

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**AN ANALYSIS OF ERRORS IN THE WRITING OF J. H. S. STUDENTS IN
ODUMASE-AMANFROM M/A BASIC SCHOOL “4” J. H. S.**



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**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication
submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Teaching English as a Second Language)
in the University of Education, Winneba**

OCTOBER, 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

Signature:.....

Date:.....

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

..... (Principal Supervisor)

Signature

Date

..... (Co-Supervisor)

Signature

Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my step sister Cecilia Boakye Dadzie and her husband Kwaw Tutu Dadzie, for nurturing me when we lost our father, through them I have been able to come to this far. “Auntie” and “dada” as I affectionately call them may the hand of God continue be upon you.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to the almighty God who gave me the life, zeal, wisdom, knowledge and the strength to complete this work.

This work will not have seen the light of the day without the help of Doc. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey, my lecturer and supervisor, who advised, guided and directed me throughout.

I also express my gratitude to all those who contributed in diverse ways towards the completion of this work.



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ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the major sources of errors occur in the writing of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” J. H. S. learners in the Ga West Municipality of Ghana in the Greater Accra region. It also investigates the types of errors and the linguistic level that presents the most errors in their writing. The study limited itself to the analysis of Error in the writing of the learners from J. H. S. one (1) to J. H. S. three (3) as this would enhance effective teaching and learning. The study used the case study method. A sample of thirty (30) respondents were randomly selected, ten (10) from each form with gender equality. The quantitative data collection instrument was used to conduct a composition test to the respondents. The nature of the essay topic given was descriptive which allowed room for the learners to share what they have experienced and witnessed. The five most common errors committed by the learners were: error of concord, error of spelling, error of tense, error of punctuation and vocabulary error. These five common errors would help the researcher to find out the difficult areas of learners and to achieve fuller understanding of errors committed in writing and to use the appropriate teaching and learning materials as well as effective pedagogies in teaching and learning. It is also important to educators and curriculum developers who should become aware of the kind of errors that their target learners make, so that they are in a better position to put appropriate intervention strategies into place. Learners can also improve on their writing skills for better performances. Among the key recommendations made by this study is the difference for the subject area instructors who are trained or specialised in the subject he or she is teaching and between instructors who are not trained or specialised in the subject they he or she is teaching. Also, the comparison of learners in the urban areas and those in the rural areas notwithstanding the investigation on writing errors in the upper primary learners and the J.H.S learners..

ABBREVIATIONS

J.H.S.	Junior High Secondary
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
ESL	English as a Second Language
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L2	Second Language
L1	First Language
EA	Error Analysis
ELT	English Language Teaching
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
LL	Language Learning
M/A	Municipal Assembly
F1	Form one
FL	Foreign Language
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TL	Target Language
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WVF	Wrong Verb Form
Pr-P	Present Tense Form Pass Tense Form

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Writing is one of the four basic language skills that include listening, speaking and reading which the teacher, as an instructor, is expected to know. Unlike speaking, writing is not a natural activity. While speaking is acquired by all normally endowed human beings without explicit instruction, writing, on the other hand, has to be taught. Stubbs (1980) distinguishes formal features which are used in written language or in spoken language. He maintains that features such as intonation, pitch, stress, rhythm, speed of utterance, pausing, variation in loudness and other paralinguistic features including aspiration, laughter, voice quality and timing. Other features such as co-occurrence with proxemics and kinesics signals, and availability of physical context are employed only in a spoken language. Again, he adds that spacing between words; punctuation, typography, capitalization to indicate sentence beginnings and proper nouns, inverted commas, for example, to indicate that a term is being used critically; layout, including paragraphing, margining, paging, footnoting, headings and sub-headings are used in writing.

It is evident, therefore, that formal features of writing and speaking which speakers use when organizing their linguistic operations are quite different from those available to writers. This also means that teachers and communicators first and foremost need to understand these differences and be able to apply the skills correctly and appropriately. Thus, for effective writing, the writer has to use a number of formal features in order to help his/her readers infer the intended meaning. Failure to correctly use these features may cause vagueness, ellipsis and ambiguity in some writings.

This study is aimed at identifying the errors in the written essays of students at Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS. The analysis is based on common grammatical errors and the use of inappropriate communicative norms of writing. The explanation for each writing problem is first offered as a working hypothesis and then it is discussed under the given circumstances and contexts in order to explain why and how these writing errors occur. Given the broad general agreement about the importance of learning to write, it is disturbing to discover that “most researchers and educators agree that with rare exceptions, students do not and cannot write well” (Amiran & Mann, 1982, p. 3). For the past eight years the Chief Examiners’ Report has always been the same. Notable among the issues relevant to this study are poor construction, ungrammatical expressions, poor spelling and inappropriate use of vocabulary. It also maintains that candidates suffer from recurring weaknesses of poor grammar as well as presentation of loose and rumbling of sentences. Students were also found guilty of writing sequence of tenses, mix capital and small letters at random; wrong use of tenses; error of concord and poor handling of direct and reported speech. Reference to the chief examiner’s reports generalized the problem in other secondary schools in the country. This also means that errors in students’ writing are not only peculiar to the students under study. The report has been the same since 2005.

Writing still remains a critical area of the school curriculum and an important part of students' lives after school. Some employers insist that employees possess well-developed communication skills, including writing skills. A variety of other purposes are served by writing and developing writing capability. Graves (1996) identifies several ways that writing is important in our lives: it develops personality, initiative, courage, leads to personal breakthrough, contributing to reading

comprehension and making one active rather than being passive. It is thus important to note that in developing writing as a communicative skill, students should constantly be made aware that particular topics in writing fit particular situations and one should conform to a particular convention. The role of the language teacher, therefore, is to teach his students to master not only the language skills but also to master the standard language which is free from grammatical errors.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Complaints about poor English results of 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 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 Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS students 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 could be 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.

To investigate 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. Iilomaki, 2005; Randall, 2005). According to Corder (1974), systematically analysing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. This study investigates errors in the writing of students of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School "4" JHS, identifies the various types of errors they commit, and identifies sources and causes of the errors.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify errors in the written essays of students of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School "4" JHS;
2. To discuss the causes of such errors with respect to their categories; and

1.4 Research questions

The following are the research questions that drive the present study:

1. What are the most common errors that students of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS commit in their written essays?
2. What are the causes of these errors?

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study has two limitations: First, the limitation of time: The study was carried out and applied in the second term of 2019/2020 academic year. This means that certain problems that might have been encountered in either the first or third term could not be realized. Owing to time, the research could not be carried out for the entire school population which would have helped the researcher to solve, if not all, some of the problems relating to students’ writings. Second, the limitation of place: The study was applied and carried out in Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS. Considering the topic, a research on the whole school or all the senior high schools in the entire district would have been appropriate. The research was solely limited to the classroom environment which means that some problems that can be attributed to the environment in which students come from cannot be discussed.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study contributes to improving teaching and learning of English language. It does this by identifying reasons behind the poor achievement of students in English. When doing this, it is important, in my view, to identify the students’ level of achievement in their English language writing skills and the problems they encounter in the process of English Second Language learning. In this vein, Lightbown and Spada (2000) argue that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful for teachers to bring the problem to the students’ attention. Corder (1974) also notes that Error Analysis is

useful in second language learning because it reveals the problem areas to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers.

According to Xie and Jiang (2007), errors can tell the teacher how far the learner has progressed and consequently, what remains for him or her to learn. They add that students' errors are valuable feedbacks to teachers and syllabus designers. Error analysis helps teachers to identify in a systematic manner the specific and common language problems students have, so that they can focus more attention on these types of errors. The significance of this study is to inform educators and language material developers about the kind of errors that students make. It further shows the frequency of errors. If teachers become conscious of likely problem areas that specific students face, they would be in a better position to put appropriate intervention strategies into place.

This study is also valuable to learners. Researchers such as Nunan (2001) and Erdogan (2005) reveal that learners' errors are systematic, rather than random, and many learners tend to commit the same kinds of errors during a certain stage of language learning. It is therefore the obligation of teachers to summarise these frequently appearing errors, and remind students of these errors as often as possible so that they can make greater effort to avoid them. The results of this study therefore serve as guidance to teachers on how to assist learners to become better writers. Judging from the fact that spelling errors outnumbered other errors in this study, teachers need to draw learners' attention to the commonly misspelled words indicated in this study when discussing correct spelling of words in their classes. As Corder (1974, p. 126) puts it, "we should be aware that different types of written material may produce a different distribution of error or a different set of error types." The commonly misspelled words indicated in this study are only a sample; teachers could

explore to identify other commonly misspelled words that could not be part of the instruments used in this study.

The study further contributes to the debate on error analysis studies and identifies key issues which merit further investigation. For instance, the study can later be extended to investigate the origin of certain error patterns found in English written work of specific learners of the same mother tongue. In this regard, the results of this study are not only beneficial to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers by showing them a student's progress, but also significant to researchers. The findings can be used as reference for those who would choose to conduct research in error analysis. As pointed by Linnarud (1993), a language teacher has the opportunity to be the best language researcher. As an English as a second language teacher, this study further enhances my understanding of second language learning, especially, in the field of error analysis in the students' written work.

1.7 Organization of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework as well as a review of some studies related to the current research. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the study. In this chapter, the design for the collection of the data, and how the data are analyzed are discussed. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the study. The findings revealed that majority of students have difficulty in spellings (20.7%), especially those caused by confusion of writing (215 out of 576 errors of spellings). The other most frequently occurring categories of errors were in the following order: the verb tense errors (20.2%), concord errors (16.6%), capitalisation errors (12.7%), sentence fragments (11.1%), preposition errors (9.5%) and article errors (9.2%). Chapter 5 presents the summary of the results, implications, recommendations and suggestions for further studies. It is argued that

errors are feedback to teachers and so teachers should train and guide learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses literature on error analysis in second language acquisition. The discussion focuses on the differences between errors and mistakes, sources and causes of errors and other research studies on error analysis. The chapter will also briefly discuss some issues of writing and writing at the secondary school level, and the importance of writing to students. The chapter finally ends with a discussion of the significance and challenges of errors in language learning.

2.1 Writing

Writing has been with mankind for several thousand years, and nowadays is more important than ever. Since writing has spread steadily over the centuries from clay tablets to computer chips, it is poised for further dramatic advances. Although millions of people are still unable to read and write, humanity relies on writing to an unprecedented extent. It is quite possible that today, more communication takes place in written than in oral mode. The importance of written record and knowledge conserved in libraries, data banks, and multi-layered information networks make it difficult to imagine an aspect of modern life unaffected by writing.

Most authors argue that it is not easy to provide a clear definition of what writing is. This is because of the multiple meanings of English words and partly because of the long history of writing and its great importance. Philologists, historians, educationalists, perceptual and cognitive psychologists, cultural anthropologists, typographers, computer programmers and linguists all have their own interest in writing based on their disciplines' specific understanding of how writing works, what functions it serves, and which methods can be applied in its investigation.

What is more, since writing has evolved over thousands of years, it cannot be taken for granted that it has not changed substantially.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), writing is viewed as the result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing teach students to use these processes. Hornby (2000) also observes that writing is the activity or occupation of writing, for example, books, stories or articles. Writing is central to our personal experience and social identities and we are often evaluated by its control (Hyland, 2002). Writing is seen as a complex process of an activity that is used for a wide variety of purposes. Writing communicates, entertains and informs based on the personal experiences and social identities. As one of the four language skills, writing has always occupied a place in most English language courses. One of the reasons is that more and more people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes.

2.1.1 Writing at Senior High School Level

At the Senior High School Level, there are immediate and long-term objectives for writing. Composition writing is taught to enable students to develop writing skills to cope with their academic work. It is also to help develop functional writing skills to manage the type of writing needed both inside and outside the school situation. Students at this level depend on a large degree of writing skills in examinations, and the process approach to writing may provide a valuable head start. According to Parson (1985 cited in Maddine, 2015), the major general finding from research on teaching writing is that student's achievement is higher when the teaching approach emphasizes writing as a process rather than as a product. As Parson points out, in the traditional product-oriented approach, form and correctness are the major

concerns. In this sense, the teacher provides drill work on specific skills, makes many of the major writing decisions for the students (topic, form, length, etc.) and serves as the sole audience or judge.

