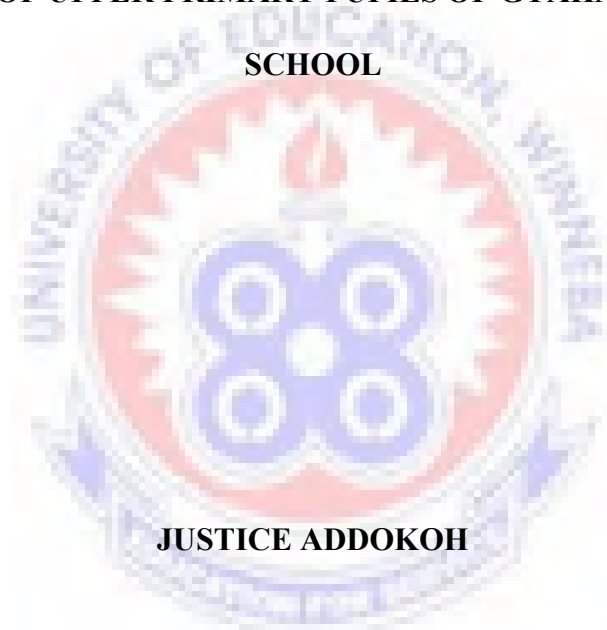


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**ORTHOGRAPHIC AND GRAMMATICAL ERRORS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
ESSAY WRITINGS OF UPPER PRIMARY PUPILS OF GYAHADZE M/A PRIMARY
SCHOOL**



JUSTICE ADDOKOH

2017

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JUSTICE ADDOKOH

(7150080026)

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

AUGUST, 2017

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE :

DATE :

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this study to my mother Emma Esi Donkoh.

Your support, encouragement, motivation and prayers have helped me to this level.

May the Almighty God richly bless you.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
DEDICATION	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
ABSTRACT	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	3
1.3 Purpose of the study	5
1.4 Objectives of the study	5
1.5 Research questions	6
1.6 Significance of the study	6
1.7 Limitations	7
1.8 Organization of the study	8
CHAPTER TWO	9
2.0 Introduction	9
2.1 The Theory of Writing	9

2.2.1 The meaning of Writing	9
2.2.2 Writing genres	10
2.2.3 Purpose of Writing	10
2.2.4 Writing process	11
2.3 What constitutes an Error	12
2.3.1 Meaning of Error	12
2.4 Errors versus Mistakes	14
2.4.1 Difference between Errors and Mistakes	14
2.5 The types of Errors	15
2.6 Sources of Errors	19
2.7 Causes of Errors	19
2.8 Error Analysis	23
2.9 Significance of Errors in Language teaching and learning	25
2.10 Challenges of Error Analysis	25
2.11 Related studies	27
2.12 Error Analysis in English Writing Studied Ghana	28
CHAPTER THREE	28
METHODOLOGY	31
3.0 Introduction	31
3.1 Research Design	31
3.2 Population and Sampling	32
3.3 Sample size of the study	33

3.4 Sampling Technique	34
2.5 Data Sources	34
2.6 Instruments for Data Collection	35
2.7 Data Analysis and Classification of Errors	35
2.8 Reliability and Validity	36
2.9 Conclusion	36
CHAPTER FOUR	38
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	38
3 Introduction	38
3.5 Categorization of learners errors	38
3.5.1 Spelling Errors	39
3.5.1.1 Spelling Errors due to omission of letters (Sp – O)	39
3.5.1.2 Spelling Errors due to addition of letters (Sp – A)	40
3.5.1.3 Spelling Errors due to substitution of letters (Sp – S)	40
3.5.2 Tense Error	43
3.5.2.1 Tense Exchange (Tn – E)	44
3.5.2.2 Wrong verb form used (Wr – V)	44
3.5.3 Capitalization Errors	47
3.5.3.1 Omission of capital letters (Om – C)	48
3.5.3.2 Addition of wrong use of capital letters (Ad – C)	49
3.5.4 Punctuation Errors	51
3.5.4.1 Wrong use of Punctuation	51

3.5.4.2 Omission of Punctuation (Om – P)	52
3.5.5 Article Errors	55
3.5.5.1 Addition of incorrect element (Ad – A)	56
3.5.5.2 Omission of Article (Om – A)	56
3.5.6 L1 Transfer Errors / Transliteration Errors	59
3.5.7 Errors in writing	62
3.6 Causes of learners errors	66
3.6.1 Errors caused by teachers	67
3.6.2 Errors caused by learners	68
3.6.3 Errors caused by learners L1 Transfer	69
3.6.4 Summary of causes of errors	70
3.7 Conclusion	71
CHAPTER FIVE	72
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND	
CONCLUSION	72
4 Introduction	72
4.5 Summary of findings	72
4.6 Causes of errors	73
4.7 The role of errors in language teaching and learning	74
4.8 Implications for language teaching and learning	75
4.9 Suggestions for future research	77
4.10 Conclusion	78

REFERENCES	79
APPENDIX A	91
APPENDIX B	92



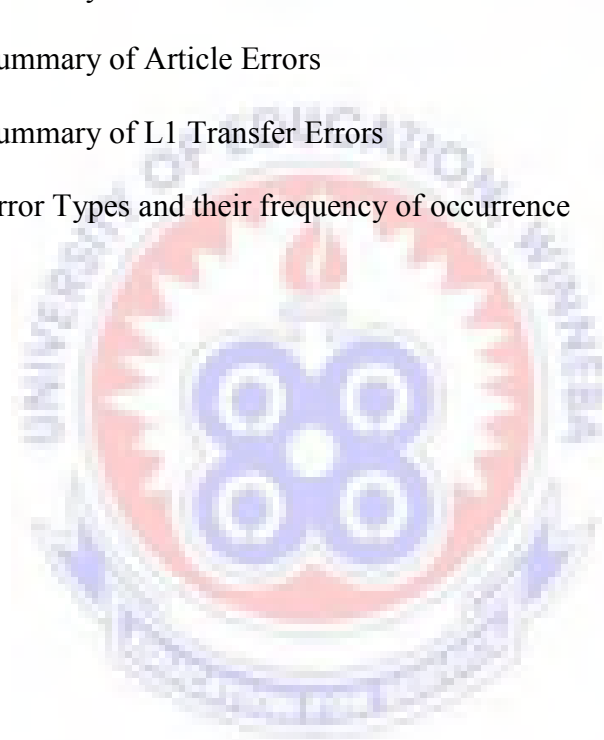
LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Summary of Spelling Errors	41
2	Summary of Tense Errors	46
3	Summary of Capitalization Errors	49
4	Summary of Punctuation Errors	53
5	Summary of Article Error	57
6	L1 Transfer Errors / Transliteration Errors	61
7	Frequency of Errors in pupils' writings	63



LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1	Summary of Spelling Errors	42
2	Summary of Tense Errors	46
3	Summary of Capitalization Errors	50
4	Summary of Punctuation Errors	54
5	Summary of Article Errors	58
6	Summary of L1 Transfer Errors	61
7	Error Types and their frequency of occurrence	64



ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study that examined orthographic and grammatical errors in the written essays of upper primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School. The instruments used for data collection were observation and test. From this, a total of 310 errors were identified. Six error types were identified on spelling, capitalization, punctuation, errors in the use of tense, errors in the use of articles and L1 transfer errors. Causes of these errors identified were from factors ranging from laziness and carelessness on the part of learners, overgeneralization of concepts and rules, teacher competence to inappropriate teaching methods among others. Based on the findings, some recommendations have been made; suggesting roles that various stakeholders can play as far as improving effective teaching and learning of the English Language in the basic schools is concerned.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the study

The aim of teaching a language is to make learners proficient in some or all of the basic language skills; speaking, writing and understanding. Writing is a continuous complex process of expressions; it is not itself a simple process with the native language and rather, even more a complicated process, if the language is a second language (L2). A number of studies conclude that the impact or interference of the first language of learners in writing in English is heavily felt whenever they write (e.g. Benson, 2002; Cedar, 2004; Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Seyyed, 2012). The root of English in Ghana is however through Missionaries who came to settle the then Gold Coast to establish schools to train native children to assist them in their commercial and evangelical activities. English language was used as their medium of instruction at all levels of education in the country. It is still being used in all aspects of human life. For instance, in social functions like church ceremonies, courts, weddings, funerals etc.

Though English is the official medium of communication and instruction in Ghana, it is sometimes unfortunate to realize that the performance of students in this very subject is mostly abysmal. For instance, recent reports on students' performance in English Language over the years have not been pleasant. Various debates from several concerned organizations have focused on the causes of poor performance in the English Language. The arguments and debates indicate that all those who have gone through any form of formal education in Ghana must have the ability to speak or write Standard English. It is

surprising however to note that yearly reports on students' performance both in the Basic Education Certificate Examination and West African Senior High School Certificate Examination from WAEC has not been the best. Most people attribute this failure or poor performance to the difficulty in writing the English Language.

Though language learning, like any other learning, comes with its own problems, learners at the basic level are more likely to make errors. This is because it is believed that they are beginners and learning to master concepts comes with peculiar challenges. These problems, if not well attended to, have the potential of affecting learners' communication. Learning English language, the lingua franca of Ghana, is no exception. Writing is a highly complex task and writing in the second language (L2) makes the task further intricate as it requires sufficient command to fulfill all formalities; composing and developing logical ideas which are essential for written text to be comprehensible (Sarfraz, 2011). It is to this effect that the contents of the English syllabus designed for the nation's beginners entails four major aspects namely; listening and speaking, grammar, reading and writing.

The main objective of these aspects is that by the end of schooling, there will be the ability to express one's self clearly and comprehensively in writing. Writing may be in the form of simple sentences, short essays, compositions, summaries, and writing letters. It further narrows down to the specific objectives for at the Upper Primary, especially those in Class 4, which states that "the pupil will be able to develop and apply the skills of good handwriting and use writing skills to communicate his/her ideas" (MOES, 2007, p. 41). This goes to buttress the need for learners to develop good penmanship and effective communication of ideas through writing. Many stakeholders, educationist, Non-

Governmental Organizations and teachers have complained about the poor level of pupils written exercises, not only in the English Language lessons, but also in other subjects studied at that level. The ability to write well however, does not exist by nature and without artificial aid; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional setting (schools) or other environments (Puwarty, 2011)

Sadly enough, there is no doubt that the problems stated will continue to occur in our basic schools and further continue to higher levels if steps are not taken to combat the situation. This can be traced to the fact that daily errors committed by pupils right from the Lower Primary level are not duly seen due to several factors. This work aims at investigating the different types of errors found in the writings of basic learners. This study analyzes the English language errors in the essays of Upper Primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School in the Effutu Municipal Assembly of the Central Region. This chapter presents the introduction to the study. It consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, and objectives of the study. It also presents the significance of the study, limitations, as well as organization of the study.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Complaints about poor English results of basic secondary school students have been commonly heard from the public, the Ministry of Education and even teachers in schools all over Ghana. The blame is either placed on teachers for not being competent enough to teach the language properly, learners who do not want to take their learning seriously, or the education system which is perceived to be ineffective. Some people in Ghana such as parents and some educationists generally blame it on the fact that English

is not widely spoken in the communities, such as the home or in public places. Poor English language proficiency is believed to be the major cause of the overall poor performance of Ghanaian students or pupils in schools. These observations are confirmed by English examiners reports every year. Examination scripts also reveal a wide range of practical problems learners encounter during their L2 learning. Through this experience, it was observed that the upper primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School are generally very poor at English writing activities. Their incompetence in writing English as a Second Language (ESL) can be clearly observed in examination answer scripts and their exercise books.

One of the reasons for students' incompetence is that they are taught in a second language. Nunan (2001) argues that proponents of Contrastive Analysis claim that where the first and second language rules are not the same, errors are likely to occur as a result of interference between the two languages. Similarly, it has been noticed that in some cases learners from the same school or region would produce the same type of errors in their *interlanguage*, that is, the type of language produced by second and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. Selinker (1983) coined this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learners' L1 and the target language. Richards and Schmidt (2002) also state that in language learning, learners' errors are caused by different processes that include borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending patterns from the target language, and expressing meanings using words and grammar which are already known. Pupils find it difficult to construct simple sentences, misspell words which are mostly due to the L1 transfer, the inappropriate use

of grammatical forms, face challenges in the use of articles etc. in both their exercise and examination. As a result their performance is always poor, which affects their performance in the final exams.

Again, in the long run effect, poor performance will automatically limit their chances of attaining better and higher job opportunities. Hence, there is the need to investigate into the problem, researchers examine the types of errors that ESL learners make and identify the frequency at which these errors appear in the interlanguage of different L1 speakers (e.g. Randall, 2005; Ilomaki, 2005). Analysis of errors normally helps teachers in areas of their teaching that need special attention or reinforcement. This study investigates errors in the writing of upper pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School, identifies the various types of errors they commit, identifies sources and causes of the errors and suggests some ways of minimizing the errors.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of conducting this research is to identify the forms of errors basic learners (upper primary) produce in their writings. By this, it will analyze and discuss implications of the findings and provide necessary suggestions to both teachers and learners in solving the problem identified.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the research are:

- To identify the errors produced by Upper Primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School in their writings;
- Discuss the causes of such errors based on the types found;

- Suggest how these errors could be minimized.

