the man who comes to collect the rent," Foli suggested. ✓  
"Why are we hiding from him?" Efo asked in a puzzled voice. ✓  
"Because we haven't the money to pay him," Foli replied impatiently. "Now do be quiet. He put his hand over Efo's mouth. Do you want him to hear us?" he hissed. ✓  
"No I don't," said Efo obediently. Then, he added "Will you please take your hand off my mouth." ✓  
Foli kept his hand where it was. ✓  
"Don't you know you're hurting me?" Efo cried. ✓



17  
53

READ AND PUNCTUATE THE PASSAGE BELOW

I can hear someone coming Efo whispered softly.

Foli gripped his younger brother's arm and hide he commanded. He pushed Efo in the direction of the bed. Go on Under the bed he ordered him. Then he crept under the bed himself.

Who is it coming Efo asked softly. Arent his footsteps loud he added?

I think its the man who comes to collect the rent Foli suggested.

Why are we hiding from him Efo asked in a puzzled voice.

Because we havent the money to pay him Foli replied impatiently. Now do be quiet. He put his hand over Efos mouth. Do you want him to hear us? he hissed.

No I dont said Efo obediently. When he added Will you please take your hand off my mouth?

Foli kept his hand where it was.

Dont you know youre hurting me Efo cried.

15