Virtually all the various sub-parts of the traditional approach have been shown to be ineffective in producing capable writers. Parson identifies several reasons for the failure of this approach: it emphasizes form and mechanics before, and often at the expense of ideas and meaning, it focuses on the product rather than the process, it seriously neglects the earliest stages of the writing process, it offers too many artificial contexts for writing and isolates mechanical skills from the context of writing. Rather than being an outgrowth of research and experimentation, the traditional approach is based on sheer historical momentum of outmoded theoretical assumptions. Consequently, writing activities at the secondary school level imply that students will have to write for examination purposes, as well as for social and economic purposes and graduate to academic writing of the type they are going to encounter at post-secondary level and in life outside school. All the above factors have the potential to increase students' motivation for writing.

Writing has always been considered an important skill in teaching and learning. As commented by Rao (2007), writing is useful in two respects: First, it motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, developing their ability to summarise, analyse and criticise. Second, it strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. Abdel (2010) also maintains that writing facilitates students' acquisition of the basic study skills needed for understanding what they study and expressing it in their own words. Abdel further argues that the acquisition of basic writing skills will assist students to keep away from memorization, rote learning and help them to be creative in their own writings. In addition, competence in essay

writing helps students pass all their academic courses successfully. Graves (1996) identifies several ways that writing is important in our lives: First, as a contribution to the development of a person, no matter what that person's background and talents. Writing is a highly complex act that demands the analysis and synthesis of many levels of thinking. It motivates students' thinking, organizing ideas, developing their ability to summarise, analyse and criticise. It strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language. It helps students to see the world as a complex entity and ready to solve problems in it. Writing expresses who you are and makes your thinking visible. Again, writing develops students' initiative. In reading, everything is provided. In writing, the learner must supply everything: the right relationship between sounds and letters, the order of the letters and their form on the page, the topic, understanding, information, questions, answers, and order.

Also, writing develops courage. At no point is the learner more vulnerable than in writing. Writing stimulates students to extend a line of thought beyond their first impressions or gut responses. It equips students with the communication and thinking skills they need to participate effectively everywhere they find themselves: be it job places, in government or anywhere they need to make an input in decision making (Gardner, 2005). Moreover, writing contributes strongly to reading comprehension as children grow older. The ability to revise writing for greater power and economy is one of the highest forms of reading. It helps one to understand how truth is established in a given discipline. It requires that you anticipate your readers' needs. Your ability to do so demonstrates your intellectual flexibility and maturity. It helps you move easily among facts, inferences and opinions without getting confused and without confusing your readers.

Writing can contribute to reading from the first day of school. Writing, some say, is active, whereas reading is passive. Writing out your ideas permit you to evaluate the adequacy of your argument and understanding. It refines your ideas when you give others feedback and helps others give you feedback. Again, writing, more than any other subject, can lead to personal breakthroughs in learning. Writing ideas down preserves them so that you can reflect upon them later. It is an essential job skill and expresses you as a person. It is seen as the primary basis upon which your work, your learning and your intellect will be judged in school, workplace and in the community.

To conclude, most people never consider the complexity and difficulty of the writing process. In fact, relative to all other academic activities, writing requires more basic skills than perhaps any other. Even during their earliest handwriting exercises, children must combine complex physical and cognitive processes to render letters precisely and flowing. As writing tasks become more difficult, student must call on an increasing wide range of skills to not only write legibly, logically and in an organized way, but also to invoke rules of grammar and syntax. This combination of requirements makes writing the most complex and difficult use of language. It is probably no accident that many adults have chosen jobs that limit the amount of writing they have to do. Unfortunately, students have no such luxury. From primary one, they write nearly every day and they are asked to do more with this skill than any other. And, as students' progress through school, writing requirements, from homework assignments and class work to note taking and test, increase across the curriculum. Like all learning problems, a writing disability can be devastating to a child's education and self-esteem and can dramatically limit what that child can achieve later in life.

School requirements demand high level of writing proficiency and a student who struggles with an unrecognized writing disability will find it increasingly difficult to express his knowledge on many subjects, as the writing process itself will stand firmly in the way of learning. Since most secondary school students find it difficult to write essays free of errors of various types, teachers of essay writing need to anticipate certain common types of errors. They may also find other types of errors, which can be revealed by analyzing the written products or essays of students. These are the conventions which are usually followed by teachers of writing when analyzing students' errors. Taking these ideas into consideration, this study attempts to identify the errors that students commit in writing English essays in order to help teachers of English tackle the problem and to indicate points of weakness in English writing.

2.2 What constitutes an error?

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. In another study an error was seen to be a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language (Eun-pyo, 2002). Brown (2002) and Ellis (2003) differentiate between covert and overt errors. They define covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to obviously ungrammatical utterances.

Brown (2000, p.217) defines an error as a “noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner”. This is supported by James (1998) and Ellis (2003) who affirm that errors are seen as the deviation which arise as a result of second language 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. Errors can be described in two terms: systematic and non-systematic errors. As Brown (2000) and Richards (2015) point out, systematic errors are the sort of errors we might expect from anyone learning English as a second and also persist or recur within any group of learners. Systematic errors seem to occur in cases in which learners reveal more consistency in producing the second language and when learners produce incorrect language because they do not know the correct form. Non-systematic errors are the slips-failures to utilize known systems correctly of the tongue or pen caused by psychological conditions such as intense excitement, or psychological factors such as tiredness, which change from moment to moment and from situation to situation (James, 2001). Such errors are unsystematic and may be called 'mistakes'-performance errors that are either random guesses or slips. They can occur when learners produce incorrect language although they know the correct form. Carelessness of learners is a good reason for which non-systematic errors occur. While the issue of errors in language learning is important, research in this area is still inconclusive. The definition of errors could still be looked at from various points of view. In Contrastive Analysis, errors are seen as "bad habits" that have been formed. The response is based on the stimulus. It is assumed that interference of the mother tongue (L1) is responsible for the errors made during the transition period of learning the target language.

In the cognitive approach, errors are seen as a clue to what is happening in the mind. They are seen as a natural phenomenon that must occur as learning a first or second language takes place before correct grammar rules are completely internalized. Teachers are relieved to find a more realistic attitude towards errors because the errors are no longer a reflection on their teaching methods, but are rather, indicators that

learning is taking place. This means that errors are no longer “bad” but “good”. The insight that errors are a natural and important part of the learning process itself, and do not all come from mother tongue interference, is very important. There is variation in learners' performance depending on the task. Learners may have more control over linguistic forms for certain tasks, while for others, they may be more prone to errors.

2.2.1 Errors and Mistakes

It is essential to make a distinction between mistakes and errors. According to Brown (2002) *mistakes* refer to a failure to utilize a known system correctly whereas *errors* concern a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Two things need to be stated here: First, mistakes do not require special treatment assuming they are recognized. Second, *error* here refers to structures only. Both Corder (1974, 1981) and James (2001) reveal a criterion that helps us to do so: A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are “systematic,” that is, likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner would not (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Norrish (1987, p 8) also makes a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He states that errors are “systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong.” He adds that when a learner of English makes an error systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form of that structure in the language. Norrish defines mistakes as “inconsistent deviations.” According to Norrish when a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, then a mistake has occurred.

2.3 Types of errors

James (2013) believes that there are errors that do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of utterances (local errors) and errors that interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances (global errors). Local errors involve noun and verb inflections, the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. Global errors, for example, involve wrong word order in a sentence. Corder (1967 cited in Richard, 2015) also identifies two types of errors: *performance errors* and *competence errors*. He notes that performance errors are made when learners are tired or hurried while competence errors are more serious since they reflect inadequate learning.

Dulay, Burt and Krashen. (1982) also discuss four types of errors: *developmental*, *interlingual*, *ambiguous* and *others* errors. They observe that *developmental and intralingual* errors are “similar to those made by children learning a target language as their first language” (p. 165) Interlingual errors are similar in structure to a semantically equivalent phrase or sentence in the learner’s native language, commonly referred to as interference (negative transfer) by Selinker (1983). Ambiguous errors are those that reflect the learner’s native language structure and at the same time are of the type found in the speech of children acquiring their first language. There are items that do not fit into any other category of errors. Dulay et al. (1982) classify such other errors as “unique”, in that they are identified only with the second language learners.

2.4 Sources of Errors

Brown (2002) classifies sources of error into: *interlingual transfer*; that is, the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner, *intralingual transfer*; that is the negative transfer of items within the target language. In other words, the incorrect

generalization of rules within the target language, *context of learning*; which includes the teaching methods, activities, instructional materials and the teacher competence that aide the learner to learn. In a classroom context the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalization about the language. Once a teacher identifies and understands the context in which they teach, they will be more readily able to improve instruction to meet learner needs and enable student success and *communication strategies*; it is obvious that communication strategy is the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner for some reasons. These forms are also seen in the written essays of learners.

Brown (2002) again identifies communication strategies that can also be sources of errors in students' writing. One if such is avoidance. Avoidance can be broken down into several subcategories, and thus distinguished from other types of strategies. The most common type of avoidance strategy that can affect students' acquisition of words (spelling errors) is 'syntactico- lexical avoidance' either by the teacher or the learner within a semantic category. When a learner, for example, cannot say "I lost my way" he might avoid the use of way' and say "I lost my road" instead. Phonological avoidance is also common, as in the case of a learner or teacher of English who finds initial /L/ difficult to pronounce and wants to say "he is a liar" may choose to say "He does not speak the truth". A more direct type of avoidance is "topic avoidance", in which a whole topic of conversation is entirely avoided. To avoid a topic, a learner may change the subject, pretend not to understand, or simply not respond at all. *Prefabricated patterns* are another common communication strategy that is used to memorize certain stock phrases or sentences without understanding the components of the phrases or sentences.

One's own personality style or style of thinking can be a source of error, highlighting the idiosyncratic nature of many learner errors. A reflective and conservative style might result in very careful but hesitant production of speech with perhaps fewer errors but errors indicative of the conscious application of rules. Such a person might also commit errors of over formality. A person with high self-esteem may be willing to risk more errors, in the interest of communication, because he does not feel as threatened by committing errors as with a person with low self-esteem. Language errors can thus conceivably be traced to sources in certain personal or cognitive idiosyncrasies. Finally, when all other strategies fail to produce a meaningful utterance, a learner may switch to his native language. This is called language switch. That is, he may simply use his native language whether the hearer knows that native language or not. Usually, just a word or two are slipped in, in the hope that listener will get the gist of what is being communicated.

Another expert who discusses the sources of error is Richards (2015). He classifies sources of errors into six groups. Errors that results from *interference* are those that come from the transfer of grammatical or stylistic elements from the source language to the target language. As stated by Brown (2000), most of learners' errors in the second language result primarily from the learners' assumption that the second language forms are similar to the native language. It appears that transfer can be positive in cases in which the first and second languages are similar and learners can apply the knowledge of their first language to the second language learning task. Then the similarities between the first and second languages can benefit or facilitate second language learning. In contrast, where there are differences between the two, learners' first language interferes with second language. This is referred to as negative transfer or interference, which can become the source of errors in the second language. When

second language learners commit errors, which could be traced back to the first language, such errors are similar to interlingual errors (Brown, 2000; Ellis, 1997; Krashen, 1988; Norrish, 1987).

Overgeneralization occurs when an error is caused by the extension of target language rules to areas where they do not apply. It concerns cases where a learner creates a deviant structure based on his experiences of other structures in the target language. The learner generalizes a particular rule or item based on partial knowledge of the target language. These errors reveal how learners learn the language. *Performance errors* are unsystematic errors that occur as a result of such things as memory lapses, fatigue, confusion, or strong emotion. *Markers of transitional competence* are those that result from a natural and perhaps inevitable development sequence in the second language learning process (by analogy with first language acquisition). *Strategy of communication and assimilation* are those that result from the attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical form necessary to do so. Finally, *teacher-induced error* are errors that result from pedagogical procedures contained in the text or employed by the teacher. This can be as a result of bad or poor methods used by the teacher in the classroom. Teachers can also have a limited knowledge on a target language and tried to transfer it to his students.

2.5 Causes of Errors

Norrish (1987, pp. 21-26) classifies causes of error into three types. These are *carelessness*, *first language interference* and *translation*. Carelessness is often closely related to lack of motivation. Many teachers will admit that it is not always the student's fault if he loses interest, perhaps the materials and/or style of presentation do not suit him. With respect to the learner's first language, Norrish states that learning a

language (a mother tongue or a foreign language) is a matter of habit formation. When someone tries to learn new habits, the old ones will interfere the new ones. This cause of error is called first “language interference”. Finally, translation becomes a cause when a student translates his first language sentence or idiomatic expression in to the target language word by word. This is probably the most common cause of error.