1.4 Research questions

The study is aimed at answering the following research questions:

- What are the errors produced in the English essays of Upper Primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School?
- What are the causes of these errors?
- Based on the findings, how could these errors be minimized?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study is significant in many respects. It provides syllabus designers with useful input that allow them to select and sequence linguistic items for language learners at different levels of language proficiency. It also serves as an aid to teachers to better structure their lessons by providing them with data about problem areas that affect their learners. Ellis (2002) maintains that error analysis is the study of the language acquisition process, and it is able to indicate the strategies used by learners to acquire language. Therefore, errors can be used to measure the language performance of learners. The study also functions as a significant contributor of new insight, especially with respect to the role of inter-lingual transfer in language acquisition. This fact has been attested by Brown (2002) who found that the early stages of language learning is characterized by inter-lingual transfer, but once learners have begun to acquire parts of the new system, more and more intra-lingual errors—generalization within the second language is manifested.

The study exposes the kind of errors learner's in basic schools make in their writings as an aspect of the English Language. It also helps teachers to identify some of the problems

that hinder good writing skills in the classroom and in the L2 as a whole. These are in line with those Corder (1994) outlines as significant ways in which learners' errors are in different ways. He notes that these errors:

- show the teacher and the learners' progress;
- provide the researcher with the evidence of how the language is acquired or is learned and what strategies the learner is employing;
- are indispensable to the learner himself, because certainly, repeated errors become more confirmed and unless the learner is aware of them, he cannot learn from them.

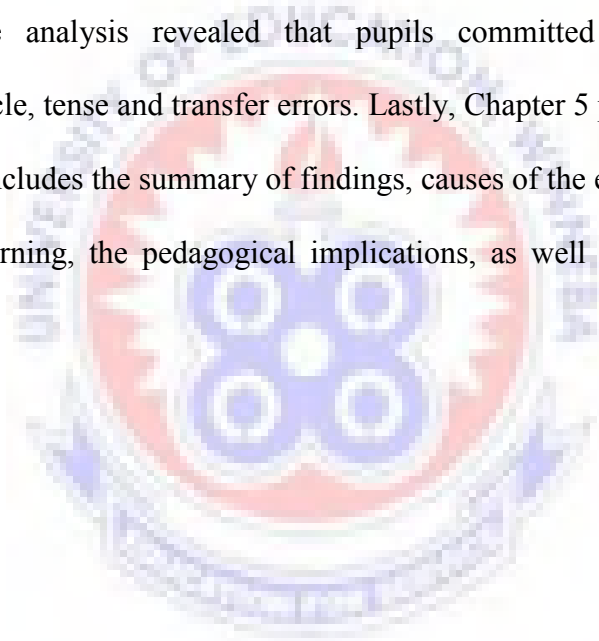
The research will further help the class or language teacher to decide which grammar or structure to pay attention to. Teachers can also be aware of weakness which needs exceptional concentration and the suggested solutions that will help minimize these errors and if possible, do away with them.

1.6 Limitations

This research is limited to only the Upper Primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School. It is also limited to the Effutu Municipal Assembly, a part of the Central Region and its findings cannot be generalized to all Ghanaian pupils, although the sample was representative of the population under study due to its random nature. A research on the whole school would have been appropriate looking at the topic. This would have enabled the researcher to solve if not all, some of the problems related to writing once and for all. The written essays were conducted outside the normal instructional hours and some pupils failed to take part and this automatically decreased the number of essays the researcher wanted to assess. Owing to financial and time challenges, this could not be done.

1.7 Organization of the study

This rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews related literature to the study. This focuses on theoretical views that are closely relevant to error analysis. This includes what constitutes an error, sources and causes of errors, the significance of errors and related studies. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology adopted for the study. In this chapter, the instruments and sampling population used for the research work and data analysis are discussed. The results of the study are discussed in Chapter 4. The analysis revealed that pupils committed spelling, capitalization, punctuation, article, tense and transfer errors. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study. This includes the summary of findings, causes of the errors, the role of errors in teaching and learning, the pedagogical implications, as well as suggestions for future research.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

The chapter seeks to review the related previous studies on the topic. Over the last three decades, researchers have focused on first language interference as well as writing skills as a composition technique to find out the courses of errors, to develop more effective techniques and thus to promote writing skills (Grabe, 2001; Myles, 2002; Xu, 2007). Areas reviewed are theory of writing, approaches to the analysis of errors, and practical uses of error analysis.

2.1 The Theory of Writing

2.1.1 The meaning of writing

Contributions from many scholars and authorities have greatly enhanced our understanding of the concept of writing. Research has shown that writing is a complex process of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing teach students to use these processes. Meanwhile, writing is used for a wide variety of purposes that is produced in many different forms (Harmer, 2004). The elements of writing, based on the definition, are:

- a. Variety of purpose
- b. Different form

In relation to this, pupils in the Upper classes of Gyahadze M/A Primary School use simple and purposeful communication interaction. Here, their request or needs are written on a sheet of paper and forwarded to the appropriate person for feedback. Somekh and Cathy (2005) observe that writing enables the research to gain distance from an experience, to reconstruct and to re-evaluate it from alternative points of view. Arguably, writing is as a result of the complex processes of writing activity that is used for a wide variety of purposes

and communication. This can be both entertaining and informative that is sometimes based on personal experiences and social identities by using words (in the written form). As one of the four language skills, writing has always occupied a place in most English language course. One of the reasons is that more and more people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes.

2.1.2 Writing genres

Writing includes a wide range of genres, divided into fiction and non-fiction. The latter can be defined as outputs which inform, explain and describe (such as reports, explanation manuals, prospectus, reportage, travel guides and brochures); persuade, argue and advise (essays, reviews, opinion pieces, advertisements), and analyze, review and comment (commentaries, articles etc.).

2.1.3 Purpose of Writing

Basically, writing is based on the writer's ideas that he/she wants to develop in poem, article, books etc. Writing, in addition to being communicative skill of importance, is a skill which enables the learner to plan and rethink the communication process (Murcia, 2001). Writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing language that has been thought (Harmer, 2004). Hyland (2002) comments on the various purpose of writing, the increased complexity of its contexts of use, and the diverse backgrounds and needs of those wishing to learn it. Based on the explanations, it is argued that the purpose of writing is planning and rethinking of communication process that is used as thoughtful reinforcing language.

2.1.4 The writing process

Writers go through series of activities for a complex work to be achieved. In view of this, concerning the stages involved in the process of writing, several scholars classify them differently. Brown (2001) states there are several steps in the writing process. They are generating ideas, writing in the first draft, peer–editing, and revising. Campbell (1999) also mentions that the stages are illustrated and practiced from the generation of ideas and the compilation of information through a series of activities for planning, gathering information, drafting, revising and editing. From Harmer (2004, pp. 4-5), it is suggested that the process has four main elements.

1. Planning – experienced writers plan what they are going to write. Before stating to write or type, they try and decide what he or she is going to say.
2. Drafting – we can refer to the first version of piece of writing as a draft. This first ‘go’ at text is often done on the assumption that will be amended later.
3. Editing (reflecting and revising) – once a writer has produced a draft, he/she usually reads through what he has written to see where it doesn’t.
4. Finally, version - after a writer has edited his draft, making the changes they consider to be necessarily, they produce their final version.

2.2 What constitutes an error?

2.2.1 Meaning of error

Defining an error has not been easy for linguists. This is partly due to what we may refer to as the relative notions that are sociolinguistically determined (Crystal, 1985; Ellis, 1995; Kachru, 1982; and Trudgill, 1984). In a monolingual community such as the United Kingdom, one finds a lot of variations in pronunciation and even meaning. For instance, does one use a [bus] or [bʌs] to travel from Winneba to Cape Coast? The use of the sounds [u] and [ʌ] can be said to be free variants of the morpheme /u/. This would make the use of any of the variants correct or acceptable depending on the speaker's choice of which pronunciation to use in different speech communities or situations. A somewhat traditional definition of error is given by Burt, Duley, and Krashen (1982, p. 138) as follows: "Errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviates from some selected norm of mature language performance".

The determination of what constitutes an error, according to this definition, is normative: that is, a sentence or language form becomes an error if it fails to comply with the sentence or language forms that are normally produced by mature proficient users of the language in specified communities or situations. Usually, these proficient users are native users who in some studies in Error Analysis (EA) are referred to as research informants. They assess the accuracy levels or acceptability of given sentences or use of certain forms in given situations. Ten years after Duley and Burt offered this definition, Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992, p. 127) agree with them when they note that an error, "(in the speech or writing of a second language or foreign language learned), is the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical item, a speech act, etc.) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning." The

two definitions suggest that the term ‘error’ is used to refer to a language learner’s language. When viewed as features of a language learners’ language, they are defined as developmental rather than performance errors.

The definitions above differ from the ones provided by Corder (1981) and Burt and Kiparsky (1972), who define an error in the context of the effectiveness of the sentences/utterances made by language users. Corder identifies what he calls “covertly idiosyncratic” and “overtly idiosyncratic” errors. The former refer to flaws in communication in sentences whose word orders conform to the rules of the grammar of the target language but do not clearly convey the speakers intended meaning. Overtly idiosyncratic errors on the other hand, occur in sentences that appear to be ill-formed but whose meaning is transparent to the listeners.

Corder’s provision of these broad error categories was preceded by that of Burt and Kiparsky (1972). They classified errors in terms of whether they were “global” or “local”. Global errors can be perceived as synonymous with what Corder referred to as covertly idiosyncratic error. Local errors, on the other hand, are synonymous with overtly idiosyncratic ones. Although the latter violate rules that operate within plurals and clauses, they do not result in the miscommunication of messages as global errors do. It should be noted that in the preceding definition of the concept ‘error’, no reference is made to mistakes. Mistakes are deviations that are not reflective of the speaker’s inadequate mastery of language rules but, what we frequently refer to as ‘slip of the tongue’ or ‘slip of the pen’. Unlike competence errors which are due to inadequate mastery of language or

discourse rules, mistakes can be easily corrected by the speaker soon after their occurrence in speech or during text revision after writing.

2.2.2 Errors versus Mistakes

According to Ellis (2008), a ‘mistake’ is a deviation in learner language that occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. It is a lapse that reflects processing problems. An error, on the other hand, is a deviation in learner language which results from lack of knowledge of the correct rule. (p. 971)

In linguistics, it is considered important to distinguish errors from mistakes. A distinction is always made between errors and mistakes where the former is defined as resulting from a learner’s lack of proper grammatical knowledge, whilst the latter as a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Brown terms these mistakes as performance errors.

Mistakes of this kind are frequently made by both native speaker and second language learners. However, native speakers generally are able to correct themselves quickly. Such mistakes include slip of tongue and random ungrammatical formations. On the other hand, errors are systematic that they occur repeatedly and are not recognizable by the learner. They are a part of the learners’ interlanguage and the learner does not generally consider them as errors. They are errors only from the perspective of teachers and others who are aware that the learner has deviated from a grammatical norm. That is, mistakes can be self–corrected with or without being pointed out to the speaker but errors cannot be self–corrected.

2.3 The types of errors

According Haryono (2011: 6), there are four types of errors based on the surface strategy taxonomy, omission, addition, misformation and misordering.

2.3.1 Omission

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of items that must be present in a well-formed utterance. Examples are

1. He is good student
2. She is best teacher in my school

In the first utterance the student omits an indefinite article 'a' for while in the second utterance, a definite article 'the' is omitted.

2.3.2 Addition

Addition errors are the opposite of omission errors. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not be present in a well-formed utterance. Haryono (2011: 6) divides addition errors into three types as follows:

2.3.2.1 Double Marking

Many addition errors are more accurately described as the failure to delete certain items which are required in some linguistics construction, but not in others. Example:

- a. They didn't went here
- b. I did not arrived on time

In utterance a), two items rather than one are marked for the same feature (tense in these examples).

2.3.2.2 Regularization

Regularization error refers to an error having exceptional items of the given class that do not take a marker's form. For example,

Incorrect

1. *Mans* : *Men (plural from man)*
2. *Buyed* : *Bought (past tense from buy)*
3. *Childs* : *Children (plural from child)*

These examples are regularization errors in which the regular plural noun and tense marker respectively have been added to items which do not take marker.

2.3.2.3 Simple Addition

Errors of simple addition refer to the addition of one element to the correct utterance. For example,

1. *I am is a student*
2. *You can to swim in the swimming pool anytime*

In utterance 1, the sentence "*I am is a student*" is incorrect sentence because it is added with a word 'is'. So, the correct sentence is "*I am a student*". And in the utterance 2, the sentence "*You can to swim in the swimming pool anytime*" is incorrect sentence because it adds with word 'to'. So, the correct sentence is "*You can swim in the swimming pool anytime*".

2.3.3 Misformation

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the unacceptable forms of the morpheme or structure. While in omission errors the item is not supplied at all, in

misformation errors the learner supplies something, although it is incorrect. There are three sub-types of misformation errors, they are as follows:

2.3.3.1 Regularization errors

Regularization errors are errors in which regular marker are used in place of irregular ones, as in *runned* for *ran* or *sheeps* for *sheep*.

2.3.3.2 Archi – Forms

The selection of marker of one member of a class of forms to represent other in the class is a common characteristic of all stages of second language acquisition. The form selected by the learner is called archi – forms. The following examples are dealing with the use of demonstrative adjective *this*, *that*, *these*, and *those*:

1. *That cats*
2. *This students*
3. *These book*
4. *Those table*

That should be followed by singular forms, whiles these should be followed by the plural forms, and the correct form of the examples above are as follows:

1. *That cat*
2. *This student*
3. *These books*
4. *Those tables*

2.3.3.3 Alternating form

As learners' vocabulary and grammar grow, the use of archi-form often gives rise to the apparently free alternation of various member of class with each other.