Richards (2015) also classifies causes of error into *overgeneralization*, *incomplete application of rules*, *false concepts hypothesized* and *ignorance of rule restriction*. Overgeneralization generally involves the creation of one deviant structure in place of two regular structures, for examples, “*He can sings*”, and “*We can sings*”. Incomplete Application of rules can be seen in question forms. Very often they are used, not to find out something, as they should, but as a means of eliciting questions through a transform exercise. False concepts hypothesize occurs due to poor gradation of teaching items. The form ‘*was*’ for example, may be interpreted as the marker of the past tense, as in*“*one day it was happened*”. Ignorance of rule restriction is the generalization of deviant structures due to the student’s failure to observe the restriction of existing structures. That is, the application of rules to context where they do not apply. For example: *The man who I saw him* violates the limitation on subjects in structure with *who*. This is a type of generalization of transfer since the learners is making use of a previously acquired rule in a new situation.

2.6 Related Studies

Some related studies on errors have also been reviewed to prove that causes of error are a universal phenomenon. Adejare (1995) maintains that the West African Examination Council has attributed to this incompetence (errors) to poor quality of English teachers and lack of suitable teaching materials. One of such factors is that

sometimes teachers of different subjects (and not necessarily English) are asked to teach English. Adika (2012) supports this and intimates that there is a shortage of English language teachers in Ghanaian schools to the extent that non-English language specialists are asked to teach English in some schools. For example, in the year 2006, a request for 716 teachers for English teachers by senior secondary schools was not met because the country produced only 167 graduate teachers during that period, (7th September 2007, *The Ghanaian Times* [p.3]). Indeed, the report indicated that “about 3000 vacancies for English teachers in second cycle schools throughout the country needed to be filled” (Adika, 2012, p. 155). It can thus be said that the assumption that anybody, particularly graduates from universities can teach English needs to be discouraged. This is because many of such graduates, apart from not having the skills of teaching the language, also make the same fundamental mistakes and are therefore not in the position to correct them (Mahama, 2012). This causes *teacher induced errors*.

Mahama (2012) further argues that many Junior high schools either do not have school libraries or do not make use of the books they have in the libraries. His belief is that students have not acquired reading habits, hence, they are unable to improve their English through reading. Again, Msanjila (2005) also holds the view that such categories of errors (writing problems) can be discussed and analysed in appropriate contexts. He highlights the main writing problems noted from the students’ essays as capitalization problem, punctuation problem, inexplicitness/fuzziness, poor organization/illogical sequence, spelling problem and grammatical errors. In a related study, Weir (2005) concludes that students’ writings show the characteristic defects such as high frequency of grammatical errors, lack of variety in grammatical structures employed, use of inappropriate vocabulary, use of

inappropriate grammatical structures, limited range of vocabulary, poor spelling and inadequate understanding of the topic, deficiency in clear self-expression, poor punctuation, poor handwriting and untidiness.

Some research studies such as Makoni (1993), Dakubu (1997) and Kasanga (2006) have been conducted on language learning in Africa in general. According to Dakubu (1997), there is a complex chemistry that takes place when several languages come into contact, as well as the competition that is associated with the struggle for status and prestige. In the Ghanaian context, this competition is between native languages and English Language. Dakubu (1997, p. 2) concludes by noting that “although one cannot deny that English has had a measure of influence on the indigenous languages, the latter have had a much greater influence on English learning”. She concludes that this influence has produced an English Language that is distinctively Ghanaian in flavour.

Finally, Bokamba (1982 as cited in Kachru, 1992, p. 28) maintains that “... the very obvious deviations from Standard English ... may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from his/her mother tongue.” He identifies the following deviations in syntax in Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan English: omission of function words; Semantic extension of certain lexical items from African languages to cover various meanings and functions in English, occurrence of certain redundancies, including planarization of mass nouns, Retention of anaphoric pronouns in non-subject relativisation, Use of affirmative to yes/no questions, unusual word order in adjectival phrases containing demonstrative or possessive pronouns and omission of the element “more” in comparative constructions.

2.7 What is Error Analysis?

Richards and Schmidt (2002, p. 184) define error analysis as “the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners”. According to James (2001), Error Analysis compares “learner English” with English itself and judges how learners are “ignorant” about the grammatical and semantic rules of the target language. Hasyim (2002) also observes that error analysis may be carried out in order to: find out how well someone knows a language, find out how a person learns a language, and obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials. Another view of error analysis is given by Brown (1980, cited in Hasyim, 2002, p. 43) is that error analysis as the process of observing, analyzing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by a learner. Similarly, Crystal (2003) proposes that error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language. Although errors sometimes obstruct communication, they can often facilitate second language learning, and they play a significant role in training teachers and helping them identify and classify learners' errors, as well as helping them construct correction techniques.

2.8 Significance of errors in language learning

Corder (1981) emphasizes the importance of studying errors made by second language learners. He noted that the study of errors is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process. He adds that remedial exercises could be designed to focus more attention on trouble spots. It is the learner who determines what the input is. The teacher can present a

linguistic form, but this is not necessarily the input, it is simply what is available to be learned (Corder, 1974). This assertion is confirmed by Kwok (1998) who adds that language errors provide important information about the progress, or language system of the learner.

In another instance, Nation and Newton (2001) posit that correcting an error is done if there is some understanding of why the error occurred. Errors are not only beneficial to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers by showing them a student's progress, but also significant to researchers and to learners. It can show researchers what strategies learners use to learn a second language and also indicate the type of errors learners make and why. When a learner commits an error, the most efficient way to teach him or her the correct forms is not by simply giving it to him/her, but by letting the individual discover the error and test different hypotheses. Error analysis is conducted not only to understand errors per se, but also to use what is learned from error analysis and apply it to improve language competence. Several studies including Kroll and Schafer (1978, as cited in Bartholomae, 2005) and Kwok (1998, p. 11-22) demonstrate how error analysis can be used to improve writing skills. They analyze possible sources of errors in non-native-English writers' work, and attempt to provide a process approach to writing where the error analysis can help achieve better writing skills.

According to Corder (1974), Ellis (1997) and James (2001), learners' systematic errors can provide evidence of the language system that they are using or have learned at a particular point. There are three good reasons for pointing out errors. First, it is necessary for language teachers to know what types of errors learners make. This way, they can know what needs to be taught and find ways to help learners remedy those errors. Second, learners make specific errors which are obvious points

of reference. This could allow language teachers to know how learning proceeds and to understand causes of learners' errors. Errors also provide evidence of how learners learn a language and what learning strategies they employ. This can inform teachers on what skills learners have achieved and what remains for them to learn. Brown (2002) also states that errors are viewed as windows to the learners' comprehension of the second language. Therefore, they reflect learners' underlying system and enable teachers to provide appropriate feedback. Third, errors are an important device for learners as well as teachers because they are part of a process by which learners prove or disprove their hypotheses about the second language. Learners can learn from errors particularly when they take part in correcting their own errors. As a result, learners might not commit the same errors again.

2.9 Challenges of error analysis

As most research methods, error analysis also has its drawbacks. The majority of teachers of English are non-native speakers. English is not their first language, consequently, there is the likelihood of English teachers using some wrong aspects of the English language. What constitutes an error for one researcher may not be an error to another. Identification of errors is not easy since most researchers are not native speakers of the English Language. However, "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 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 toward a particular set of items. Using another word with the same meaning might get the student marks for ingenuity, but will still be a wrong answer. Even if errors count in different situations, they may have

different weights. For instance, a spelling error would count heavily in a spelling test and probably little in an extended essay. 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 minimizing 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. Another shortcoming is the overstressing of production data than comprehension data which is equally important in developing an understanding of the process of language acquisition.

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, and structure or discourse category may be assumed, incorrectly, to have no difficulty therewith. According to Xie and Jiang (2007), the absence of error does not necessarily reflect native like competence since learners may be avoiding the very structure that poses difficulty for them. They point out that error analysis can keep us too closely focused on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspects of language. However, these drawbacks are outweighed by the advantages. Error analysis is an important aspect of language learning for English second language learners such as those in this study.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed what writing is. It has discussed some importance of writing and has narrowed the discussion to the writing errors of students. It also discussed some causes and sources of errors, types of errors and error analysis. Other related literature was also reviewed. Surveying the related literature proved that there are many answers as to why learners of English commit errors. The chapter also examined some significance of errors in language learning and enumerated some drawbacks in error analysis. The next chapter describes the procedure of data collection as well as the instruments used in gathering the data.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the structure and design of the study are discussed. Other issues discussed here include; the type of information required the research design, the method of collecting data, the sample, pilot study and analysis of data and presentation. Odumase-Amafrom M/A Basic School '4' is among the cluster of School at Ga Odumase. Is a town in the Ga West Municipal Assembly of Ghana in the Greater Accra Region. Most of the learners come from the communities around Ga Odumase and the four public schools known as Odumase cluster of school has a quiet large number population with different tribes.

The native dialect spoken there is Ga but dominated by Twi although there are other languages spoken there. It was during the course of studying Teaching English as second language (TESL) that the researcher became interested in investigating why errors in the writing of English language by learners as a second language. Moreover, it will aid the researcher to find out the difficult areas of learners and to examine what is peculiar about English as a second language to the learner. Also, to achieve fuller understanding of errors committed in writing.

3.1 Research approach and design

In this study the qualitative case study was used to investigate, explain and describe errors in learners writing at the J.H.S. Questions were given to find the kind of errors learners made. The explanatory design was used to identify why learners make errors. The descriptive design was also used in order to achieve an elaborate and comprehensive understanding of the problem. Research instrument used in this study comprised of written composition. Thirty (30) respondents were used, Ten from J.H.S

1, J.H.S 2 and J.H.S 3 respectively. The nature of the essay topic given was descriptive which allowed room for the learners to share what they have experienced and witness. Respondent were asked to select one question out of three descriptive questions given for each form. Respondent in J.H.S 1 used 45 minutes to write two hundred words of essay whiles J.H.S 2 and 3 used 45 minutes to write 250 words of essay. Data from the essay were gathered and were analysed. Errors detected by the researcher were put into types of errors and categorised into classification for easily interpretation.

3.2 Population and sampling

The probability sampling was used to select and represent respondent for the study to reflect the larger population. These respondents were selected randomly whereby each member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. A sample size of 30 was selected for the essay writing. The respondent sample was recruited from J.H.S 1, J.H.S 2 and J.H.S 3 respectively in Odumase-Aman from M/A Basic School '4'. The composition was five (5) boys and five (5) girls from each form irrespective of one's religion or tribe. This was to avoid any gender biased, religion, or language spoken. They were between the ages of twelve (12) to Sixteen (16). English language has been the medium of instruction since primary four (4) to J.H.S. The study took place in their various classrooms as a class test. These numbers were selected based on the available resources, which take the form of time, energy and finance.

3.3 Data collection

A detail descriptive writing was conducted as a class test. Respondents were guided to write in paragraphs with simple and appropriate vocabulary, punctuation marks, capitalization and other appropriate grammatical aspects. Respondent were

supervised. Data was collected via written discourse completion tests. The data was encoded with numbers, examined and analysed. Respondents were interviewed to find out their views on why certain errors were made.

3.4 Pilot study

Prior to the actual research, a prior study carried out to check whether the methodology has been correctly thought through. This gave the researcher an opportunity to obtain the background information about the proficiency of English as a second language in particularly analysing the errors committed by J.H.S learners in writing at Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic school '4' and identify their problems so as to modify the research method before embarking on the main study. The pilot study was also used to check whether the data collection tool provides the depth, range and quality of information required. Revisions were made on problems detected at the pilot study before undertaking the main study. This rendered the data collected in the main study very useful.

3.5 Analysis of data

The data collected from the written essay in the form of descriptive writing were examined, analysed and organised into easily retrievable sessions, read through for familiarization. The data were then put into classification of errors, types, frequency of error and was encoded, themes, identified and then analysed.

3.6 Validity

In checking the validity of the study, the researcher was critical to ensure that the results of the study, the research design and the analysis are linked with the original data. The respondent validation is ensured by providing respondents feedback in the classification and analysis of the study.

3.7 Access and ethical issues

To access the selected sample in the Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic J.H.S, permission was sought from the head teacher and teachers. Confidentiality and anonymity of the sample were also considered. The respondents were informed in advance before the actual test. The date, time and venue were as well negotiated with the respondents.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of the data. The results showed that students commit different errors in their writings, and this is an indication that they have little knowledge of English language. The chapter is divided into two parts: The first section presents analysis of the common errors students commit in their written essays. Here, it was observed that the errors were varied: spellings, tenses, subject verb agreement, capitalization, sentence fragments, pronouns, articles, prepositions and double negatives. It was also revealed that the highest number of the errors committed was tenses and the lowest was double negatives. The second and final part discusses the causes of these errors. Here, the researcher observed a blame-shifting-game; while the teachers interviewed shifted the blame to students and basic school teachers, some students also blamed the teachers. Others, still, blamed modern technology and social media communication for such errors.