- a. She seen her yesterday
- b. He would have saw them

The utterances have incorrect verbs 'seen' and 'saw' instead of 'saw' and 'seen' respectively.

2.3.4 Misordering Errors

The incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance characterized misordering error. Misordering errors occur systematically for both L1 and L2 learners. Examples:

1. *I don't know who is he.*
2. *What you are thinking about?*

Both sentences have incorrect placement of 'is' and 'are'. Grammatically, the utterance should be written as follows:

1. *I don't know who he is.*
2. *What are you thinking about?*

In addition to these creative misordering errors, the students have made written misordering errors that are word – for – word translation of native language surface structure.

2.4 Sources of Errors

Brown (2000, p. 224) is of the view that there are two main sources of errors; Interlingual and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are those that are traceable to first language interference. These errors are attributable to negative interlingual transfer. The term interlingual was first-introduced by Selinker (1972). He used this term to refer to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent of both the learner's L1 and the target language (Abisamra, 2003). According to Kavaliauskiene (2009), transfer errors may occur because learners lack the necessary information in the second language or the additional capacity to activate the appropriate second language routine. Transfer is of two kinds: positive and negative. Transfer may prove to be justified because the structures of the two languages are similar; and in this case, it is 'positive transfer' or facilitation, or it may prove unjustified because the structures of the two languages are different which is known as 'negative transfer' or 'interference' (Wilkins, 1972, P.199).

2.5 Causes of errors

Language errors as identified arises from negligence, interference from the learners' mother tongue, translation from the first language, contrastive analysis, general order of difficulty, overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, material-induced errors and a part of language creativity. In writing, learners easily make errors because information has to be transmitted without any aid from sources other than the language itself. However, there is a danger that the language learner will tend to focus on the errors rather than on the presumed aim of the piece of writing communication. Sompong (2014) classified sources of competence errors into two categories: 1. Interlingual errors caused by the mother tongue interference and 2. intralingual and developmental errors occurring

during the learning process of the second language at a stage when they have not really acquired the knowledge. Almost 90% of errors are said to be intralingual errors (Dulay & Burt, 1974). James (1998) states that there are four causes of errors: interlingual errors, intralingual errors, communication strategy-based errors and induced errors.

2.5.1 Interlingual errors (Mother – tongue influence)

These kinds of errors are influenced by the native language which interferes with target language learning. It is seen as a process by which learners use their knowledge of the first language in learning a second language. Learners translate word by word idiomatic expressions, vocabulary and even the grammatical rules of their first language into the second language. In contrastive analysis, it is believed that the type of errors made by the learners of the target language can be predicted and their causes can be determined in order to prevent and eliminate these errors.

2.5.2 Intralingual errors

These types of errors are caused by the target language (TL) itself. Apart from recourse to L1 transfer, the learners in ignorance of a TL form on any level and any class can do either of two things: they can set about learning the needed item, engaging their learning strategies, or can try to fill the gap by resorting to communication strategies. Learning strategies are used for code breaking while communication strategies are encoding and decoding strategies. Errors caused by learning strategies include:

2.5.2.1 False analogy

Learners assume that the new item B behaves like A: they know that “boy” (A) has its plural “boys” and assumed that “child” B behaves likewise, so pluralizes to “childs”.

2.5.2.2 Misanalysis

Learners form a wrong hypothesis. An example of this strategy occurs in: *they are carnivorous plants and * its (their) name comes from*. The false concept in operation here is that it is the *s* pluralized form of it. A false concept is the result of the learners misanalysing the TL.

2.5.2.3 Incomplete rule application

This is the converse of overgeneralization as the learners do not use all the rules. They change or decrease the complicated rules to simpler rules as they aim at simplification rather than attempt to get the whole complex structure. An example is seen in: *Nobody knew where * was Justice (ii Justice was)*. The learners have selected and fronted a wh – element (rule component 1 and 2), but have omitted to invert the subject and verb.

2.5.2.4 Overgeneralization or system-simplification

This error is caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules. An example is the generalization of the relative pronouns *that* as in: *Addokoh *that had a great sense of unconventional morality*

2.5.3 Communication strategy-based errors

2.5.3.1 Holistic strategies or approximation

The term “holistic” refers to the learners assumption that if you can say X in the L2, then you must be able to say Y. Lacking the required form, it must be all right to use another near – equivalent L2 item which they have learnt. It takes on a number of forms, the first of which is to use a synonym. The second is to coin a word. Until you be unconscious to love * sensities (senses).

2.5.3.2 Induced Errors

These errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities. In order words, the errors are caused mostly be the teaching and learning process as follows:

2.5.3.3 Teacher–talk induced errors

This kind of errors might be caused by both, native or non – native teachers if they do not provide models of the standards TL in class

2.5.3.4 Materials–induced errors

Teaching materials with errors will make the learners confused and they will make similar errors again and again.

2.5.3.5 Exercised–based induced errors

The learners make errors while doing exercises on sentences combining, for example, the teacher feeds to the learners the raw ingredients: Simple sentences that the learners must combine. Conditionals linked by *if* or *unless* are examples:

1. *I can't afford a new car combines with I shall win lottery.*
2. *Should yield*
3. *I can't afford a new car unless I win the lottery.*

4. *But will also yield at times from at least one learner forms like*
5. *Unless I can afford a new car I shall win the lottery.*

The likelihood is especially great when the students have been told that unless is equivalent to if ... not, which will suggest to them the possibility of replacing the negative element in can't with unless.

2.5.4 Errors induced by pedagogical priorities

Learners achievement tends to match other teacher expectations of what they will achieve. Some teachers choose to prioritize one of the following: accuracy, fluency or the idiomatic in teaching communication, thus if fluency is considered as superior, accuracy would have lower priority or vice versa.

2.5.4.1 Look-up errors

There have been many learners' dictionaries and grammar books in recent years and these publications usually come with useful guidelines on how to look up aspects of the L2 about which is doubt. But, strangely, learners do not like to read such user – instruction and as a result they frequently misuse these reference aids. In addition, the learners sometimes use the new words from the dictionary inaccurately or get incorrect references from the grammar books.

2.6 Error Analysis

As already indicated, an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker that reflects the competence of the learner. Errors are systematic in that they occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner. An analysis of errors in writing is believed to be one way to improve learners writing skills. By this, it can be the indicator of

the achievement in language learning, and also inform teachers to prepare appropriate teaching approaches to enhance pupils' or students' writing skills. As a result, error analysis has been a growing research interest conducted in order to examine the errors committed by the learners. Error analysis has been in existence since the 1960s and continues till date. It is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors that learners make. This term is strongly associated with Corder (1967). He dealt with errors in a totally different point of view than they were dealt with before. Corder showed that errors were regarded as “flaws” that should be eradicated, but he considered them as very important ‘devices’ that the learners use to learn and thus considered indispensable (AbiSamra, 2003).

Another concept of error analysis is given by Hasyim, (2002, p. 43). He defines error analysis as “the process to observe, analyze, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal the systems operated by learner”. Errors contain valuable information on the learning strategies of learners (Lightbown & Spada, 2006), and also supply means by which teachers can assess learning and teaching and determine priorities for future effort. Conducting error analysis is therefore one of the best ways to describe and explain errors committed by L2 learners. This kind of analysis can reveal the sources of the errors and the causes of their frequent occurrence. Once the sources and causes are revealed, it is possible to determine the remedy, as well as the emphasis and sequence of future instructions.

2.7 Significance of errors in language teaching and learning

Errors are normal and unavoidable. Therefore, they are regarded as a necessary part of language learning that could reveal learners' underlying knowledge of the language. Again, many educators and theorists in the field of error analysis have focused on the importance of second language learners' errors. For example, Corder (1967) indicates that errors are significant in three different ways. First, they inform teachers how far towards the goal the learners have advanced and consequently, what remains for them to learn. Second, they provide the researchers the existence of how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in their discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learners themselves, because we can regard the commission of errors as a device the learners use in order to learn. There is the need for students to recognize the significance of errors which occur in their witting, to fully grasp and understand the nature of the errors made. This requires English language teachers to be better equipped, more sensitive and aware of the difficulties students face with regard to grammar. In other words, it is a way the learners have for testing their hypothesis about the nature of the language they are learning.

2.8 Challenges of Error Analysis

As most research methods, error analysis also has its setbacks. Majority of teachers of English are non-native speakers. English is not their first language, but they speak it as a second language. Consequently, there is the likelihood of teachers using some wrong aspects of the English language. "The recognition of error.... depends crucially upon the analyst (researcher), making a correct interpretation of the learners' intended meaning of the context (Corder 1974, p. 127). With error analysis, it can be difficult to decide what an

error is and what it is not. This is mostly the case when it is task-dependent. An error in one situation may not be an error in another. For instance, vocabulary tests are generally geared to a particular set of items. Using another word with the same meaning might get the student marks for ingenuity, but may be a wrong answer. Even if errors would count heavily in a spelling test, a spelling error would count heavily in a spelling test and probably little in an extended essay. Thus, error interpretation and evaluation really depend on the weight given to an error which varies from exercise to exercise.

Another weakness of error analysis, according to Xie and Jiang (2007), is that there is danger in paying too much attention to learners' errors. For instance, in the classroom, the teacher tends to become so pre-occupied with noticing errors that the correct utterance in the second language will go unnoticed. Although the diminishing of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency, the ultimate goal of second language learning is still the attainment of communicative fluency in a language. Furthermore, overstressing production data as opposed to comprehension data is equally important in developing an understanding of the process of language acquisition. In this regard, Caicedo (2009) claims that error analysis can be said to only deal effectively with learners production, that is speaking and writing, but not with learner reception which is listening and reading.

In addition, error analysis does not account for learner use of communicative strategies such as avoidance, when learners simply do not use a form with which they are uncomfortable with. For example, a learner who for one reason or another avoids a particular sound, word, structure, or discourse category may be assumed, incorrectly, to

have no difficulty. The absence of error, therefore, does not necessarily reflect native-like competence since learners may be avoiding the very structure that poses difficulty for them. (Xie& Jiang, 2007:13). Ultimately, Xie and Jiang (2007) point out that error analysis can keep us too closely focused on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspects of language.

2.9 Related Studies

In recent years, there has been a growing research interest in the analysis of errors learners make while learning a second language. The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners (i.e. Error Analysis), either in their speech or writing or both has been brought under consideration by many educators, EFL teachers, linguists, and researchers throughout the world. The studies in error analysis have for the most part dealt with linguistic aspects of learners' errors. In fact, identifying and describing the origin of the learners' errors is now an activity that has received much attention in the last three decades. Such an analysis may lead one to understand the types of significant cohesive errors associated and the origin of such error. Sarfaz (2011) argues that though students are taught grammatical rules of target language, they lack practice and positive feedback. Without this, he further observes, the development of their proficiency in the target language is hindered.

2.9.1 Error Analysis in English Writing Studied in Ghana

The researcher's personal view on errors are the conditions of being wrong or the total deviation from the accepted one. Therefore, in relation to language study, errors can be the deviation from the norms or rules of a language. Errors are studied in order to find out something about the learning process and about the strategies employed by learning another language (Lungu, 2003, 323). The term errors was defined differently by many experts; but these definitions contain the same meaning while the differences lie only the ways they formulate. Before studying errors, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the two terms "error" and "mistake". These two terms are strongly associated with Corder in various papers (e.g. 1967), the distinction is drawn between errors and mistakes. An error is "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker that reflects the competence of the learner", while mistake refers to "a performance error that is either random guess or a slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly". Errors are "systematic" i.e. they occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner.

Another distinction between "error" and "mistake" made by Richards, and Schmidt (2002), it is mentioned that "a learner makes mistakes when writing or speaking because of lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspects of performance. Thus, mistakes can be self- corrected when attention is called". Whereas, an error is defined as "the use of linguistic item in a way that fluent or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning". In other words, it occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus it cannot be self- corrected. Thus, in this study the focus will be on learner's interference errors not mistakes.

Writing skills are obviously needed by students at all levels of education, especially university students since it is a tool for acquiring knowledge. Also, an analysis of errors in writing is believed to be one way to improve learners writing skills as it can be the indicator of the achievement in language learning, and it can be the information for teachers to prepare appropriate teaching approaches to enhance pupil's or student's writing skills. As a result, an error analysis has been a growing research interest conducted with learners in order to examine the errors committed by the learners. In Ghana there are also studies focusing on errors in English writing committed by students which are ongoing. For instances the study done by (Owu-Ewe & Lomotey, 2016), which focused on L1 (Akan) interference errors in L2 (English) writing among a three junior high school students in Ghana. Therefore, this research reviews the studies on errors of Ghanaian student's especially upper class pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School.

Error analysis has spread in 60's to date. It is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. This term is strongly associated with Corder (1967). He is regard as the "father" of this field (E.A). He dealt with errors in a totally different point of view that they were dealt with before. Corder showed that errors were regarded as "flaws" that should be eradicated, but he considered them as very important 'deyces' that the learners use to learn' they are indispensable' (AbiSamra, 2003).

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Errors contain valuable information on the learning strategies of learners (Lightbown and Spada, 2006), and also supply means by which teachers can assess teaching and learning and determine priorities for future effort. Conducting error analysis is therefore one of the best ways to describe and explain errors committed by L2 learners. This kind of analysis can reveal the sources of the errors and the causes of their frequent occurrence. Once the sources and cause are revealed, it is possible to determine the remedy, as well as the emphasis and sequence of future instructions



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter gave a review of literature on error analysis and interpretation of terms as well as a review of related studies. This chapter outlines the methodology and research design adopted in carrying out the entire research. The chapter discusses the sources of data, population and sampling, sampling size of the study and the factors that informed the researcher's choice of the sample population. It also presents the procedures used in the collection of the data. The reliability and validity of the research instruments are also addressed. Finally, ethical considerations pertaining to the research are also discussed.

3.1 Research Design

This study is to investigate errors made by the Upper Primary pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School. Creswell (1994) describes research as a master plan specifying the research methods and procedures. Also, Kothari (2004) claims that research design is a detailed plan which researchers use to guide the research. Here, the researcher is much concerned with why they collect certain data, what in order to answer the research questions of study. Baines, Grove and Burns (2003, p. 195) also defines a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. In addition, Parahoo (1997, p. 142) describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and

analyzed”. Finally, Owu-Ewie (2012) observes that a research design provides the most valid and accurate answers possible to the research questions stated.

In this study, qualitative research will be used. According to Owu-Ewie (2012) ordinarily, qualitative research to imply with detailed verbal descriptions of characteristics, case and setting by using interviews, observations and documents as the data collecting procedure. Creswell (1998) also observes that qualitative research design is an enquiry of the process of understanding, based on a clear methodological process that uses a social or human problem. This is done by building a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, report detailed views of informants, and conducted in the natural setting.

Research designs provide the most valid and accurate answer possible to the research questions stated. Bailey, Pillard, Dawood, Miller, Farrer, Trivedi and Murphy (1999) state that since validity are an essential element, the researcher should attempt to accurately represent findings. To this end, different data sources will be employed to identify errors in the written essays of pupils and thus the necessity to expand the data scope to the greater proportion of the population of the school. The researcher will follow the analytical descriptive method. The analytical method involves the identification and interpretation of errors in the written essays of the pupils.

3.2 Population and Sampling

A population is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and of interest to the researcher (Best & Kahn, 2006). It also refers to the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which he or she would like the results of the study to be generalized (Creswell, 2013). The entire school has a population of about 218 pupils.

The researcher selected the Upper Primary because they form the middle belt of the basic education level. A good sample determines the generalizability of results and represents the population of the study. The target population for the study was the upper primary pupils.

The learners are aged between 10-15 years and have been introduced to the study of English Language for four (4) to six (6) years. It can be said that the Upper Primary pupils have acquired the necessary basic writing skills needed in writing short essays. This is because it is assumed that they have had much exposure to English Language at the school where this research was carried out. Gyahadze M/A Primary School was selected because that is where the researcher teaches and identified the problem in the course of marking pupils' class exercises. Most of the pupils in the school are taught in their lower primary in L1 and for that matter face a lot of challenges when it comes to their writing. Hence, errors in pupils writing depict their knowledge or lack of it in the use of the language.

3.3 Sample Size of the Study

The process of selecting portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001). Baines, Grove and Burns (2003) also refer to sampling as a process of selecting a group of people, events or behavior with which to conduct a study. The sample size of the research comprises 82 pupils from Class 4, 5 and 6. Out of these there are 43 boys and 39 girls. It is said that the size of the population depends on factors such as the research topic and the type of data (Seliger & Shohamy,

1989). The size of the study demands the use of a fairly large number of samples to represent pupils' writings.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) confirm that in sampling, a portion that represents the whole population is selected. Time and money will be considered in selecting a sample to be studied rather than attempting to study the entire population. In this study, the sampling technique was purposive. Purposive sampling was used to select Upper Primary pupils. Parahoo (1997, p. 232) describes purposive sampling as “a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data”. These classes were targeted because they have students of various intellectual abilities that serve as a better representative sample of the pupils. The target population involved 82 pupils out of a population of 218 pupils.

3.5 Data Sources

All research instruments involve data collection and are designed to either test hypotheses or answer research questions (Creswell, 2013). This study aims at answering research questions with data from the basic source, thus, pupils written essays. Written work was given to pupils because they are considered to be the outcome of planned language production. On the basis of ethical grounds, the researcher duly informed the school authorities and the pupils about the study. This ensured some level of co-operation of the people involved with the researcher from start to the end of the data collection period.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

According to Parahoo (1997), a research instrument is a tool used to collect data. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge attitude and skills. He argues that a research instrument is a systematically prepared form or document purposely designed through compilation of questions to elicit responses from respondents with the aim of collecting data. The researcher used written essays for the study. The written essays as an instrument for conducting this study is discussed below:

3.6.1 Written Essays

Written essays were the major instrument of this study because the analysis of the pupils' writing errors is the central objective of the study. The writing test was in the form of an open essay question where pupils were given guidance on how much to write (at least 120 words). The time limit for the essay was 40 minutes, which is in line with the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B. E. C. E) guidelines. The purpose of the essay is to identify the types of errors pupils commit and group them. The topics were *The benefit of maintaining the environment*, *How I spent the Christmas holidays*, *My first day at school*, *A book I have read* and *A journey I have made before*. The researcher followed the West African Examination Council marking scheme in the scoring. The breakdown of marks is given as: Content (10 marks), Organization (5 marks), Expression (10 marks) and Mechanical Accuracy (5 Marks)

3.7 Data Analysis and Classification of Errors

Data analysis involves working to uncover patterns and trends in data sets, and data interpretation involves explaining those patterns and trends. Error analysis is used both as a theory and method of analyzing data. It is a technique for identifying, classifying, and

systematically interpreting the forms of language writing and speaking (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Based on the guidelines of selecting a corpus of language by Ellis (1995), the written essays were collected from the 82 pupils. Various research on error analysis including Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 67) and Huang (2001) informed the processes used to analyze the data. The following steps were followed: *Data Collection, Identification of Errors, Classification of Errors* and *A Statement of Error Frequency*.

In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998, p. 304), categorization and sub-categorization were used for this research to record all the occurrence of errors which were committed by the pupils: grammatical (articles, tenses, concord and possessive cases); syntactic (nouns, pronouns, and word order); lexical (word choice); semantic and substance (capitalization and spelling). The written essays were read, marked and analyzed. Every error was recorded only once from each participant even if it reoccurred. The errors were categorized into tense, L1 transfer, spellings, capitalization, articles, and punctuation.

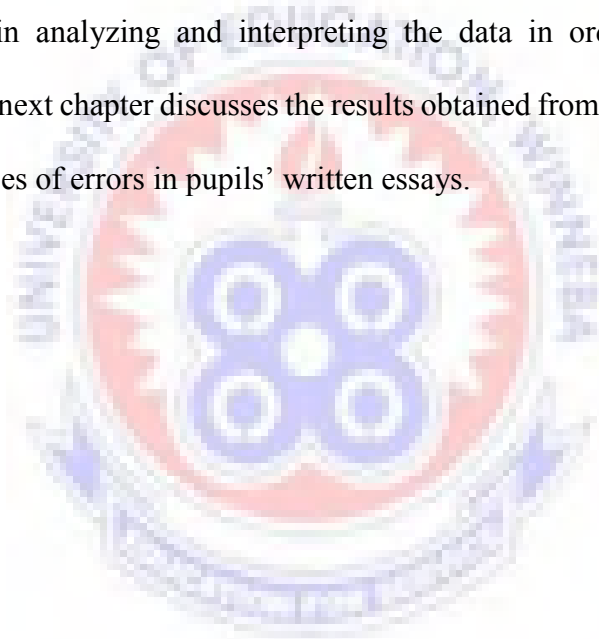
3.8 Reliability and Validity

Polit, Beck, and Hungler (2001) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. The researcher used a test-retest device to measure the reliability of the instrument. The researcher conducted a pilot study by randomly selecting 12 pupils from the target population. These pupils did not take part in the actual study. The students were asked to write on the topics twice within a two-week interval. The results showed consistency in the answers. Validity, on the other hand, is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Polit,

Beck & Hungler, 2001). To ensure the face and content of the study instrument, three (3) teachers were asked to evaluate the given topics. It was confirmed that the topics have been taken from materials appropriate to pupils' standard and their ages, and that the rubric set was very clear.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the procedure adopted for the study. It highlighted the sources of data, the population and sample size, the instrument of the data collection, the technique used in analyzing and interpreting the data in order to better explain the phenomena. The next chapter discusses the results obtained from the data collected to show the type and causes of errors in pupils' written essays.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter represents details of results obtained from the analysis of the data collected. It analyzes errors found in the written essays of pupils. The chapter is structured into two (2) main sections. The first section presents an analysis of common errors committed by learners in their written essays. Such errors included punctuation errors, errors in the use of capital letters, spelling errors, L1-induced transfer errors, tenses errors and errors in the use of articles. From this, spelling errors topped the list of errors with L1 transfer errors being the lowest. These are all discussed and illustrated with examples. The second section presents a discussion of the causes of these errors based on the findings.

4.1 Categorization of learners' errors

In order to analyze the types of various interference errors in pupils' essays, the errors were identified and categorized into different error types by the researcher. The researcher used their completed scoresheet to calculate errors. According to Huang (2002), absolute frequencies refer to the actual occurrence of errors, expressed by natural numbers. The errors were counted and rated in percentages. After data were collected and analyzed, several errors were identified in the learners' writings. These are punctuation errors, errors in the use of capital letters, spelling errors, L1 transfer errors, tense errors and errors in the use of articles. The individual error types are discussed in the sections that follow.

4.1.1 Spelling Errors

In writing, spelling is very essential because a wrongly spelt word may obscure the meaning of the message a writer intends to convey. Spelling is the art of forming words from letters. It has to do with the process of writing words by using the letters which are conventionally accepted for their formation. The common spelling errors identified in the data collected are spelling errors due to addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters.

4.1.1.1 Spelling errors due to omission of letters (Sp-O)

In these errors, the learners spelt words alright; however, they omitted some of the letters that make up the words. Examples are found in sentences as follows:

- (a) I still *rember** this Christmas day (remember)
- (b) When we *head** that I was very happy (heard)
- (c) We went to the *Parliment** House. (Parliament)
- (d) Accra Sports Stadium to *wach** a match. (watch)
- (e) How I spent the *Chrismas** holidays. (Christmas)

From examples (a)-(e), it is seen that some letters were omitted from certain words which led to those words being misspelt. This can be attributed to the fact that the learners spelt words as they hear them being pronounced, not necessarily the way they are spelt. In effect, they tend to learn the wrong pronunciation, produce it wrongly and further misspell the words.

4.1.1.2 Spelling errors due to addition of letters (Sp – A)

An addition is the act, process or result of adding or joining something to something else. In this vein, it is the inappropriate addition of letters to words that resulted in the words being misspelt. In this category of errors, the investigation revealed that learners added extra letters that were not required. This is seen in the sentences in the following examples:

- (a) I was *scent** to JHS at Gyahadze (sent)
- (b) I have to *visite** her during the holidays (visit)
- (c) On Sunday, *whilles** we got there. (whiles)
- (d) I woke up very *earily**. (early)
- (e) They called the *seniours** to come. (seniors)

The analysis suggests that these pupils' inability to read more and often give them some kind of limitation on the number of words they come across or encounter. That is, the more they read the more familiar they become with different words and that will help them to use them in their writing and speech appropriately.

4.1.1.3 Spelling due to substitution of letters (Sp – S)

Substitution in general has to do with the replacement of a thing by another, in this case, a letter with another letter. The analysis revealed that spelling errors under this category occurred when certain letters were replaced by other similar words. Examples of sentences to illustrate this are as follows:

- (a) I *fatch** water into our tank. (fetch)
- (b) A journey I have *mode** before. (made)
- (c) At *Takoradze** I took *Trakwa** Dompim car. (Takoradi and Tarkwa)

(d) *Adeleicious* jallof** rice. (delicious and jollof)

(e) We just came for an *escesion**. (excursion)

Here also, the analysis suggests that the substitution is seen to arise out of the fact that learners write the words just as they pronounce them. A summary of the spelling errors found in the data are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Spelling Error

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Sp – O	39	44.8
Sp – A	18	20.7
Sp – S	30	34.5
Total	87	100

Table 1 represents the sub-categorization of the spelling errors discussed in this section. This information is illustrated in Figure 1.

From Figure 1, it is evident that spelling errors due to omission (Sp – O) are the highest recorded in this category with 39 out of 87 cases accounting for 44.8% of total number while spelling errors due to addition (Sp – A) recorded the lowest with 18 out of 87 cases representing 20.7% of errors found in the data. Jordan (2002) explains that people usually tend to spell as if they try to write what they hear. In his opinion, spelling involves a whole lot of guessing and this leads to errors.