4.1 Categorization of students' errors

After analyzing the data, the researcher identified different types of errors in students' written essays. These are spelling errors, punctuation and capitalization errors, tense errors, sentence fragment errors, concord errors and students' failure to follow the formal features of that particular essay. The errors types identified are discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Tense errors

In the 120 essays analyzed for the study, it was noted that there were many cases that exemplify the misuse of verb tense in English. Errors of wrong tense or

wrong verb occur when a learner uses the wrong verb tense in a certain sentence. Tenses errors identified in this study were categorized as wrong verb form used and the present form used where the past tense is required (or past when the present is required).

4.1.1.1 Wrong verb form used (WVF)

The results of this study revealed that the students were not aware of applying the correct tense to the verb in the sentences. Hence, they had difficulty selecting the appropriate verb form. It can be said that some of the students are not aware of the different rules of applying tense to the verb. This is supported by Carson (2001) and Kutz, Gorden and Zamel (1993), who claim that learners tend to try out what they assume is a legitimate structure of the target language. Examples of such errors identified in the written essays are:

1. *I will also **told** them to leave the dormitory early.* (tell)
2. *If I am a form one student, I will **used** ten minutes to rush to campus* (use)
3. *In our time, the house mistress **spoked** against lateness to campus.* (spoke)
4. *They should make sure **to maintained** silence during prep times.* (maintain)
5. *The boarders should make sure that they **woke** up at 4:30am every morning.*

The sentences suggest that learners tend to over-generalise the rules for stylistic features when acquiring new discourse structures. In examples 1 and 2, the students do not understand the right form of the future time, so instead of using the simple present form, they use the simple past; “*told*” and “*used*”. Example 3 indicates that students confuse regular verbs with irregular verbs. A student has substituted the past of *speak* “*spoke*” with “*spoked*”. This error may have resulted from negative transfer. This is what Norrish (1987) refers to as *interference*. The student has transferred the idea that regular verbs take -ed to form the past, committing that error. In example 5,

the student has over-generalized the use of the past tense. Instead of adding the infinitive form after *to*, he has transferred the past meaning. This could be traced to the fact that the Ghanaian languages' tense system, in general, is rather simple and straightforward regarding the concept of time. Example of some irregular verbs such as; go went gone eat ate eaten choose chose chosen do did done The spelling and pronunciation totally change whiles with the Ghanaian language, it does not change that much.

It is also noted that some of the students do not completely understand a distinction in the target language. Ellis (1997, p. 710) calls this phenomenon "false concepts hypothesised". However, the use of some suffixes like 'ing' and the 'ed' forms showed that these students are aware of the rules on different tenses application; and that they already knew that these verbs needed to be used with different tense forms.

4.1.1.2 Present tense form used where the past tense form was required (Pr-P)

Other tense errors recorded in this category occur in the usage of present tense instead of past tense. Examples 6-10 were identified in the written essays. Students seemed not to have a clear understanding of when to use the two tenses, present tense and past tense.

6. *I am very happy to be **call** upon to talk on time management (called)*
7. *I have **notice** that students don't sleep early. (noticed)*
8. *Mr. Chairman, last week I went to a form one class and what I saw **is** not good.*
9. *I spoke to them and they **say** that they were unhappy.(said)*
10. *I will advise them to revise whatever has been **teach** in class.(taught)*

Here, students seemed to be confused that the event that happened in the past has to be told in past tense, hence the verbs; *call*, *notice*, *is*, *say* and *teach* were used in the

sentences to express the past. This is considered to be a grammatical error in the usage of tenses because it causes confusion to the reader. In these examples, the students are confused between the use of simple past, simple present and future time. This is a kind of language interference. In most Ghanaian languages time sequence in a sentence does not matter so much. Truly, students are not conscious of the right verb tense appropriate for the time of occurrence. Students' carelessness and ignorance on the application of rules on verb forms, particularly tenses, are the primary causes of these errors.

The results support the claim of Sukasame, Kantho, and Narrot (2013) that learners of English as a second language have so much difficulty on tense selection. According to them, though students can use all the tenses comfortably, in some situations they are not confident enough to select the correct tense for consistency. Such claim is also true to the study of Lim (1990) revealing that English language learners know the rules of tense but they just jumble them when they are supposed to apply them. She adds that learners think in their L1 and then translate it into English. At the time of translating into English, they feel confused in which tense form they can use especially in present and past tense. Limited knowledge of form of verbs and lack of the knowledge of the use of auxiliary verbs contribute to these kinds of errors. The errors in the use of tenses are subcategorized in Table 4.1.1.

Table 4.1.1. Sub categorization of errors of tense

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentages of errors
WVF (wrong form of verb)	351	62.3%
Pr-P (present and past tense)	212	37.7%
Total	563	100%

The table represents the sub categorization of tense errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4.1.1:

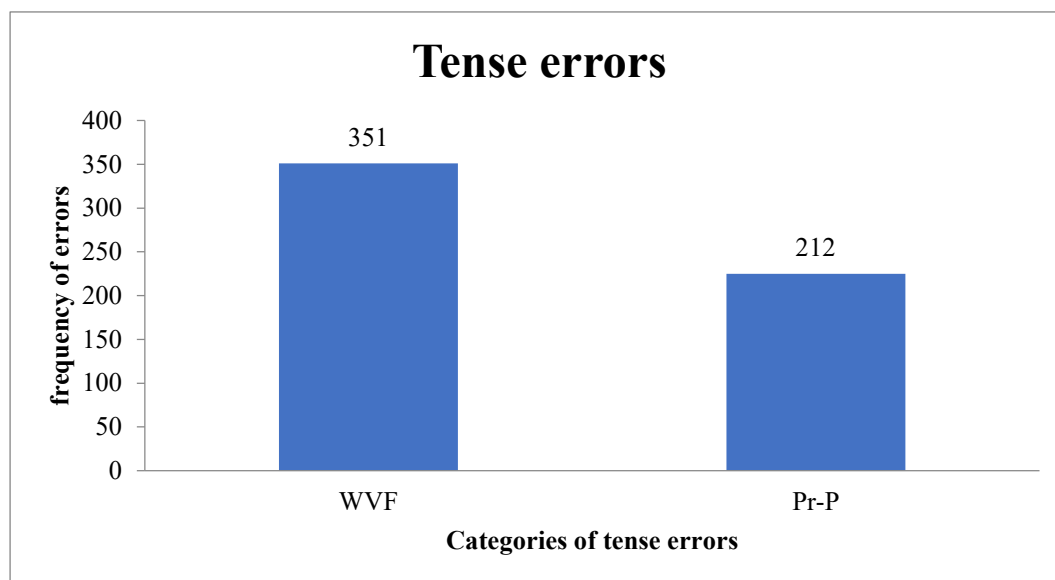


Figure 4.1.1. Tense errors

4.1.2 Spellings errors

Spelling means the act or process of writing words by using the letters conventionally accepted for their formation. The data revealed different types of spelling errors which include the wrong usage of apostrophe, letter substitutions, wrong joining of words, confusion of writing, wrong splitting of words and letter omission.

4.1.2.1 The wrong usage of apostrophe

Some of the most common punctuation mistakes involve the apostrophe usage. The apostrophe denotes possession, some plural forms and is used in contractions. The wrong usage of the apostrophe is another challenge of the students under this study. The rules for the usage of apostrophe are more definite, but they are frequently misapplied. For instance, words where an apostrophe is supposed to be used include for example, *I'm*, *don't*, *can't* and *it's*. Students encountered problems

when using words or contractions containing an apostrophe. Some examples of wrong usages of apostrophe in students' written essays are:

- 11 *Its' my time to advise the form one students.* (It's)
12 *The time is **your's** but don't misuse it.* (yours)
13 *The form one students **cant** listen to simple instructions.* (can't)
14 *I **dont** know why they are behaving like that.* (don't)

The wrong usage of the apostrophe made the spelling of the words wrong by giving a different meaning. In example 1, the usage of *its'* instead of *it's*, form a meaningless word that does not exist as part of speech. *It's* means *it is* or *it has*. There is no such word as *its'* in English Language. In example 2, words like *mine*, *your*, *yours*, *hers*, *her*, *its* etc. are already possessive, so they do not need an apostrophe. Other wrong usages of apostrophe identified were: *dont* instead of *don't*, *cant* instead of *can't*, *did'nt* instead of *didn't*, etc. These spelling errors can be regarded as overt and covert errors. According to Brown (2002) and Ellis (1997) covert errors are grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances.

4.1.2.2 Letter substitution

Students struggled very much with the spellings of some words and ended up producing many different spelling errors in quest to get the correct spellings of words. Examples 14-18 illustrate this:

- 15 *Mr. Chairman, **follow** students, Ladies and Gentlemen.* (fellow)
16 *Students are not to waste time at the **dormatory**.* (dormitory)
17 *They should **revice** their notes at prep hours.* (revise)
18 *I am happy to be called on this **occation** to advise the form ones.* (occasion)

In example 5, the student substituted the letter *e* with *o*. This may be due to how the word is pronounced to the student. The same thing is seen in other examples. Even though there might be other reasons for this type of errors, letter substitution can also be as a result of the student limited knowledge in phonetics or phonology. It was observed that many misspelling instances occurred as a result of phonological problems. This type of inaccurate spelling is categorized as articulation or interference errors which occur as a result of spellers' use of particular pronunciation (Carney, 1994). Also, while there is the regularity or consistency of correspondence between letters and sounds in Ghanaian languages, the correspondence between letters and how they are produced tend to be inconsistent with the English language. Other misspelled words under this category were *compering* instead of *comparing*, *previlaged* instead of *privileged*, *want* instead of *went*, *as* instead of *us*, *Greatful* instead of *grateful*, *continous* instead of *continuous*, *unecassary* instead of *unnecessary*, *agains* instead of *against*, etc.

4.1.2.3 Confusion of writing

Like other types of spelling errors identified in this study, students had problems in the use of homophones. To illustrate this, one sound can be written or pronounced differently such as *asnoice* instead of *noise*, *gudges* instead of *judges* and *greatful* instead of *grateful*. It was observed that the students were confused with words of this nature. Wasowicz (2007) points out that learners who have problems with phoneme distinction spell many vowel sounds with the same letter. Another explanation is given by Randall (2005) who notes that phonological differences between L1 and L2 play a role in the error production regarding orthographic knowledge of L2 users, such as vowel distinctions and clusters. The study suggests that poor spelling is also another major learning difficulty for students of Odumase-

Aman from M/A Basic School “4” JHS. According to Malicsi (2003), the correct use of words in any language task is indispensable in conveying a clear and understandable idea, especially where several words may seem to have similar meanings.

Hassan (2014) also points to the way learners of a target language pronounce words in influencing how the words are spelt or written. He reveals that there is considerable effect of phonetics on writing. Second language learners have difficulty producing certain sounds in the L2, especially when those sounds do not exist in the native language. This confusion can make students join words which are not supposed to be joined and separate words which are not supposed to be separated. In the same way, they may add letters to show their ignorance of the word. The errors in spellings are subcategorized in Table 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.2. Summary of spelling errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Confusion of writing	215	37.3%
Letter omission	115	20%
Letter substitutions	105	18.2%
Wrong joining of words	57	9.9%
The use of apostrophe	43	7.5%
Wrong splitting of words	41	7.1%
Total	576	100%

The information in Table 4.1.2 is represented in Figure 4.1.2. The chart shows that confusion of writing is the highest error committed under the various sub categories of spelling errors representing 37.3% (215 cases recorded). Based on the written essays of the students, many of them are confused with spelling of the English words due to the interference of their L1.

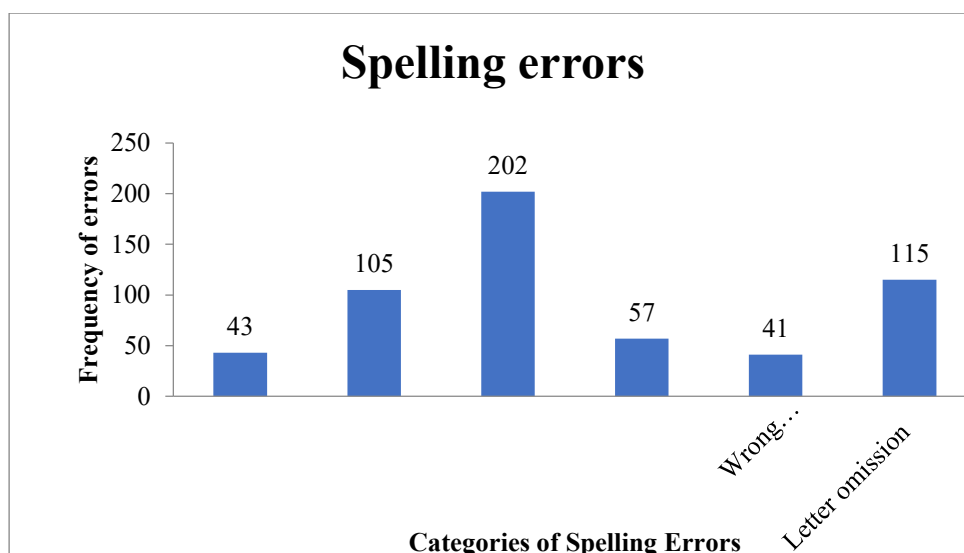


Figure 4.1.2. Spelling errors

The L1 and the L2 of the students have different sound systems, making it difficult for them to learn and master the correct spelling of some words in English.

4.1.3 Concord errors

Concord or agreement happens when a word changes form depending on the other words to which it relates (Booij, 2012). Booij continues by saying that agreement generally involves matching the value of some grammatical category between different constituents of sentence (or sometimes between sentences). One of the common types of errors made by students is Subject-Verb Agreement. Concord errors identified in this study are related to numbers and persons/pronouns.

4.1.3.1 Number Agreement

Subjects and verbs must agree with one another in number (singular or plural). Thus, if a subject is a singular, its verb must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural (Benner, 2005). In this case the subject and the verb phrase in the English sentence should agree in number. In the present tense, nouns and verbs form plurals in opposite ways: nouns add -s to the singular form; verbs remove the -s

from the singular form. Examples of errors in Subject-Verb Agreement (Number) identified in the written essays of the students under study are:

- | | | |
|----|--|------------|
| 19 | <i>The authorities has to provide lights for evening preps.</i> | (have) |
| 20 | <i>Students needs to identify their potentials and study hard.</i> | (need) |
| 21 | <i>First year students spends their time on unnecessary things.</i> | (spend) |
| 22 | <i>A student who do not manage his time well fail at exams.</i> | (does not) |
| 23 | <i>Teachers has to force students to learn always.</i> | (have) |

These are examples of subject-verb agreement errors that appeared in the essays of the students in this study. The researcher is of the opinion that this type of error arises due to the students' use of very long sentences, and consequently, some students fail to relate the grammatical articles in their proper concord. It can also be said that the concord errors may be due to simplification strategies and overgeneralization of the Target Language rules. Some substitution errors (e.g. *has* instead of *have* as in examples above) must have resulted from inadequate competence in the Target Language. A possible explanation why students tend to add -s after plural, and omit -s after singular may also be due to overgeneralization of the rule. Students overgeneralize the plural by adding the plural -s to the verb that follows and omit the -s in the verb if the subject is singular. This is shown in examples 2 and 3 above.

4.1.3.2 Person/pronoun agreement

There are three persons in grammar; first person, second person and third person. All persons must agree with the verbs they relate to in sentences. At times, students become confused with the use of the third person and the verbs they agree with. In English grammar, it is only the third person singular that adds -s to the verb to form singular and *I* which is singular always takes a plural verb. Again, as in person, there is agreement in number between pronouns (or their corresponding

possessives) and antecedents. The analysis showed that students have difficulties relating indefinite pronouns to the appropriate verbs. Examples of errors under this sub category of concord are as follows:

- 24 *He or she **have** to show some respect to the seniors.* (has)
- 25 *The girl did **their** work.* (her)
- 26 *Every form one student **have** a sweeping plot.* (has)
- 27 *Some form one **student** are stubborn and disrespectful.* (students)
- 28 *.....as a good student, he manage to spend his time well on campus.* (manages)

The examples suggest that most students are confused between the third person singular (-s) and the plural (-s). They tend to add -s to the verb if the subject is plural and omit -s if the subject is singular. Especially, in example 28, the student overgeneralized the rule that singular subject takes singular verb and wrote *manage* without -s thinking to avoid making it plural. This is a deviation from set rules governing the targeted language which state that a third person singular subject takes verbs +s. Errors and their frequencies are presented in Table 4.3:

Table 4.1.3. A summary of concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Person/pronoun agreement	248	53.6%
Number agreement	215	46.4%
Total	463	100%

The Table 4.1.3 shows the different concord errors committed in the written essays of the students in this study, and these have been presented in Figure 4.1.3:

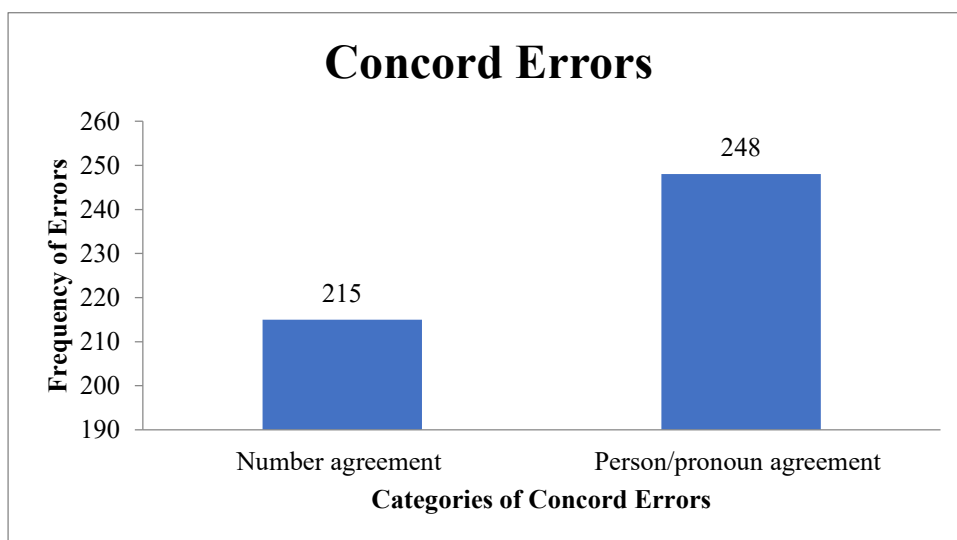


Figure 4.1.3. Concord errors

Figure 4.3 shows that most errors committed under concord is students' inability to relate persons/pronouns to agree with the verbs in the sentence which takes 53.6% of the concord errors in the students' written essays.

4.1.4 Capitalization errors

Capitalization is writing a word with its first letter as a capital letter (upper-case letter) and the remaining letters in small letters (lower-case letters) (Hart-Davis, 2005). An error in capitalization occurs when a letter is capitalized unnecessarily or written with a lower case when it should be capitalized. Initial words in a sentence and proper nouns (such as names of people, places, organizations, books, movies etc.) are usually capitalized. The anomaly of using small letters at the beginning of a new paragraph and using capital letters in the middle of sentences are typical examples noted in the essays. Capitalisation has a norm which should be followed by learners of English. Failure to use writing norms appropriately may lead to misinterpretation of information. For this study the misuse of capital letters may partly be due to bad

handwriting. The students' written essays revealed three different kinds of capitalisation errors. These have been sub categorized as follows:

4.1.4.1 Misuse of capital letters

It was observed that students used capital letters for every word that they considered important to them. Examples of errors under this category in students' essays are as follows:

29 *Mr Chairman, For someone to be a good student he must manage his time very well.*

30 *Mr. Chairman, The first year students are lazy.*

31 *Ladies and Gentlemen, It is not easy to pass WASSCE at SHS.*

32 *Again, Using school hours any how is not good.*

33 *Today, As we all know marks the 50th anniversary of our school.*

In the examples, it is clear that students have limited understanding of the use of capital letters. Students were seen to be confused and always thought that words after a comma should start with a capital letter. They might think that they were starting a new sentence, therefore beginning with a capital letter. 'For', 'The', 'It', 'Using' and 'As' in the examples above starts with capital letters which is a deviation from the capitalisation norms because they don't begin their respective sentences neither are, they proper nouns.

4.1.4.2 Non-capitalisation

The first word of a sentence is always capitalized, regardless of the word. This capitalization rule applies to quotes as well, even if they are within a sentence. The analysis suggests that some students wrote the first letter of a sentence in a small case as in examples below:

34 *it will be difficult for students who manage their time well to fail exams.*

35 *the first years are not serious at all.*

36 *we should use our time properly.*

37 *this behavior must stop.*

38 *mr. Chairman, the first years will spend only two years on campus.*

The beginning of these sentences is a deviation from the rule of capitalisation. In example 38, the student forgot the fact that titles also begin with a capital letter. Thus, the student used *mr* instead of Mr.

4.1.4.3 Proper nouns

The Capitalisation rule states that all proper nouns should start with a capital letter. These include names of persons, water bodies, titles, book titles, names of institutions, Religions and names of deities, days of the week etc. Some of the errors noted under this sub category are as follows:

39 *Mr. Chairman, students in Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS are not time conscious.*

40 *Mr. Chairman, distinguished guest, p.t.a chairman, teaching staff*

41 *Mr. Chairman, you will bear with me that god created everything with time.*

42 *The bible says in ecclesiastes that there is time for everything.*

43 *The first year students need to be disciplined as the bible says so.*

In sentence 39, the student started the name of an institution with small letters. In the same way, *god* in sentence 41, *bible* in sentence 42 and 43, and *ecclesiastes* which is a name of a book in the Bible are supposed to begin with capital letters since they are all examples of proper nouns.

These may be due to the fact that students do not understand the concept of proper nouns well.

4.1.4.4 The Pronoun “I”

The pronoun *I* is always capitalised, regardless of the context in which it is used or its placement in the sentence. It's even capitalised within a quote. In the students' written essays, the use of the lower key 'i' when referring to the first person singular *i* appeared to gain popularity. These are shown in the examples 44-48 as follows:

44 *When i cast my mind back at my former school, i become sad.*

45 *Ladies and Gentlemen, i am honoured to be given this opportunity to advise you.*

46 *The reasons why i want the form ones to be time conscious are as follows:*

47 *Again, i will like to advise them to respect the teachers.*

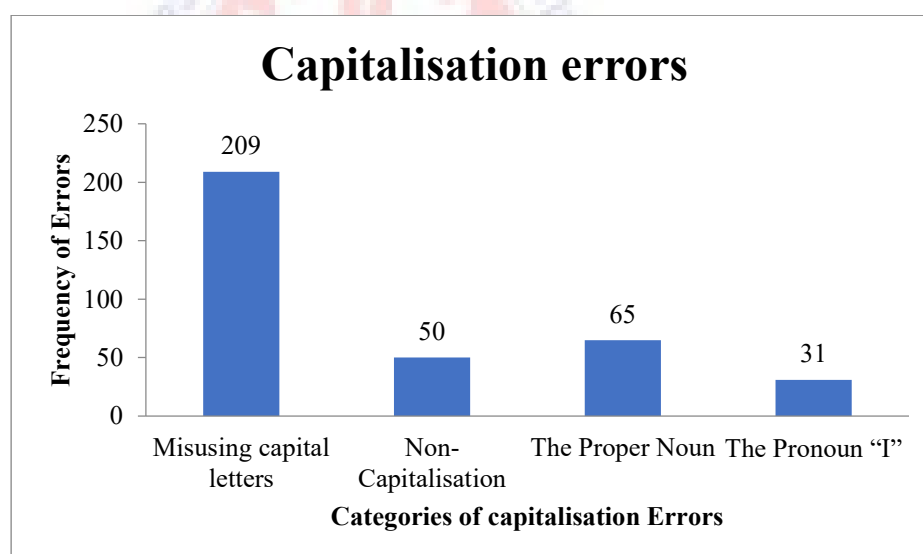
48 *Mr. Chairman, i want to explain the word time.*

The problem is worsened as it is emerging as a typical feature of SMS spelling, where writers generally use the lower key 'i' for their messages. It appears that the source of this problem is neither from the mother tongue nor from L2 interference. Using capital letters correctly is a writing norm which is required in all languages. The researcher thus maintains that capitalisation problem is a pedagogical problem which can be handled appropriately by teachers. This cause of error is what James (1998) calls *teacher-talk induced error* and Richard (2015) calls it *False Concept*. This type of error may be copied in the context of learning which will be as a result of misleading explanation from the teacher or faulty presentation of the structure in a textbook or improperly contextualized patterns.