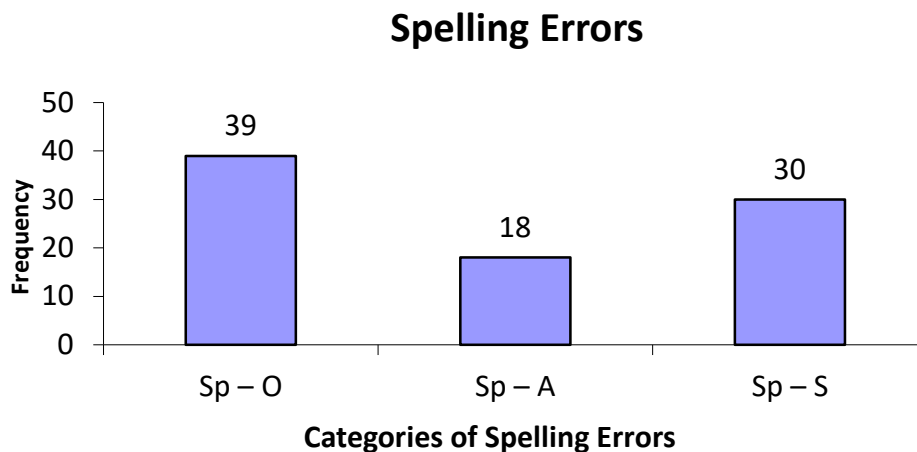


Figure 1: Summary of Spelling Errors

Hassan (2014) also argues that the way learners of a language pronounce words to a great extent influences how such words are written. Thus, it is seen that there is a considerable effect of phonetics on writing. These error types found in the data are worrying in the sense that the spelling eventually affects the meaning of the text. In a related study, Benyo (2014) examined spelling errors made by students in Sudan. From the writings, the author identified error of omission, addition and substitution. He concluded that mastering of the writing system of any language includes the inability to spell properly.

Errors in spelling may sometimes lead to obscurity and these make comprehension virtually impossible. Spelling is important for everybody to communicate his or her idea. Correct punctuation is important for conveying the right meaning of a written discourse. Bad spelling is a hindrance for the reader to get the meaning of written language, and any mistake in spelling can affect the written product and may lead to misunderstanding. As Macline (2001, p. 310) notes that “English spelling is difficult and irregular, but some rules work almost all the time”. This study also realized quite a number of spelling errors which

placed first with a total of 87 which represented 28.1%. From the researcher's personal observation, spelling errors present some kind of learning difficulties to students studying English and Gyahadze M/A Primary pupils are no exception.

4.1.2 Tense Errors

In language learning, knowledge of grammar, particularly tense, is considered to be the crucial part for non-native learners to master properly (Muftah & Rafik-Galea, 2013). Verb tense refers to the way a verb is formed to communicate when an action or an occurrence takes place. Many verbs give the idea of action of *doing* something. For example, *sing, jump, fold* and *sit* all convey action. However, some verbs do not give the idea of action; they express the idea of existence of state of *being*. For example, verbs *like be, being, seem* and *exist* all convey state. In simple terms therefore, we can say that verbs are words that tell us what a subject does or is, they describe action and state of being. Errors in sentences are one of the common errors committed by learners of English and those in this study are not excluded. Verb tense errors occur when one uses the wrong verb tense. From the data analysis, it is evident that though learners had some tense constructions right, a majority still struggle with the selection of the right verb to use to express distinction of time. These are of two kinds. Some used the present tense where the past was to be used while others used the wrong form of the verb.

4.1.2.1 Tense Exchange (Tn – E)

In this category, some learners used the present tense where they were expected to use the past. This was mainly because they have difficulty distinguishing when to use any of them. Examples of such errors are presented in the examples as follows:

- (a) I *take** some pictures. (took)
- (b) When we *are** going, I went there with my money. (were)
- (c) We *sleep** there till morning (slept)
- (d) We *wait** for them to come (waited)
- (e) Her money *have** been missing (has)

From the sentences, the simple past tense, which is used to talk about an action or a situation – an event – in the past, was represented by the simple present tense. This is considered an error because it changes the meaning of message to be conveyed to the reader. According to Richards and Renadya (2002), such errors could be from faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language arising from the poor graduation of teaching items. Here the form is interpreted as a marker of the past tense.

4.1.2.2 Wrong verb form used (Wr – V)

The analysis revealed that most of the learners had difficulty determining which verb tense was appropriate in a sentence at a particular moment. Wiredu (2005) states that the present tense can be used to express an action that is regular or habitual. He further notes that the simple present tense uses infinitive forms of the verb such *as go, see, come* and *sit* and only changes with the third person singular. He explains this by saying that the verbs are inflected with *-s* when the third person singular pronoun like *be, she* and *it* is used. For instance, in “*I go to school*” and “*She goes to school*”, the verb *go* is inflected

with *-s* in the second sentence because *she* is a third person singular pronoun. This exceptional rule in the simple present tense was seen to be a problem for most of the learners in this study. This is seen in examples as follows:

- (a) When I go to JHS I feel happy (went, felt)
- (b) The turtle *ask** for another race (asked)
- (c) Some people *said** they are *seeing** (say, saw)
- (d) You will *loosing** your life (lose)
- (e) I *see** that the town is very nice. (saw)

From the examples, it is evident that learners chose the verb form they assume is right due to the over-generalization of forms learnt. They also appear not to have a clearer understanding to determine when to use which form. This is due to a lack of adequate exposure and practice in the case of L2 leaning. These findings are similar to the findings made by Thomas (2014) in his study, which aimed at analyzing the English language proficiency of first year Indian Engineering students.

The study covered the types of errors in using tenses and remedial suggestions to improve their proficiency. Common errors made by these students were wrong usage of present tense, wrong usage of present tense and past tense, wrong usage of present continuous and present perfect continuous tense errors in the use of future tense and errors in using sequence of tense. He thus concluded that the students made such errors in tense due to inadequate exposure to the L2. Table 2 shows the sub categorization of tense errors made by learners in this study.

Table 2: Summary of Tense errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Tn – E	53	71.6
Wr – V	21	28.4
Total	74	100

Table 2 presents the sub categorization of tense errors, with the total of 74 errors. Its frequency chart is shown in Figure 2.

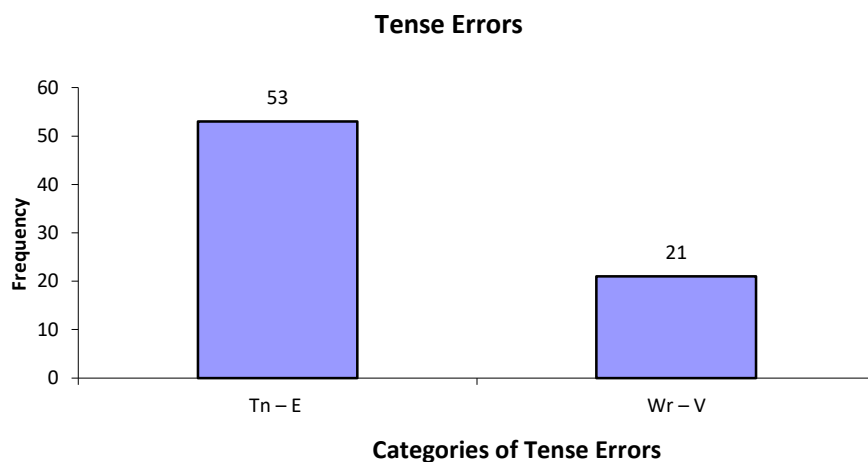


Figure 2: Summary of Tense Errors

Figure 2 represents the distribution of tense errors made by the learners in this study. From this, it is evident that most of the tense errors committed were due to wrong verb form used. These results are in line with those found by Lin (2002) in her study which examined 26 essays from Taiwanese EFL College students. His results indicated that wrong verb forms formed the highest percentage of 66% of the total errors committed. Ratnah (2013) also conducted a research in Indonesia on Error Analysis on Tenses Usage by semester students of Tour and Travel department.

From the results, he found that the types of errors made by the students in tenses usage were errors of omission, errors of selection, and errors of addition, particularly in using verb time signals and the use of auxiliary verb. He argued that the sources of errors made by the students in using tense cover intralingual and interlanguage errors. He concluded that the causes of errors were interference, overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restriction, and false concept hypothesized. From these, he encouraged English teachers to explain the English pattern structure clearly so that students could use the tenses forms of English correctly. In relation to this, the researcher is of the view that the rules, structures and systems of the L1 should also be taught thoroughly to avoid counter interference in L2 usage.

4.1.3 Capitalization Errors

Lowercase and uppercase letters refers to how a letter is written – as a capital letter (A) for example or as a small letter (a). The uppercase letters are used to begin sentences and for proper nouns such as names of *persons, places or town* etc. From the errors made by learners in this study, errors on capitalization were third highest recorded. These are further classified into two main groups. These are omissions of uppercase (capital letters) and addition or use of capitals where lowercase letters are to be used.

4.1.3.1 Omission of capital letters (Om – C)

A critical look at the learners' essays revealed that a basic sentence which must mandatory begin with an uppercase or capital letter, was mostly written omitting the uppercase letter. Some of the errors that are in this group are seen in examples (a) – (e).

- (a) *oneday*,* I had a letter from my Auntie. (One day)
- (b) A JOURNEY I HAVE MADE *BEforE**. (BEFORE)
- (c) On 3rd *december** 2015. (December)
- (d) I took *takoradi** car. (Takoradi)
- (e) Ecobank in *budumburum** (Budumburam)

From the examples, *oneday* in sentence (a) which begins the sentence starts with lowercase letters instead of uppercase letter as *Oneday*. This is wrong because a basic sentence must begin with a capital letter. The correct use of capitalization is a basic requirement for every written sentence. Its omission therefore distorts its meaning since the reader will not know where a thought being expressed begins or ends. Also, *december* in sentence (c), *takoradi* in sentence (d) and *budumburum* in sentence (e) are all proper nouns that must begin with uppercase letters were all written beginning with lowercase letters. This problem may be due to the fact that learners are not able to make a proper distinction between proper and common nouns. In sentence (b) which should have been all capitals (BEFORE), did not happen like that, that is mixing lower and uppercases together which makes the whole word to be wrong.

4.1.3.2 Addition of wrong use of capital letters (Ad – C)

In this type of errors, some learners used uppercase letters where they were not required. Examples are shown in examples (a) – (e)

- (a) Again, *Using** school hours any how is not good (using)
- (b) At first, I *Saw** so many soldiers. (saw)
- (c) The *Soldiers** showed their guns (soldiers)
- (d) The bell was rung for *Change** lesson (change)
- (e) I was *Examined**. (examined)

From the examples, in sentence (a) using (b) saw, (c) soldier, (d) change and (e) examined are all written beginning with a capital letter which is grammatically wrong. This may be attributed partly to learners' bad hand writing. The capitalization errors are subcategorized in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Capitalization errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentages
Om – C	33	66
Ad – C	17	34
Total	50	100

The table above shows the sub categorization of the capitalization errors earlier discussed in this study. Its frequency chart is presented in Figure 3.

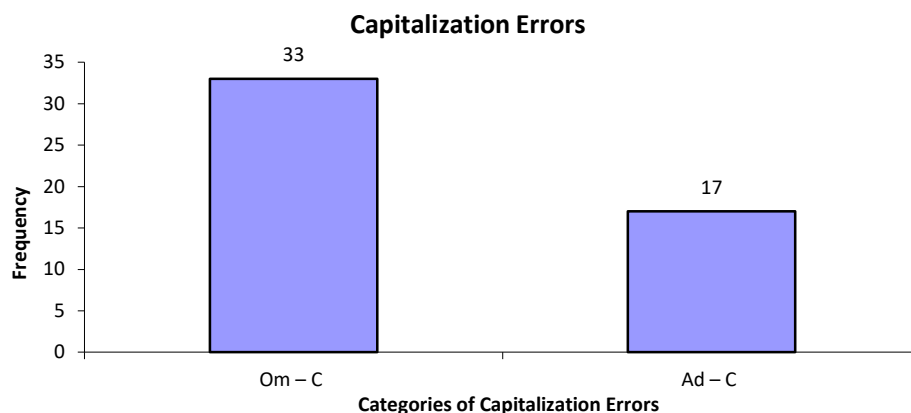


Figure 3: Summary of Capitalization Errors

Figure 3 shows the distribution of capitalization errors made by the learners in this study. The sum of errors under this type were 50, representing 16.1% of total errors made by the population. 33 representing 66% of errors made under this category were due to omission of capital letters while 17 also representing 34% were due to addition wrong use of capital letters where lower case letters were to be used. A related study was conducted by Tahaineh (2010) among Arab university students in the appropriate use of case letters. It was found that subjects of his study made 2,290 errors which came under three subcategories of errors of omission, substitution and addition.

In relation to this capitalization error, a study was conducted by Hazarika & Mohammed (2016) on difficulties of learning EFL. To them, comparative analysis of students' response for question 1 and writing sample shows that a highest percentage of students (53.33%) agree that they never have problems in capitalization while the analysis of writing sample of students reveals they always struggle with capitalization. It shows that students are not even aware of the fact that they commit mistakes in capitalization. They unconsciously make mistakes while writing a paragraph. This analysis shows that students

need to develop awareness regarding the use of capitalization. To them, realization of one's mistake is the first step on its correction. In their conclusion, they suggested that teachers must explain the rules of capitalization and make students practice them in the classroom. For example, exercises like titles and identification of capital and lower case can help rectify the capitalization errors of the students. The researcher thus concludes that capitalization must be given the needed attention by teachers to reduce such errors.

4.1.4 Punctuation Errors

Punctuation, according to Sekyi-Baidoo (2013), constitutes a set of symbols and marks which are used to clarify meaning in text by separating strings of words into clauses, phrases and sentences. They communicate the author's intentions and show how a sentence is constructed and it should be read. The analysis showed that 31 errors made on punctuation. Learners' errors in punctuations centered on wrong usage of punctuations and omissions which are further explained and discussed as follows.