Table 4.1.4. Summary of capitalisation errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentages of errors
Misusing capital letters	209	58.9%
The Proper Noun	65	18.3%
Non- Capitalisation	50	14.1%
The Pronoun “I”	31	8.7%
Total	355	100%

The information in Table 4.1.4 shows the summary of the different types of errors under this category of errors. The information is illustrated in Figure 4.1.4:

**Figure 4.1.4. Capitalisation errors**

The chart shows that majority of the errors committed under this category of error is the improper usage of capital letters. Out of 355 errors recorded made, 209 representing 58.9% is the misuse of capital letters and few were recorded under students' inability to write the personal pronoun "I" (31 representing 8.7%)

4.1.5.2 Fragments caused by missing subjects

The subject of a sentence tells whom or what the sentence is about. If the subject is missing, we are left wondering who or what performed the action or what the sentence is about. Examples of such errors include:

54 *Learning in all aspects will help them pass their exams,*

55 *Importantly is how the seniors welcome them*

56 *Help students to have a better and enjoyable stay on campus.*

57 *With the ultimate aim for learning is to pass exams.*

58 *By paying too much attention to the form ones will check indiscipline.*

In example 54, one may find it difficult to understand what the sentence is about. Every meaningful sentence should have a subject and a predicate. In examples 57 and 58, the use of prepositions to begin the sentences nullifies the subjects in the two sentences. Sentence 57 is supposed to be: *The ultimate aim for learning is to pass exams* and sentence while 58 would read *Teachers paying too much attention to the form ones will check indiscipline*. Fragments caused by missing subjects also distort meaning in sentences.

4.1.5.3 Fragments caused by dependent clauses without independent clauses

Dependent clauses are groups of words that contain subject and verb, but they do not express complete thoughts. If you use them alone, they become sentence fragments. You can fix these kinds of fragments by connecting dependent clauses to independent clauses. You can add independent clauses before or after dependent clauses. Examples in the students' written essays are:

59 *Because they student do not manage time.*

60 *While some students use their time wisely*

61 *Whenever they come to campus.*

62 *Until the teachers come to class.*

The examples above are all dependent clauses which needed independent clauses to express a complete thought. This makes understanding very difficult. One may find it difficult to deduce the correct independent clause the student may use. A possible explanation for such errors may be lack of training or students not understanding the rule of writing a complete sentence.

Table 4.1.5. Summary of sentence fragment errors

Types of errors	Number of errors	Percentage of errors
Fragment caused by missing verb	200	64.9%
Fragment caused by missing subject	69	22.4%
Fragment caused by dependent clause	39	12.7%
Total	308	100%

The table shows the summary of the sub categories of errors under sentence fragments identified in the students' essays. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1.5.

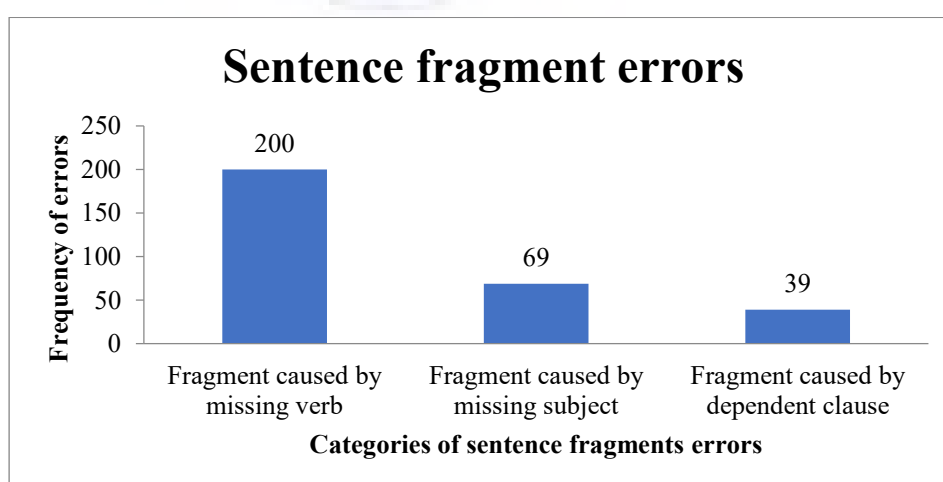


Figure 4.1.5. Sentence fragment errors

Important gathering (at)

66 *When classes are **on** progress, some students run home.* (in)

67 *To my point of view honourable headmaster such students should be dismissed.* (in)

The examples especially in 63, show that the preposition “in” was incorrectly used. We observe from the examples that the preposition *in* is mostly used by the students in this study because they may have a different understanding for it. It is clear that the choice of preposition is very crucial and needs to be carefully made in order to convey precise meaning in expressions.

4.1.6.2 Unnecessary insertion of prepositions

Unnecessary Insertion occurs when a preposition is wrongly infixed.

Examples:

68 *Students must plan **about** their time very well.*

69 *I would like to emphasise **on** the fact that the form ones are not serious.*

70 *I will like to describe **about** the behaviours of the form one student.*

71 *On 29th **of** January, 2016, two students were dismissed.*

Students use prepositions where they are not needed. Students encountered problems with unnecessary insertion. In Sentence 68, *Students must plan **about** their time very well.* We *plan something* but we don't *plan about something*. So Sentence 68 should read: *Students must plan their time very well.* Here, the student inserted the preposition *about* wrongly because it is not needed here. Again, a student encountered a problem with unnecessary insertion of *on*, such as in Example 69: *I would like to emphasize **on** the fact that.* We *lay emphasis on something* but we only *emphasize something*. Again, the use of the preposition *about* in example 70 is inappropriate in the context and should be avoided. In Sentence 71: *On 29th **of** January, 2016, two*

students were dismissed. It is incorrect to write the date with the preposition *of*. In speech we state it as *the 29th of January* but the correct way of writing the date is *29th January* (Hornby, 2000)

4.1.6.3 Preposition omission

Preposition omission is what Ellis (1997) terms “incomplete application of rules”. Incomplete application of rules arises when learners fail to develop a structure fully. Some of the errors under this sub category is as follows:

72 *All these types* behaviours should not be encouraged in the school.*

73 *When students are* the dormitory, they should try to comport themselves.*

74 *So I am pleading* everybody, use your time well.*

75 *First years can manage their time* making personal time table.*

76 *Students are to stay *campus for teachers to teach them.*

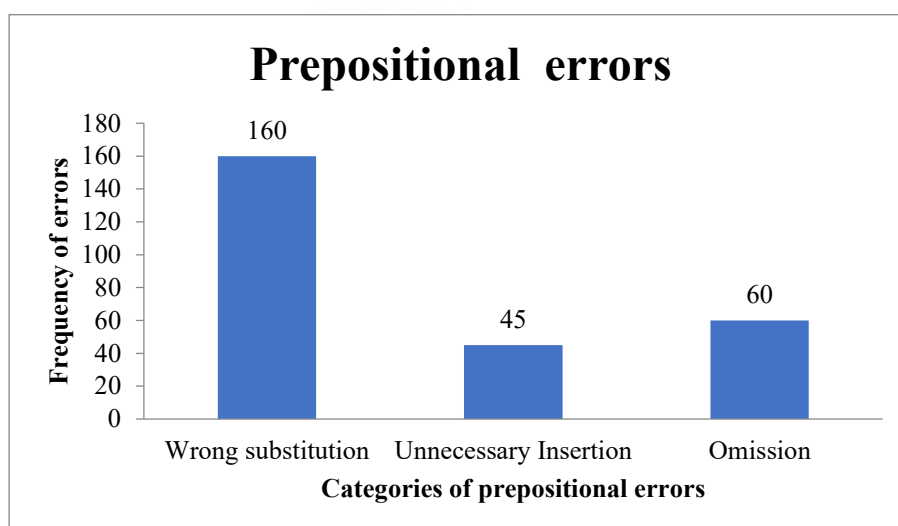
Instead of writing the complete phrase *all these types of behaviours, when students are at the dormitory*, the students only wrote *all these types behaviours* and *When students are the dormitory*. With the omission of the preposition *of* and *at*, examples 72 and 73 are considered erroneous. The study reveals that wrong use of the preposition is another major problem for the students. Probably, carelessness played a role in the occurrence of the few errors involving preposition use, ignorance of rule restrictions. The students tend to make analogy of what they have learnt and apply it in new situations.

Table 4.1.6. Summary of prepositional errors

Types of errors	Number of errors	Percentages of errors
Wrong substitution	160	60.4%
Omission	60	22.6%
Unnecessary Insertion	45	17%
Total	265	100%

The table shows the summary of errors committed by the students under prepositions.

These are presented in Figure 4.1.6:

**Figure 4.1.6. Prepositional errors**

From the chart, it is clear that 160 out of 265 errors committed on prepositions are on wrong substitution which represents 60.4% (the highest) under prepositional errors.

4.1.7 Article Errors

An article is a word that is used with a noun to indicate the type of reference being made by the noun. English has two articles: *the* and *a/an*. '*The*' is used to refer to specific or particular nouns; '*a/an*' is used to modify non-specific or non-particular nouns. We call '*the*' the *definite* article and '*a/an*' the *indefinite* article. Corder (1974, as cited in Erdogan, 2005 p. 263), errors fall into four main categories: omission of

some required elements; addition of some unnecessary or incorrect element; selection of an incorrect element; and misordering of elements. Following Corder's identification of error types, the article usage that were most problematic for the students in this study are discussed in the following three sub-sections: Wrong Substitution, Unnecessary Insertion, and Omission.

4.1.7.1 Wrong substitution of articles

Wrong substitutions of articles are cases in which, for example, 'a' was used instead of 'the', or vice versa. The usage of both the indefinite and definite articles depends on the nature of the words that follow. The indefinite article 'a' is used before a word beginning with a consonant sound, for example, *a place*; or a vowel with a consonant sound, for example *a university*. The article 'an' is used before words beginning with vowels. For example, *an apple* and words beginning with mute 'h', for example, *an honour*. The definite article 'the' occurs in the position where a person or thing or something is already referred to. Let's see some examples in the students' written essays:

77 *I will not spend more than a hour to advise the form ones.*

78 *A students should manage their time well.*

79 *Students should follow a school rules.*

80 *As a saying goes, Time and tide wait for no man.*

In example 77, the student used 'a' instead of *an* before a word that begins with a vowel sound. This again explains over-generalization of the rule. Ghanaian languages do not have an equivalent form that goes before the noun (i.e. a vowel sound takes 'an' and consonant sound takes 'a').

4.1.7.2 Unnecessary insertion of articles

Unnecessary Insertion indicates articles which were placed where they were not needed. Sometimes nouns in English are used without an article but students continued to use them where they are not needed. Examples in students' essays are:

81 *Finally, managing **a** time is very important.*

82 *Students spend **a** hours chatting at preps time.*

83 *The Chair, I am here to talk on **the** how the form ones will manage their time.*

84 *The form one students should go **a** home with an exeat.*

85 *On **the** 16th February, 2016, some indiscipline students were dismissed.*

The student in example 81 added 'a' before 'time' which is not necessary. This explains the student's incomplete understanding of the rule. Example 85 displays unnecessary insertion of *the* when students wrote a date and a month as in the following example: *On the 16th January, 2016*. Some sources (Adrian-Vallance, 2006; Horny, 2000) explain the usage of 'the', namely that it should not be used with a date when you write it. The students over-corrected themselves by using articles redundantly. The failure of students to learn and understand the usage of the articles explains the students' excessive use of these articles in other situations.

4.1.7.3 Article omission

Article Omission indicates situations in which students have left out an article where it is required. Following from this, it can be maintained that the students had difficulty deciding if a definite article is needed for a noun in a particular context. The examples below show the article omission in students written essays:

86 *In* nutshell.....”*

87 *Time management could be effective by drawing* personal time table.*

88 *Teachers become angry when* student does not come to school early.*

89 *Mr. Chairman, as * school prefect, I would like to advise the form ones.*

90 ** School has so many competent teachers.*

Concerning the omission of definite and indefinite articles, students may not know when to use them and when not. It is possible that participants may have forgotten sometimes to use articles due to interference from their first language and this explains the occurrence of interlingual errors. They also omitted them to simplify their tasks or replaced them with each other. This implies that the students still have difficulties in understanding the concepts of definiteness and indefiniteness.

Articles are believed to be a source of difficulty for learners and teachers of English as a second/foreign language, especially those whose native languages do not have articles or do have articles or article-like morphemes which are used in ways that differ from English articles (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999). In this study, article use is another frequent problem in students' written essays. It is quite clear that there is a problem with the students' linguistic competence in this regard. The Ghanaian languages' system of the definite and indefinite articles might have a negative effect on the students' wrong usage of these articles in the target language, and this really needs to be investigated well.