4.1.4.1 Wrong Use of Punctuation

This occurs when a learner inappropriately uses a punctuation mark in a written text. Some of the errors which fall under the group are seen in the following sentences:

- (a) Those who *win's** their match. (win)
- (b) The police *men's** were there. (men)
- (c) Our *teacher's** followed us. (teachers)
- (d) *I,** will never forget. (I)
- (e) The *school's* will vacate. (school)
- (f) At the University of *Cape – Coast* (Cape Coast)

In sentences (a), (b), (c) and (e), the apostrophe which is usually used to indicate the omission of a letter or letters from a word, the possessive case or the plurals of numbers, letters and abbreviations was wrongly used by most of the learners. The comma (,) which should always be used in sentences to indicate discussion in items, showing a sudden pause in sentences and indicating displeasure, was used wrongly in sentence (d). In sentence (e) also, the hyphen, a short line (-) used to connect the parts of a compound word or name as in Ann-Marie or in co-exist, was wrongly used by most learners. Here, a name of a town was wrongly compounded using the hyphen. Example is *University of Cape – Coast*.

4.1.4.2 Omission of Punctuations (Om – P)

An omission occurs when an item which must be present in a well formed sentence or utterance is absent. The sentences in (a) – (e) illustrates instances where such errors were made by learners.

- (a) We have a school *library** (.)
- (b) My best subjects in school are English, Mathematics and *Social Studies** (.)
- (c) *Again** boys engage in strong activities than girls. (,)
- (d) We went to my *mother** house. (*s)
- (e) My *father** name is Mr. James Kwamena Kakraba. (*s)

In sentence (a) and (b), the full stop (.) which marks the end of the sentence after *Library* and *Social Studies* were omitted. Also in sentence (c), the comma (,) which indicate a sudden pause after *again* is omitted. Finally, in sentence (d) and (e), the apostrophe (‘) which shows the possessive of mother’s house and father’s name were also omitted. These are all errors because they do not indicate completion of the sentence in the case of

omission of the full stop while those that omitted the comma did not also indicate the tone and the pause in the sentence. A possible reason or explanation for the errors on punctuations may be due to the ignorance of rule restrictions. In such cases, learners tend to make analogy of what has been learnt and further apply them in new situations which they feel are appropriate. Table 4 shows the sub-categorization of punctuation errors discussed.

Table 4: Summary of Punctuation Errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Wr – P	27	62.8
Om – P	16	37.2
Total	43	100

The table shows the sub categorization and summary of punctuation errors made by study samples in their written texts. Its frequency chart is shown in Figure 4.

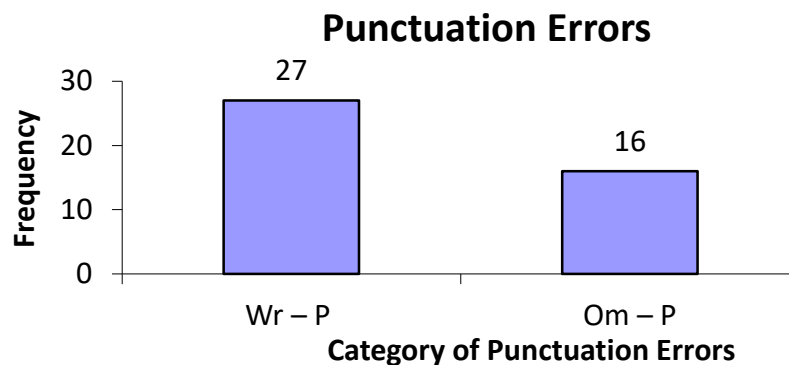


Figure 4: Summary of Punctuation Errors

Figure 4 shows the distribution of punctuation errors made by learners in this study. These errors sum up to 43, with 27 representing 62.8% were due to wrong use of punctuation and 16 also representing 37.2% were due to omission of punctuation. Alamin & Ahmed (2012) found the following errors of punctuation in their students' essays:

1. *Starting new sentences with lower case letters.*
2. *Not using capital letters for proper nouns.*
3. *Using the colon incorrectly.*
4. *Using the semicolon incorrectly at the beginning of the passages and after the words.*
5. *The exclamation mark hardly used.*
6. *Forgetting to use full stops at the end of a sentence.*
7. *Not using enough space between words.*
8. *Hardly using question marks.*
9. *Hardly using hyphens.*

The researcher also had similar errors in pupil's essays where it gives an indication that there should be more adequate coordination and reinforcement in reading, writing, listening, and oral practice.

4.1.5 Article Errors

The three articles in English are *a*, *an*, and *the*; and the learner has to describe noun – by – noun which one of the articles to use. This however becomes a problem for most learners. The article *a* (which becomes *an*, when the next word begins with a vowel – *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*) is called indefinite article because the noun it collocates with is indefinite or general. The meaning of the article *a*, is similar to the number *one*, but one is stronger and gives more emphasis. It is possible to say “*I have a book*” or “*I have one book*”, but the second sentence emphasizes that I do not have two or three or some other number of books.

The article *the* is the definite article and indicates or specifies things. The difference between the sentence *I saw a man* and *I saw the man* is that the second sentence refers to a particular or a specific man, not just any man. Many nouns, especially singular forms of countable nouns, must have an article. In English, it is not possible to say *I saw man* without an article, but a demonstration or possessive adjective can be used instead of an article as in the sentence *I saw that man* and *I saw his child*. This study identified various error types made by learners in the use of articles. These errors are grouped as omission of some required elements, addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements, mis-ordering of elements and deletion of incorrect elements. Specially, the analysis for the present study showed that errors in article use were due to addition of incorrect element and omission of some required elements.

4.1.5.1 Addition of incorrect element (Ad – A)

- (a) I felt lonely and confused on **the*** many things (the)
- (b) Mathematics problem to solve but **a*** failed (a)
- (c) **The*** journey I have made before (the)
- (d) **The*** plantain and cassava are cook together (the)
- (e) The car we took is **the*** very big (the)

From the examples, it is realized that learners added articles where it is not necessary in sentences (a), (b) and (c), while sentence (c) and (d) also have its articles before the noun group. This explains learner's incomplete understanding of the rule. Some learners obviously do not know when to use a particular article and when not to. This addition of unnecessary and correct element is seen in all the examples.

4.1.5.2 Omission of Article (Om – A)

This happens when a learner leaves out or omits an article in a well formed sentence where it is required. This could be caused by learners' inability to decide where and when to use an article in a sentence. Some instances where learners omitted article are indicated in examples (a) – (e):

- (a) I saw * traffic light (a)
- (b) Just came here for * excursion (an)
- (c) Beautiful flowers which was planted in the middle of * road (the)
- (d) My Auntie bought * nice bag (a)
- (e) I heard * bell rung for assembly (a)

From the examples above, it is clear that learners omitted articles in their sentences. In sentence (c), the definite article *the*, is omitted while *a* and *an* are also omitted in sentences (a), (b), (d) and (e) respectively. These errors occurred due to forgetfulness or ignorance of the use of the rule in the use of articles in English. This rule indicates that a singular noun (e.g. doctor, girl, bag, teacher, etc.) requires articles to introduce them, (Downing & Locke, 2006). Omission of articles was the most frequently committed error in this category with 31 representing 73.8% of the total of 42 article errors committed by learners in this study.

Table 5: Summary of Article Errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Ad – A	11	26.2
Om – A	31	73.8
Total	42	100

The table shows the sub categorization and summary of article errors made by study samples in their written texts. Its frequency chart is represented by Figure 5.

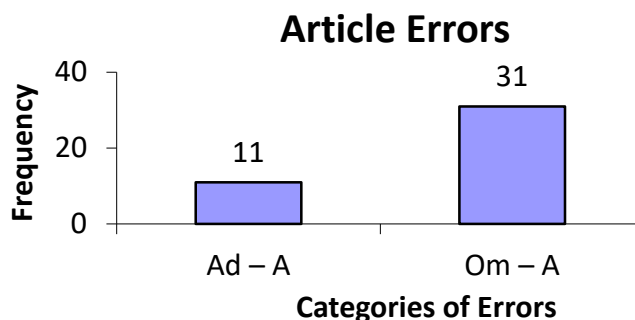


Figure 5: Summary of Article Errors

Figure 5 shows the distribution of article errors made by the learners in this study. A total of 42 errors were made with 11 representing 26.2% on addition of articles where they were not required and 31 representing 73.8% on omission of articles. The English articles, *the*, *indefinite a/an*, and *zero* can often be troublesome for English language learners to master, especially in longer texts. Thomas (1989) demonstrated that English as a second language (L2) learners from first languages (L1) that do not have the equivalent of an article system encounter more problems using articles.

Ionin and Wexler (2004) found that such learners fluctuate between the semantic parameters of definiteness and specificity. Barrett and Chen (2011) in their research findings observe that learners overuse both the definite and indefinite articles but underused the zero articles. The definite article was substituted for the indefinite article in specific environments. This study examines the interference errors made by the pupils of Gyahadze M/A Primary School. Here, potential factors influencing English article substitution and error patterns in their academic writings. These results suggest that with regard to writing, learners need to focus on the semantic/pragmatic relationships of specificity and hearer or reader knowledge.

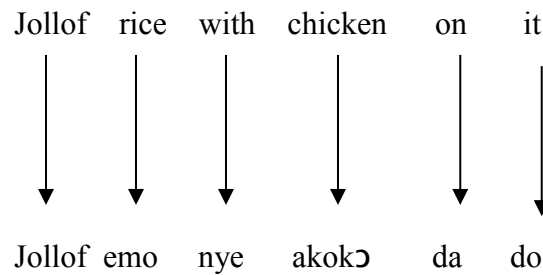
4.1.6 L1 Transfer Errors/Transliteration Errors

Adiko (2016) identifies four different strategies adopted by learners in inter-language building as potential sources of errors. For the purposes of this study, focus is on only two types of errors that arose as a result of the native language (interlingual transfer). These errors could systematically be found at the early stages of second language learning as in the case of learners in this study. In this, most learners tend to rely heavily on the structures of their L1 and end up transferring some of the features from their mother language. The second type of errors is the one that occurs as a result of over – generalization of the rules and semantic features of the target language. These are especially prominent in the case of negative intralingual transfer committed later in the learning process. In the essays, some learners appeared to have transferred some L1 (Fante) terms into their English Writing.

Transliteration, according to Crystal (2003), is the conversion of one writing system into another. Crystal adds that each item in the source language is given an equivalent item in the target language. For example,

She	measured	me
↓	↓	↓
O	susuu	me

Here, some pupils do not understand why they should use the word “took” which literally means “fa” in Fante to replace the word “measured” in the sentence. This is because in English, to be measured is to take a person’s length. Another example is:



Examples of L1 transfer Errors

1. “Now I am bringing it”
2. “And from that time going”
3. “We heard some aroma”
4. “They asked us that we are hungry or we not hungry”
5. “We respond thank you”

Examples (1)-(5), though ungrammatical in English, when literally translated to Fante (Akan), are grammatically acceptable so it is possible to conclude that these errors are as a result of L1 interference. These transfers happened because learners did not find corresponding counterparts or the right words to use. They therefore transferred properties. Chuo (2001) however agrees that the use of L1 requires language teachers to explain abstract and complicated grammar structures to learners. Although L1 transfer errors formed the least recording 14 out of the 310 errors, the trend is still worrying. This is because if it continues, their writings may be difficult to understand. Table 6 shows the number of L1 transfer errors discussed above.

Table 6: L1 transfer errors/Transliteration errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
L1 transfer	14	100
Total	14	100

Table 6 above shows the number of L1 transfer errors made by learners in this study.

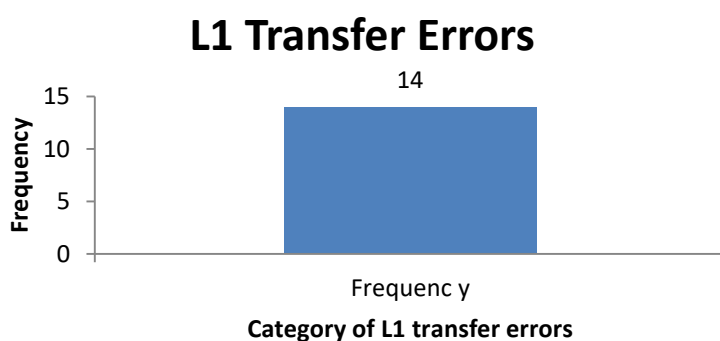
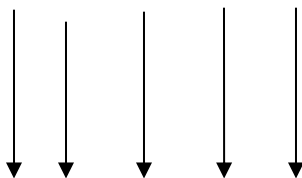


Figure 6: Summary of L1 Transfer Errors

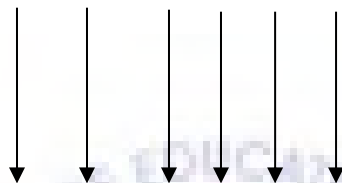
Figure 6 indicates the distribution of L1 transfer errors by learners in this study. This finding is consistent with Mahmoud (2000) who found traces of transliteration of grammar and vocabulary in the composition writing of Sudanese University students. Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) are also of the view that L1 students do this because their knowledge of L1 is most readily available as a linguistic resource they use to solve L2 communication problems. Further findings also proved that, out of this L1 transfer some pupils produced the following:

Mo wɔ nsatsea nketsenketse (reduplication)



I have finger small small

Wɔ yɛ dede wɔ m'enyim



They make noise in my face

The researcher sides with what Owu-Ewie & Lomotey (2016) suggest. To them, English and Ghanaian Language teachers should make conscious efforts to teach the similarities and differences in the structure being taught between the two languages (L1 [Akan] and English). Finally, it can be argued that the analysis of errors (L1 transfer) mainly focuses on the negative aspects of a learner's language, there are certain patterns or tendencies that are evident. With research, and/or observation, the teacher can exploit these negative aspects to the advantage of their learners.

4.1.7 Errors in writing

Table 7 gives the summary of the main writing errors identified in the essays of learners in the study. The table is drawn with the highest on top and the lowest at the bottom of the table.

Table 7: Frequency of Errors in pupils' writings

Error Type	Frequency of Error	Percentage of Errors
Spelling Errors	87	28.1
Tense Errors	74	23.9
Capitalization Errors	50	16.1
Punctuation Errors	43	13.9
Article Errors	42	13.5
L1 transfer Errors	14	4.5
Total	310	100

Table 7 indicates the summary of error types found from the study with their frequencies and percentages. These are presented in Figure 7. Figure 7 is a summary of all the error types recorded from the writing of learners in this study. In all, essays of 82 learners were analyzed from which a total of 310 errors were identified. From the analysis, spelling errors topped the list with a total of 87 cases representing 28.1% of overall errors categories under spelling errors were due to the addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters. This clearly indicates that learners in this study have a major problem of spelling resulting from learners writing the way they hear words being pronounced, poor reading habits which makes learners not familiar with the spelling of words, and poor or illegible writing of learners. Tense errors were the second highest recording 74 errors representing 23.9%. Under this type of errors, learners used the present tense where they were expected to use the past and vice versa.

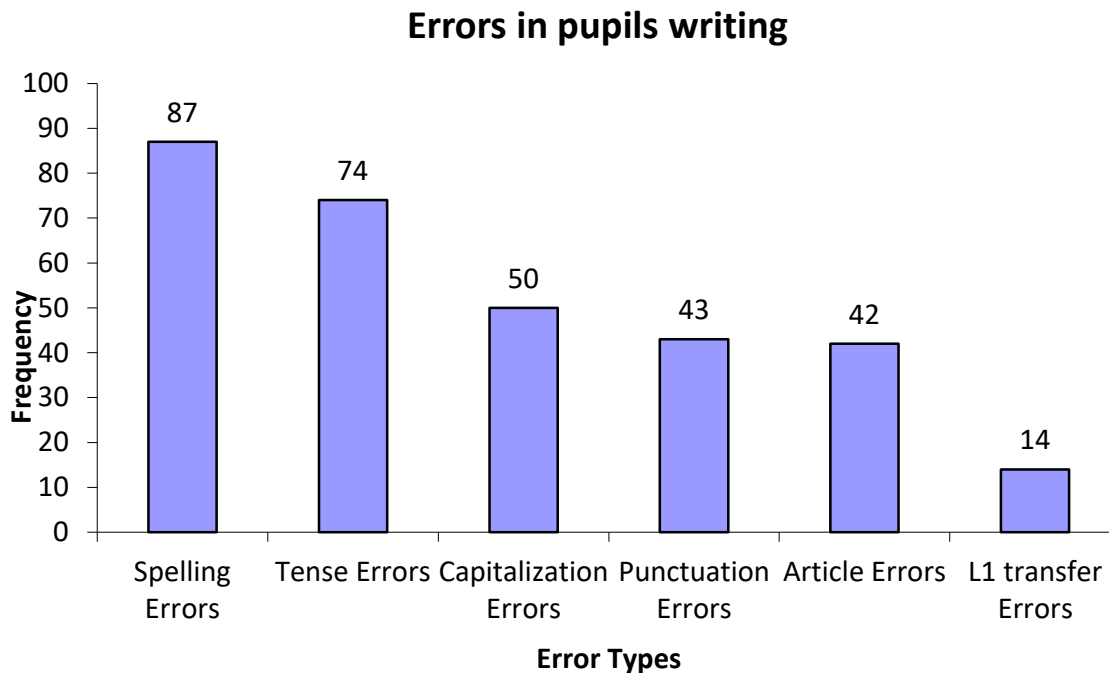


Figure 7: Error types and their frequency of occurrence

These errors are thought to have emerged from learners' over-generating grammatical rules. It is also due to poor handwriting of learners. The punctuation errors with 43 recorded cases representing 13.9%. Capitalization errors recorded 50 instances representing 16.1%, Article errors came next with 42 recorded errors, representing 13.5%. L1 transfer errors came at the bottom of the table with 14 recorded cases representing 4.5%. These were attributed to the fact that most learners could not find corresponding counterparts and right words to use in the instance if they were used. To discover learning deficiencies in writing English, Kao (1999) scrutinized 169 compositions from 53 Taiwanese college students who were English major students. A total of 928 errors were found among which grammatical errors with the greatest frequency of 66%, semantic errors occurred in 18% of the time, and lexical errors occurred with the least frequency of 16%.

A very similar study done by Neda (2012), the findings revealed that Malaysian ESL students have problems in writing tasks, especially in language use and punctuation. The first language interference was also very tangible in their writings.

Zughoul (2002) studied syntactic accuracy in the use of English Modal verbs by students in Malaysia. The research findings showed that Malaysian students had little problem using modal verbs grammatically in argumentative writing. It was concluded that despite the inaccuracies in terms of meanings, most students were able to use syntactically accurate modals in their sentences. Nganbam (2016) also examined 60 native Arabic speaking students. In all, 15 categories of errors were classified to find out the cause of syntactic errors, which type of errors are more frequent areas of weaknesses and the problems that tend to occur in writing compositions. Results indicate that errors committed were due to mother-tongue interference, misuse of sentence fragments, and lack of grammatical knowledge, formation and development errors.

In relation to this study and from the comparison made, it can be concluded that certain specific difficulties found are faced by second language learners. It can be seen that second language learners tend to overuse coordinate clauses, as well as difficulties in tense, verb formation, articles, concord prepositions, language use (grammar) and punctuation, and vocabulary register. Others were wrong organization of ideas, spelling and referencing lexical errors, and semantic errors. The investigations in these areas are important in bringing a broader scope in learning English as a second language.

4.2 Causes of learners' errors

A careful look at the results from the analysis revealed that learners' errors are sometimes caused by teachers, learners themselves and the influence of their first language. Norrish (1987, pp. 21) classifies causes of learners errors in three main types namely *carelessness, first language interference and translation*. To Norrish, carelessness is most often related to lack of motivation. Here, it must be noted that most learners lose interest when teaching materials and presentations become monotonous or do not suit them. This, according to Norrish, is not the fault of the learners. Interference also plays a role in learners' errors. Once a person tries to learn new habits, the old ones will definitely interfere with the new ones. Norrish calls this *first language interference*. To him, a learner's first language plays a complex and significant role in L2 acquisition. When learners write under pressure, they are likely to recall systematic resources from their native language for the achievement and synthesis of meaning, most especially in instances where they exhaust the L1 forms and structure.

Translation is another cause of errors in learners' writings. This comes about when a learner translates his first language into the target language word-for-word. For instance, *Now I am bringing it* and *She measured me*. This probably is the most common cause of errors in language learning. Richards (2015) however shares a different view on the causes of errors. He outlines them to be overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypothesized and ignorance of rule restrictions. Research has also proved the following five causes being language transfer, transfer of learning, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization of target language linguistic materials. The causes of learner errors discussed cannot be

complete without elaborating on the role teachers, learners, and learners' L1 played. The next subsection discusses how the aforementioned contributed in a way or the other to these errors.

4.2.1 Errors caused by teachers

The major cause of learners' errors in this study was traced to teachers. From observations made, it was realized that most of the errors made were linked to the context of instruction. This has been proved by researchers where it is the techniques of language learning in the teachers' attempt to communicate or use it. Learners and teachers were observed both in and outside the classroom. Observations revealed that grammar lessons were taught in the local dialect (Fante) by all the four teachers observed. Most of them were teaching traditional grammar, an approach to teaching grammar where grammatical structures and rules were dictated to learners first. This act does not allow learners to use the language in their day to day activities. Examples were given based on the spelt out rules so that learners could look on to give their own examples.

Grammar was also taught in isolation since the teachers did not prompt learners on the need to apply the grammar rules in both written and oral communication. Outside the classroom, teachers communicated with learners in the L1. This does not create much room for learners to use the forms and structures learnt in class. In some cases, teachers teaching languages have not received any formal training, yet they have been asked to handle English. This situation is also a huge factor for teacher contribution towards learner errors in their writings. It is also believed that these teachers lack adequate content knowledge

when it comes to teaching grammar and other equally important technical aspects of the English.

On this issue, Richards (2015) argues that teachers' attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical forms necessary to do so causes errors. This results in an automatic transfer of error from the teacher to the learners. Faulty teaching can also lead to errors made by learners in their essay this could be caused by the teacher, teaching materials or order of presentation. Aside the methods of teaching and the teaching strategies observed, teachers blamed other colleagues who taught learners in the previous classes for learners' errors. They also have the perception that if teachers who taught learners in the previous classes had done better learners' errors in simple spelling, punctuation, capitalization, tense would have been avoided or reduced to the barest minimum.

In grammar lessons observed, exceptions to rules in the use of structure and form were not taught to learners. This resulted in what Richards (2015) terms overgeneralization. The teacher has a role of providing models of the target language with regards to the way they speak, write and teach the language. From all indication, learners' errors could be teacher-induced because the teachers themselves have issues regarding the correct and structure forms of the language.

4.2.2 Errors caused by learners

Apart from teacher-induced errors, learners, to a great extent, also contribute to the errors they make in their writings. From the interactions with learners, it was revealed that they had poor reading habits. Learners had limited opportunity to read outside school

contact hours. The only time this happened was in the classroom during reading lessons or when they had been given assignments to work on at home. The motivation to read extensively was not there which resulted in learners lacking exposure to words and how they are used correctly in speech and in writing. Also, during grammar lessons, learners were observed to be passively involved in lessons since most of them were not answering or asking questions. The few who answered and asked questions produced a number of faulty constructions. The researcher also observed that most grammar lessons were simply teacher-centered since learners were not given the opportunity to use rules learnt. This makes learners passive and results in learners' inability to grasp the concept taught. This leads to the construction of ungrammatical sentences by most of the learners.

Carelessness, confusion and poor handwriting are also factors that could contribute to errors caused by learners in their essays. When learners do not practice writing legible often, their writings are not clear to read. They tend to omit letters, amalgamate words and add letters to words in the cause of writing. Norrish (1987) however shares a different view on carelessness. To him, carelessness is most often related to lack of motivation and not the fault of the learner. Some performance errors are of course, merely “performance errors which is a temporary lapse (or a slip of the pen)” (Carney, 1994, p. 81).

4.2.3 Errors caused by learners' L1 transfer

Research has shown that L2 writers employ their L1 skills in their writing of the L2 they are learning; they adopt L2 composing strategies to compensate for possible deficiencies in the L2 proficiency and as a tool to facilitate their writing process (Karim & Nasaiji, 2013). At the initial stage of L2 learning, learners frequently transfer L1 structure

to the L2. This, according to Brown (2000), happens because the learners' native language is the only previous linguistic source they can draw from. This assertion is not different in the case of the learners in this study. They over-generalize rules from structures in their L1 and use them in their L2 writings. Learners did not seem to know the similarities and the differences in the structure being taught between the L1 and the L2. For example, to the learners *sheeps* is the plural for *sheep* because in their L1 (Fante), there is a plural marked for *sheep*, this concept is transferred to English.

Such errors, according to Brown, can be detected if the teacher is familiar with the native language of the learners. These findings are similar findings made by Lakkis and Malak (2000) on the influence of L1 on L2. They concentrated on the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English by Arab students. Both positive and negative transfer we examined in order to help teachers identify problematic areas for Arab students and help them understand where transfer should be encouraged or avoided in particular, they concluded that an instructor of English whose native language is Arabic can use the students L1 structures that use the equivalent prepositions in both languages. On the other hand, whenever there are verbs or expressions in the L1 and L2 that have different structures that take prepositions or that have no equivalent in one of the languages; instructors should point out these differences to the students.

4.2.4 Summary of causes of errors

The analysis revealed that errors in essays of learners in English are due to factors. Key among them are L1 (mother tongue) interference, inadequate or lack of motivation to speak and write in English, wrong pronunciation and wrong spellings. As beginners in the

basic school, learners need the appropriate structure to aid in their writings. They can however not express themselves well because they have limited exposure to good Standard English both in school and at home. In both situations, learners do not have the opportunity to use structure learnt in their daily expressions which does not aid constant practice often leading to forgetfulness of structure learnt.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented details of results obtained from the analysis of data collected. It analyzed results from essays written by learners and observations made. The first section presented an analysis of common errors committed by learners in their essays. In all, 310 errors were recorded from the essays of 82 participants with errors on spelling topping the list with a recorded number of 87 cases. Tense recorded 74 cases, Capitalization recorded 50 cases; Punctuation recorded 43 cases and errors in the use of Articles also recorded 42 cases. Followed by L1 transfer errors also recorded 14 cases. The second section presented a discussion on the causes of errors based on the findings. The causes of errors in learners' essays were then identified to be from the teachers, learners themselves and the influence of learner's L1. These were further divided into laziness and carelessness on the part of learners, lack of motivation to read, speak and write in the target language, poor teaching methods, and teacher competence.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion of the present study. It summarizes findings of the analysis and interpretations made in the previous chapter. The main aim of the study was to identify the interference errors learners commit in their essays. This study is a qualitative analysis conducted in Gyahadze M/A Primary School in the Effutu Municipal Assembly of the Central Region of Ghana. The data were gathered from Eighty-two (82) pupils. Essays marked revealed several errors that were categorized. The errors were broadly categorized under spelling errors, tense errors, capitalization errors, punctuation errors, article errors and L1 transfer errors. The next section presents a summary of the findings made of the errors identified. This is followed with a discussion on the causes of the errors. The fourth section presents pedagogical implications of the results. The chapter finally ends with suggestions for future research.