Table 4.1.7. Summary of article errors

Types of errors	Frequencies of errors	Percentage errors
Omission	170	66.4%
Wrong Substitution	65	25.4%
Unnecessary Insertion	21	8.2%
Total	256	100%

The table shows the different kinds of errors committed under the usage of article.

These are presented in Figure 4.1.7:

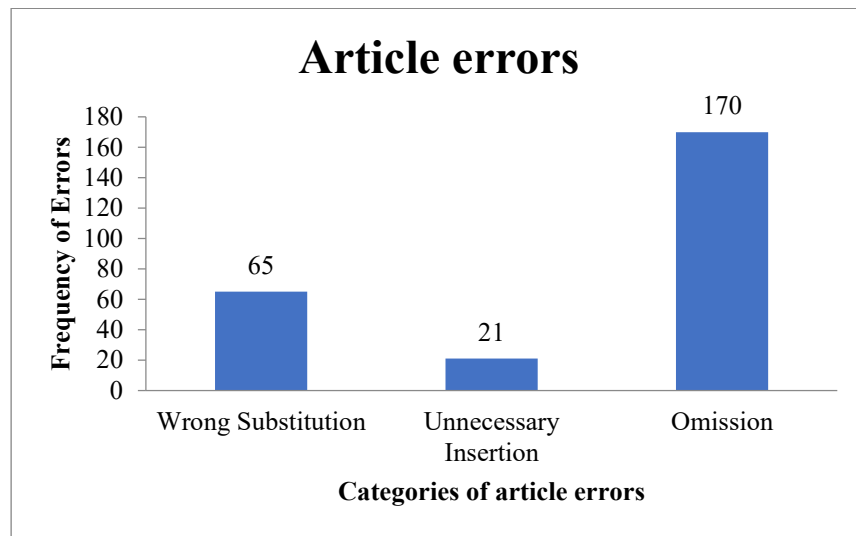


Figure 4.1.7. Article errors

Figure 4.1.7 indicates the greater number of error committed under article errors. It is clear that article omission is the highest error committed under this category (170 out of 256) representing 66.4%.

4.1.8 Summary

The Table 4.1.8 presents the summary of the main writing errors noted from the students' essays. These are arranged starting with the highest to the lowest frequencies.

Table 4.1.8. Frequency of errors in students' writings

Type of Error	Frequency of errors	Percentage (%)
Spelling	576	20.7
Verb tense	563	20.2
Concord	463	16.6
Capitalization	355	12.7
Sentence Fragment	308	11.1
Preposition	265	9.5
Article	256	9.2
Total	2786	100

Figure 4.1.8 is a representation of Table 4.1.8 and illustrates the total number of errors found in students' written essays. In the 120 essays analyzed, a total of 2786 errors were identified. The results of the present study indicates that Spelling errors is the highest number of errors recorded in the students' written essays, with a total of 576 (representing 20.7%) errors. The different types of spelling errors identified were wrong usage of the apostrophe, letters substitution, wrong joining of words, confusion of writing, wrong splitting of words and letter omission. The findings may suggest that poor spelling was a major learning difficulty for all the students. However, some spelling errors appeared to be the result of carelessness in writing rather than lack of knowledge, over confidence or bad habit towards word formation.

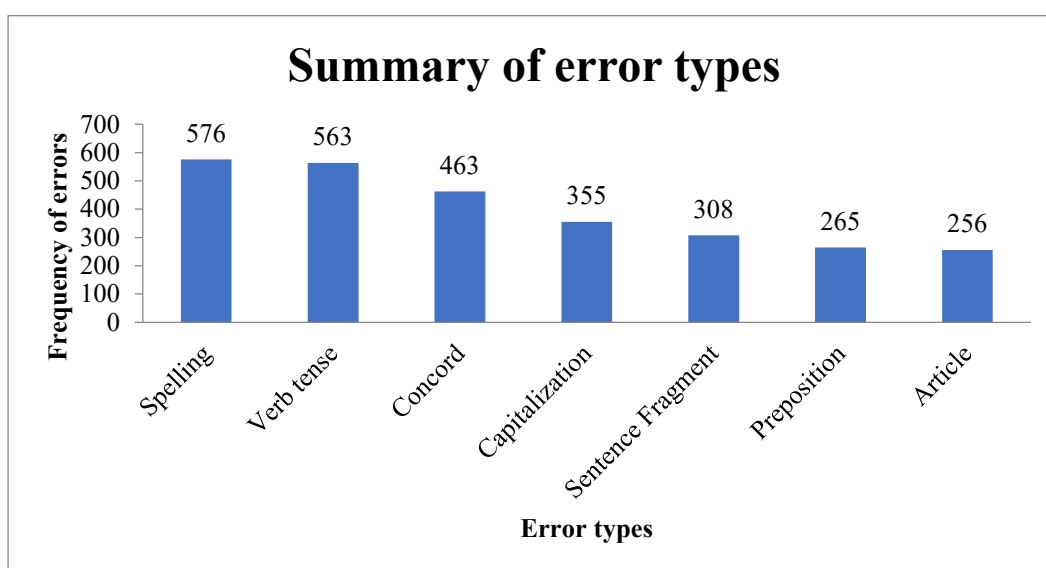


Figure 4.1.8. Error types

The chart again reveals that tense errors constitute the second highest errors which could be found in the students' written essay. The focus on tenses was mainly on two areas; wrong verb form usage and present tense form usage where the past tense form is required. The second highest error rates in this study occurred within the category of verbs, with a frequency of 563 occurrences, representing an error rate of 20.2%. This finding suggests that the use of English verbs was another major learning difficulty for students in Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School "4" JHS. The use of verb tense shows that the students still find it difficult to use the tense and the forms of the verb. The tenses most commonly misused were the simple past tense, past perfect and present simple. This may be justified by the fact that students do not understand the correct forms and usages of the verb. Some students interviewed submitted that their inability to understand grammar rules is always responsible for their difficulty in the English writing skill and this provides a positive answer to the second research question.

The next highest cases of errors recorded are concord errors. It is evident that this item had the third highest percentage of errors (16.6%) with 463 cases recorded in this study. Although the students still make errors, they do lack a basic understanding of subject-verb agreement. It can be said that the concord errors may be due to simplification strategy and overgeneralization of English Language rules. Some substitution errors like, *has* instead of *have* might have resulted from inadequate competence in the Target Language. The fourth highest error category is capitalization, with a total of 355 occurrences representing 12.7%. The analysis revealed that many students used capital letters instead of small letters and vice versa.

Sentence fragments are the next highest error category in this study, with a total of 308 representing 11.1%. The findings revealed fragments caused by missing verbs, fragments caused by missing subjects and fragments caused by dependent clauses without independent clauses. Prepositional errors follow that order with a total of 265 occurrences representing 9.5%. The investigations on prepositions were focused on wrong substitution, unnecessary insertion and preposition omission. Article errors are the seventh and the lowest error category of all the errors in this study. The rate of 256 occurrences representing 9.2% was recorded for this error category. Article errors were primarily based on wrong substitution, unnecessary insertion and article omission. It is claimed by Keiko (2003) that the English article system is considered one of the most difficult obstacles that learners face. This is especially seen where learners whose first language does not have a similar article system to that of English. The results of the present study confirm this assertion in that article system was found to be one of the most problematic error categories identified.

4.2 Causes of students' errors

Norrish (1987) classifies causes of error into three types. These are carelessness, first language interference and translation. *Carelessness* is closely related to lack of motivation. A student makes errors when he is not motivated. Many teachers will admit that it is not always the student's fault if he loses interest, perhaps the materials and/or style of presentation do not suit him. Some teachers may feel that errors are caused by learners' inattentiveness in class. Carelessness in class means not caring or troubling, having no concern or not paying enough attention to the teacher. Interest can be lost if the materials provided by the teacher or his teaching style does not suit his students.

Norrish states that learning a language (a mother tongue or a foreign language) is a matter of habit formation. When someone tries to learn new habits, the old ones will interfere the new ones. This cause of error is called first language interference. When learning the English language, an individual already knows his mother tongue, and he attempts to transfer the features. The transfer may prove to be justified when the structure of the two languages is similar (that is positive transfer). It may also prove unjustified when the structure of the two language is different (negative transfer or interference). Translation is one of the causes of errors. This happens because a student translates his first language sentence or idiomatic expression in to the target language word by word. This is probably the most common cause of errors. It has been noticed that translations occur higher in number when the teacher teaches by the translation method. Errors due to translation also occur during discussions because learners focus more on meaning rather than structure in a discussion. Their concentration is on over all meaning instead of structures and forms that they will be using to convey their message.

This study has identified several causes of students' errors which are not far from what Norrish (1987) and Richards (2015) posited. Through interviewing, observations and feedback from the students' written essays, the researcher identified errors caused by teachers, errors caused by the students, errors caused by first language interference and errors caused by modern technology; precisely, social media.

4.2.1 Errors caused by teachers/context of instruction

In this study teachers were seen as a major cause of students' errors. This is because the way and manner a teacher teaches has a great influence on his/her students. According to Richards (2015), teachers' attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical form necessary to do so causes errors. He adds that when it happens like that the teacher automatically transfers errors to his subjects. It was revealed that three of the English teachers travel from Kumasi, a town far from the school to teach. The distance presents a challenge because they do not arrive early and so end up not having enough time to teach. It was noted through the interview and the observation that some of the teacher-factors that contributed to the errors were inappropriate teaching methods, inability to give and mark exercises and assignments promptly, and the tendency of teachers to pay much attention to the grammar aspects to the neglect of the other aspects, especially, writing. A teacher and some students claimed that one teacher of English always uses Ga throughout his teaching and the students call him 'Ga master'. According to the students, his method of teaching affects them since they do not get the correct pronunciation of words and it therefore affects the way they spell words. The use of pidgin by some teachers was also identified as a major factor. This has

been a problem for the school authorities any time we go for staff meetings. According to them the students are copying from the teachers.

Finally, the teachers claimed that students make these errors because they believe that teachers at the basic levels fail to expose students to most of these errors, particularly spellings errors. Categorically, one teacher said that he believed that the work done on spellings at the basic level is very low. His belief was that some of these errors were so basic that he expected students to be conversant with them. One teacher was very worried that a student misused *bed* for *bird* in his writing. Teacher-factor causes of errors are equally dangerous and can cause tenses error, concord error, prepositional error, and sentence fragments etc. This is what Richards (2015) calls *false concept*. James also uses the term ‘teacher-talk induced errors’ to describe this type of errors (James, 1998, p. 191). One of the many roles of a teacher is to provide models of the standard target language in class. There is a chance that teachers may not be good models of the target language with regard to the way they speak, write or generally teach the language. Therefore, some of the errors being committed by students could be teacher-induced.

4.2.2 Errors caused by students

Another major cause of errors in students’ written essays identified was the students’ poor reading habits. The teachers interviewed explained that students have poor reading habits. Some other teachers termed this problem as “lack of extensive reading”. As a result, they believe that this limits students’ stock of vocabulary. One of them saw this as laziness on the part of the students. The students identified their poor reading habits and attributed it to poverty in the entire district, that is, they do not have the means to get the reading books. It was also observed that students were not making good use of the few books at the school library.

The teachers also said that students fail to pay attention to the basic format and features of the essay type they write. This was evidently clear with the type of essay given to students for this study. Though the essay is not a debate, some students used the debate format. Thus, addressing the *Panel of Judges, Time Keeper and co-debaters*. Closely related to the generalization of deviant structures is the failure to observe the restriction of existing structures, that is, the application of rules to context where they do not apply. This again is a type of generalization of transfer, ignorance of rule restrictions and incomplete application of rules since the learners are making use of a previously acquired rule in a new situation.

4.3.3 Errors caused by social media influence

Another cause noted is the influence of modern technology. It was noted that students' consistent use of modern gadgets such as mobile phones and electronic tablets provide other negative influence. As a result, it was observed that students wrote as if they are messaging (whatsApping) their friends. A teacher exemplified with the use of 'e' (the), 'a' (that) and 'gud' (good). She noted this as the results of frequent social media chatting. This is confirmed by the analysis of the written essays for this study. The analysis revealed words like de (the), tu (to) cuz/bcuz (because), and dis (this), which are all as a result of short hand transfer in social media chatting.

A teacher also added that since students hear and see others using these errors on social media, they come to see them as the correct or acceptable forms. Some teachers, particularly those who do not teach English, were also observed using and advising students to use shorthand writing to speed up the way they write notes. Some of the teachers interviewed confirmed that other subject teachers tend to use shorthand expressions in class so their belief is that students pick some of the expressions from these teachers. One teacher emphasized that she had to continuously correct many of

these expressions any time she went to class. This is because she realized that some of the teachers who taught before her utilized these expressions.