5.1 Summary of findings

A total of 310 errors were recorded from the essays of 82 learners with spelling errors topping the list of errors with 87 representing 28.1% of the total errors recorded. Errors in this category were mainly due to addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters. This finding indicates that learners in the upper primary of Gyahadze M/A Primary School have a major problem of spelling. This problem is thought to have been caused by the way learners hear words being pronounced, the way learners pronounce words, poor reading habits which make learners unfamiliar with the spelling of words,

carelessness when writing as well as illegible writing by learners. Tense errors are second with 74 out of the 310 recorded, which represents 23.9%. Here, errors in this category were on tense exchange and wrong verb forms used.

Capitalization errors were the third highest recorded with 50 out of the 310 representing 16.1%. In this case, learners omitted uppercase letters in some instances and used them where they were not required. This distorted the meaning learners intended to convey in certain cases as some adjectives were written beginning with the uppercase letters within some sentences. These errors suggest that most learners overgeneralized grammatical rules on the use of case letters and had poor reading and writing habits. Errors in the use of punctuation had the next highest frequency of errors with 43 representing 13.9%. Learners errors on punctuation centered on wrong usage of punctuation and omission of punctuations. Article errors came next with 42 recorded cases representing 13.5%. Errors in this category were addition of incorrect element and omission of article. L1 transfer errors were the least recorded errors in the study. These errors were thought to have come about due to learners' inability to find corresponding counterparts and right words to use in the instances the L1 forms were used.

5.2 Causes of errors

Based on the findings made from data gathered and analyzed for this study, several factors were realized to be the causes of errors in learners' writings. This first cause worth mention has to do with the way English Language is taught at the lower primary level. Lessons in English dwell mainly on using the learners L1 (Fante) to explain concepts. Teaching here is also done in the L1. It therefore becomes a problem when they get to the

upper primary and have to express themselves in the L2. This results in the transfer of forms and structures from L1 to L2. Most spelling and punctuation errors were due to context of learning. Such errors were made when perhaps because they have learnt to pronounce words wrongly which they carry over into their writings. Carelessness aided bad writing skills which also contributed to the occurrence of these errors. Grammatical errors found in the writings of learners were also mostly due to overgeneralization of rules and context of learning. Other errors in grammar were due to incomplete learning of rules or overgeneralization of the rules learnt. The influence of the learners L1 also contributed to the errors made in their writings.

5.3 The role of errors in language teaching and learning

One may say that responsibilities are part and parcel of life, likewise, errors which are inseparable part of the learning process and having them corrected is a good way to learn a language. The study of learners' errors helps teachers identify the problematic areas in language learning at different levels of institutions. Inferences will be made on the nature and depth of learners' knowledge acquired at given stages. Frequent exercises on the investigations of learners' errors and the frequency with which they occur will enable the teachers devise alternative strategies to organize remedial lessons on those errors towards curbing such errors. This is necessary because, errors provide adequate feedback that informs the teacher on the effectiveness of teaching techniques.

They also show teachers the topics in the syllabus that have been inadequately learnt or taught that might need further attention. This will provide the information for designing a remedial program for re - teaching. Errors also show the teacher how language

is acquired and what strategies learners use. This is evident from the interlingual and intralingual errors learners make. According to Richards (2002), errors play the role of enabling the teacher to discover, identify and analyze learners' mistakes as well as designing the appropriate methods for their mitigation. Errors are also important to the learner. This to Richards (2002) serves as a tool through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language which could not be understood earlier.

5.4 Implications for language teaching and learning

The present study has pedagogical implications for the study and learning of English Language. Correction is essential in helping students become more accurate in using the L2. Brown (2006) stresses that there is a growing evidence that error correction is overall useful and can be helpful in L2 learning. Since effective practice results in perfection, teachers should play classroom activities and design learning outcomes that encourage practice of forms and structures learnt. Teachers should also increase the number of assignments which aid learners to read and encourage oral presentation. This should be followed by feedback given for students to progress in their studies. A conducive language learning environment should be created for learners to take risk and practice language without fear of intimidation. The teacher can achieve this by including role plays, dramatization and group works in the teaching and learning process. This will encourage learners to interact freely with their colleagues through speech. It is through this that learners can test their hypothesis in the language learning situation.

In addition, grammar lessons should be learner-centered so that learners are actively involved in the learning process. Teachers should make drills in sentence patterns, identify

their errors so that they can be corrected. Most importantly, the teacher should be a good model of the target language. This is because learners copy their teachers; what learners use and write in class is a reproduction of what they hear and see in class. The teacher must also strive to upgrade in knowledge of the subject matter by reading extensively. This way, he/she becomes proficient in both oral and written English. The teacher should again try as much as possible to be innovative. Contemporary activities can be tailored to the learning experiences in the classroom. This makes learning fun and interesting. However, this will require creativity on the part of the teacher. As such, teachers should be ready to provide different activities and different materials in the class to aid them achieve lesson objectives.

To add to these, in-service training and language teaching workshops can be regularly attended. This exercise will help teachers to learn new ideas from one another. To help deal with L1 interference, teachers should have an understanding of the L1 structure and the type of errors made in the L2 in order to assist learners. Teachers should be able to predict possible future errors in the target language so that they may be able to attribute a cause to that error with some degree of precision (Owu-Ewie & Lomotey, 2016). This way, they will help students minimize such errors. Policy makers should also review the policy of the use of the L1 as a medium of instruction at the lower primary level. English Language should be more used at the lower level alongside the L1 where it is necessary to use to explain concepts.

This will help eliminate the transitional challenges learners encounter at the Upper Primary as was in the case of learners used in this study. A critical look should be given to the English Language syllabus which only spells out the grammar topics that are supposed

to be taught by teachers, but does not suggest how these topics can be effectively taught. The syllabus should include a variety of effective methodologies that the teacher can choose from to teach learners based on their needs and learning abilities.

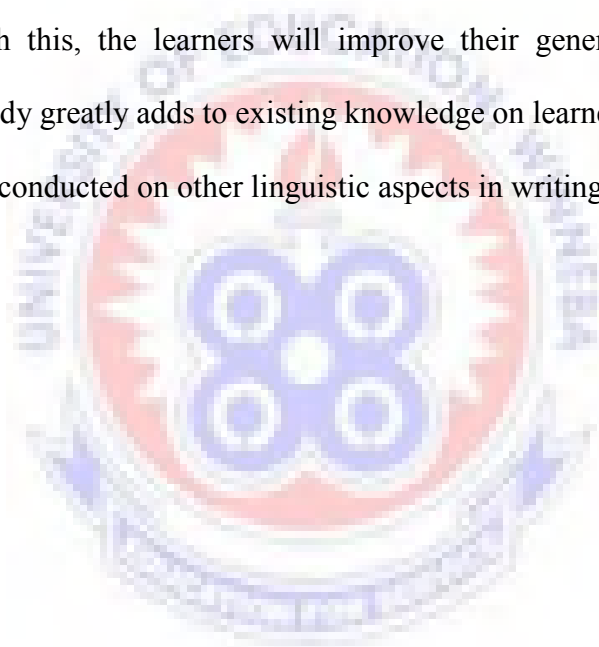
Furthermore, the syllabus should be designed with its corresponding textbooks. This will reduce the burden on teachers who find it difficult to get appropriate materials for use by learners. Textbook writers should also be tasked to go an extra mile to provide corresponding teachers' guide to aid in grammar teaching. They should work collaboratively with syllabus designers so that the books they produce will match the topics in the syllabus. Finally, parents and guardians must work hand-in-hand with teachers towards helping the children in their learning. Materials like storybooks, learning aids and textbooks that help learners in their learning must be provided by caretakers.

5.5 Suggestions for future research

This study only looked at the errors learners at the Upper Primary of Gyahadze M/A Primary School commit in their essays. Orthographical and grammatical error types in learner essays were identified. Future research may focus on how pupils' pronunciation affects their spellings. Researchers may also focus on identifying other categories of errors other than those found in the present study. Again, researchers may also investigate how errors in the writing of L2 learners are corrected by teachers in the classroom. It is also suggested that this study can be extended to other schools in the Central Region as well as in other regions with an increase in the number of participants.

5.6 Conclusion

The study aimed at investigating, identifying, describing and categorizing the types of interference errors made by upper primary pupils' of Gyahadze M/A Primary School. Results obtained from observations and an examination of pupils' essays revealed different types of errors. These were spelling errors, errors in the use of punctuations, errors in the use of tenses, articles, capitalization errors and L1 transfer errors. From the results, it is important that language teachers have adequate training on contemporary L2 teaching strategies. They are also required to explain abstract and complicated grammar structures to learners. With this, the learners will improve their general language proficiency. Although this study greatly adds to existing knowledge on learners' errors, it is hoped that more research is conducted on other linguistic aspects in writing.



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APPENDIX A

Examples of L1 Transfer Errors committed by pupils

1. "Now I am bringing it"
2. "And from that time going"
3. "We heard some aroma"

4. “They asked us that we are hungry or we not hungry”
5. “We respond thank you”



APPENDIX B

SAMPLE OF PUPILS' WRITTEN ESSAYS

SAMPLE 1

Comfort Kankubo
THE JOURNEY I HAVE MADE BEFORE THE MATCH

The journey made to Akosombo is the most interesting of all. On Sunday December 20th I woke up very early and prepared for the journey. The bus arrived at 5 o'clock and I sat in for the journey. The bus took off at 6 o'clock and I ate my breakfast. When I reached Kasoa the bus bumped into traffic so I delayed at there just before I got to Accra in Budumburam I saw flowers in their UNTICR where the to Ghana to seek to Sulya 1989. When I got to Accra I saw the bus was charged 2.50 and was given a receipt just after the tollbooth I saw Asamoah "Gan's mother house the most expensive building in Ghana. From there I fell asleep when I woke up I was in Adansi there I saw many mango trees the bus took the dusty road which made very angry because I was suffering from cold. We then got to Akosombo and I alighted.

SAMPLE 2



JESSICA QUARE
THE JOURNEY I HAVE MADE BEFORE

14th March 2012

On 23rd September, 2011 ^{1st of Oct} we went to Spain for ^{1st of Oct} meeting but we came back on 28th September ^{1st of Oct} well. There was a game when we went there we met some people. Some of them ^{1st of Oct} is ^{1st of Oct} when we were in Spain - June 2011 - 2nd of Oct 2011.

When we ^{1st of Oct} to ^{1st of Oct} waited for our teachers they are called ^{1st of Oct} to ^{1st of Oct} Madrid. Patricia and I were called us that we are hungry so we are not hungry and we said that we are hungry, they went to the ^{1st of Oct} that is near the Priby church at Madrid and they ^{1st of Oct} brought washboard and bread and ^{1st of Oct} got him washboard and one slice of bread and the car case.

^{1st of Oct} when we went to Spain on Monday 23rd September. I got first then we were in a room and each had ^{1st of Oct} sleep with other people and when we are going ^{1st of Oct} I went there with my money bag and ^{1st of Oct} went also went there with their money bag but it is small and they gave to me to put their money in my bag and I took it but Rebecca came and took their and they gave it to Linda and Linda said that I don't know how to use it so she gave the small bag to me. ^{1st of Oct} and they spent ^{1st of Oct} and also ^{1st of Oct} before they are giving the ^{1st of Oct} to Linda when Linda ^{1st of Oct} against her gave her ^{1st of Oct}.

On Friday 28th September when we were at church place and they said that there are selling a hymn book and ^{1st of Oct} Rebecca opened her bag and she realized that her money ^{1st of Oct} and she cried up to the evening.

When Rebecca is sleeping with Ruth but Ruth placed her her money in her bag and she put some clothes on. So when Linda went to her sister she have seen where Ruth placed her money and she said that she went to her sister and ^{1st of Oct} she told Ruth the money. The money ^{1st of Oct} and she ^{1st of Oct} Ruth also ^{1st of Oct}.

JACKSON D'ARIL
 My first day at school.
 17th March 2017

It was an excited day in my life when my mother told me that she is going to send me to school. I was surprised when she told me this. On that day I started to tell my mother what I will do for her when I start my education. She next day I was learning how to say the letter of the alphabets and she came in and said I should get ready so that we can go to the super market and buy all things I could need for my education. We bought things like school uniform, school bag, pencil, eraser, ruler, a set of books, a ruler, and a hard copy of hand written.

We went to a metre which was normally 11 call them taller and she measured me and told me that we should go and come back there 3 times when we reach my mother told me that I should get ready because she is going to write my name in a school name in a normal school. Then we reach the school. I saw that they have written the school name in a blue print in capital letters.

We went to the headteacher's office where we reach the headteacher's office, he told us to have a seat and we get seated. He asked me to give him my birthday certificate and he asked that date I have the school uniform. And my mother replied that I have some but it is with a metre who is sewing it. He gave me a book a he told me to write in the letters of the alphabet in it. I wrote it very nicely and when we reached he gave me 7 out of 10. Again he told my mother to take me to the next room beside the office. When we went in the class I saw they have that they have many pictures of animals, letters of the alphabet. The teacher bid my mother to get home and she let me go. I said again she asked me to mention my name and she wrote it in a book which they written back.

V/past/pencil/pen
 cross in V/past/pencil/pen
 used when used

SAMPLE 3