4.2.4 Errors caused by the students' L1 transfer

Ellis (2003) states that there is an influence that the learners' L1 exerts over the acquisition of the L2. Myles (2002) views transfer as the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired. Majority of the students studied were Ga speakers and they appeared to transfer some structures in their L1 to the target Language. This is what Norrish (1987) calls "*Translation*". This happens because a student translates his first language sentence or idiomatic expression into the target language word by word. This is probably the most common cause of error.

4.2.5 Summary

The analysis has revealed that the errors in the written essays of the students in English could be traced to several sources: carelessness, mother tongue (L1) interference, wrong pronunciation, wrong spelling and inadequate motivation to speak and write good English. It would appear that difficulties of the students to express themselves in good English are common in Ghana and stem from the common reasons of limited exposure to good, Standard English and laziness of teachers and students to correct their mistakes. Social media influence was also identified as another major cause since students always watch television, listen to radio and chat on WhatsApp and Facebook.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the data which comprised the students written essays, interview, and observation. The study highlighted some common errors that students make and the causes that account for these errors. To sum it up, the first

research question addressed the major written errors of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS. Seven (7) major types of errors were identified in the students’ written essays, which totaled 2786 errors. The error categories were the verb-spelling error (576); verb-tense error (563); concord error (463); capitalisation error (355); sentence fragments (308); preposition error (265) and article error (256). The second research question was also addressed by looking at the causes of the students’ error. The causes were identified as poor teaching method and materials and competence of teachers. L1 interference, lack of motivation in the classroom, the use of pidgin and social media influence were also identified as causes of errors. The next chapter discusses the summary of the study, its implication and recommendations for future study.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the summary of the findings, provide implications, make recommendations and draw conclusions. The summary gives a brief account of all the error types identified in the study and some causes of these errors. The implication also highlighted some ways of minimizing errors in students' written essays.

5.1 Summary of the findings

The objectives of the research were to find out the types of errors commonly made by students in their writings identify the sources and causes of those errors. Data for the research were gathered from students of Odumase-Aman from M/A Basic School "4" JHS in the Greater Accra Region. The data were gathered from students' written essays, observation and interview of some teachers and some students. The first research question of this study sought to find out the types of language errors commonly made by students. In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998, p. 304), categories and sub-categories such as the following were used for this research to record all the errors made by the students: *grammatical* (prepositions, articles, irregular verbs, tenses, concord and possessive case); *syntactic* (pronouns); *lexical* (word choice); and *semantic and substance* (capitalization, and spelling). Based on the discussion of the findings and the examples given, it could be concluded that the students in this study committed common errors, which were, verb tense, concord, spellings, capitalization, prepositions, articles and sentence fragments. The highest number of errors recorded was on spellings (20.7%) and the least was article errors (9.2%). It goes without saying that most of the students' errors can be

due to L1 transfer. The overt influences of our mother tongues on the students' writing of English indicate that teachers need to take care of the transfer and interference of the students' mother tongue in their spoken or written production.

There were also instances of simplification strategy and overgeneralization of English rules. The researcher also maintains that capitalisation problem is a pedagogical problem which can be handled appropriately by teachers in schools. The results of the study suggest that teachers need to have different strategies when responding to errors found in students' writing (Ferris, 2002). Also, learners' errors which are repetitive should be used as samples on the board and then students should be asked to correct the errors.

Finally, one way to highlight the influences of the mother tongues on the students' learning of English is to collect these errors and ask the students to analyze them to determine if they could correct them (Cook, 2013). The teacher's role is essential in providing an environment in which students will learn about writing, see models of good writing, get lots of practice writing, and receive help during the writing process. This is supported by Hedge (1988) who argues that it is dangerous to focus a student's attention on only highly controlled writing exercises whose primary aim is mastering form, rather than the construction of meaning.

5.2 The role of errors in the teaching and learning of English

The aim of this dissertation was to investigate errors made by second language learners (students) so as to understand the strategies and techniques used in the process of second language learning. Error analysis is a very important area of Applied Linguistics as well as of second and foreign language learning. It is also a systematic method used to analyze learners' errors. Errors are not always bad; rather, they are crucial parts in the process of learning a language. They may provide insights

into the complicated processes of language development as well as a systematic way for identifying, describing and explaining students' errors. Errors may also help to better understand the process of second and foreign language acquisition. This study tried to investigate why students of Odumase-Amanfrom M/A Basic School “4” JHS consistently commit errors in their writings though English is a compulsory subject at all levels in their schools.

In the present study, the written assignments of form two students were analyzed for the purpose of error analysis. Results of the analysis suggest that students lack grammatical accuracy in their writing and are not sure of the grammatical rules that may apply in their English writing. The study revealed that students' writings are highly influenced by the rules of their first language. A study of errors helps teachers to identify the problematic areas of teaching language at different levels of instruction. Through errors, teachers are able to understand the nature of the learner's knowledge at a given stage in his/her learning and discover what he still has to learn. As Fallahi (1991, p. 25) notes, “error analysis is a clue for the teacher to pinpoint the learning problems which can rarely be predicted by contrastive analysis”. In view of this, a course based on errors analysis will enable the teacher to teach the point of error and to emphasize more on those errors where the error frequency is higher. For instance, students in this study need more attention on spellings since it is the highest type of error identified. Errors provide feedback to the teacher. They inform teachers about the effectiveness of their teaching techniques. Errors show teachers what parts of the syllabus they have been using, what they have inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. This helps teachers to design remedial classes for students and pay attention to special cases.

5.3 Implications for English teaching and learning

Language learning is a step-by-step process during which errors or mistakes are to be expected. Errors are visible proof that learning is taking place. Error Analysis is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. Candling (2001) considers English language learners' errors as potentially important for the understanding of the processes of language learning. Findings on error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. They provide the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence. The findings of the present study point out the significance of learners' errors as they provide evidence of how language is learned and what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in learning the different language. For instance, this study shows that spelling and tense errors are the most common for the students studied. With these results, teachers should assist students to become more aware by establishing "a comprehensive taxonomy of the learners' errors" (Husada, 2007, p. 103) and their sources, that is, interlingual and intralingual errors. Therefore, teachers should train and guide the learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users.

Findings from error analysis provide feedback and they also tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of their teaching. Error Analysis serves as a reliable feedback to design remedial teaching methods and materials. Michaud, McCoy and Stark (2001) observe that teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures of English, but they should view the errors as a process of learning. Errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a second language is actually learned. Through Error Analysis, educators are informed about devising appropriate materials

and effective teaching techniques, and constructing tests suitable for different levels and needs of learners. If language educators know about all these, there is the likelihood that the learning of English will be enhanced in this country.

To help students overcome or minimize errors and improve their writing in English, the classroom teacher should adopt specific teaching and learning strategies that will assist students. Teacher intervention in this instance is crucial because it can provide learners with specific information and strategies aimed at overcoming these writing problems:

In the first place, teachers need to be aware of the inconsistency of English. As maintained by Carney (1994), phonological awareness is essential in that it makes learners aware of underlying phonological rules. This awareness can be achieved by having students listen to different accents or pronunciations. This can be done with radio, in films and movies to enable them indirectly recognize differences of pronunciation occurring in real English use. In English, some words can be pronounced and used differently in various ways; teachers may provide students with examples of such words for them to know the differences. Thus, having students learn orthographic irregularities could help raise students' awareness of spelling and prevent them from over-generalizing spelling rules.

Again, to reduce errors in students' writing, the students should learn more about sentence pattern, tense, spelling and punctuation, pronoun and preposition. For English teachers, they should improve the way they teach. This, they can do by improving their techniques in teaching by preparing systematic materials to help reduce learners' errors. Teachers need to emphasize that it is only through practice that students make the errors and learn to engage in the process of negotiating meaning through different stages. Involving learners in their own writing assessment

would be motivating for them and will increase learner involvement in learning. Teachers need to take their students through the process of writing. They need to help them practice more essay writing to develop their confidence level. As Cimcoz (1999, p. 1) posits, “teachers who want to help their students gain confidence in writing should try to follow a writing process that takes the student from insecurity to success”.

Teaching writing needs devoted teachers. Teachers must dedicate sufficient time to reading and writing. In this case, teachers should train and guide learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users. As much as possible, teachers should organise enough individual class exercises and assignments on essays. Thus, teachers should give students enough writing practice. As Mooko (1996) notes, the problems encountered in the way’s composition writing is taught in schools include the fact that students are not given enough writing practice. This is supported by Fuller and Snyder (1990) who examined writing in Botswana schools and concluded that less time is allocated to English writing essays in primary and secondary classrooms. They also note that although teachers consistently assigned written work, only a small proportion was devoted to writing short essays in class. In addition, Rowell (1991) concludes that students are not given adequate instruction on composition writing and her study revealed that instances where students were given the opportunity to write paragraphs and compositions were quite rare.

Again, for effective teaching of essay writing in schools, headmasters and other stakeholders should help create enabling environments particularly through the provision of teaching and learning materials and the creation of relatively small class sizes. As this study has also revealed, some of the writing errors are pedagogical in nature. The failure of many students to use standard rules in writing implies a failure

of the school and the education system at large. It is the role of the teacher as well as the school to develop and extend the skills of the students in academic writing. Likewise, it is the responsibility of curriculum developers to carry out regular evaluations of the English syllabus and teaching method to check whether they reflect the objectives of teaching. In line with this, it is recommended, as observed by Owu-Ewie (2006), that a National Language Advisory Board should be constituted to advise government on language planning and policy implementation.

Also, measures should be taken to improve writing instruction in schools such as the provision of better-equipped libraries, relevant textbooks and materials for teaching language. It can also include writing workshops, refresher courses, and remedial teaching to students with severe cases of writing difficulties. After all, an important aim of literacy is to develop individual abilities to communicate effectively in national and global contexts. For instance, Gyasi (1990) counts among these causes, scarcity of qualified teachers and textbooks together with absence of a reading culture. Moreover, teachers' attempt to teach a composition topic in a day should be discouraged. It is believed that the effective teaching of a composition topic should take at least two weeks. As the Head of the English Department interviewed opined, "this is to enable the students to have a good idea of that particular writing type".

To reduce students' threat of failure and to orient them for success, teachers can tell their students that unless the errors hinder their intended meaning, they will not be penalized for them. Through such an understanding between teachers and students, it is hoped that the students will be able to overcome their test anxiety and in turn, reduce their errors. It should be known to teachers that error analysis has been employed to draw a picture of the learners' learning strategies and never meant to eliminate or even reduce them. Rather, it is intended to help teachers adjust their

teaching methods and understand their students' learning strategies. However, errors, regardless of the teaching methods employed in the classroom, are there and will stay as long as English language teaching is practiced. Therefore, teachers should not be so worried about them.

In addition, teachers can draw their students' attention to the differences between the native and English language. In this case, English language learners' sensitivity and awareness of these differences will be raised, and that might help them reduce their interference errors. There is no doubt that the native language plays an important role in learning and using another language. Students learning English in such a situation use the interlingual transfer strategy to solve their learning and communication problems in English. When teaching writing, we must look for ways to help students learn how to express themselves clearly and how to organize their ideas logically. We must show them how to make their writing vivid and interesting. Writing a composition necessarily involves the dual task of deciding what to say and how to say it. The emphasis in teaching composition in our schools has so far been on how to say it. This is undoubtedly due to our concern with grammatical accuracy.

Interlingual transfer is a learning strategy that most second language learners fall back on. This is especially dominant in classroom situations where exposure to the language is confined to a few hours per week of formal instruction. Accordingly, many language teachers and researchers talk about making use of the mother tongue in the classroom (Mohammed, 1998). One of the most widely suggested uses of the learners' mother tongue is the presentation of contrastive comparisons of the two languages to make the learners aware of the differences and similarities between them. This technique is believed to be helpful in that the learners will know when to transfer from their native language and when not to.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

Given the results of this study, a number of recommendations for future research are suggested. First, it is recommended that a more comprehensive study of the English writings of students may be conducted by other researchers to extend the results of the study. This is to investigate the errors made by students in other Junior high schools and compare errors in the various schools. Again, since the studies identified only seven different types of errors, further investigation of other types of errors in students' essays is strongly recommended. Also, the exploration of the composing process and the strategies learners use in English writing has not been considered in this study. Finally, students are also influenced by what they hear on radio and television. How words are pronounced affects how they are spelt. Another area for potential research is the errors caused by the influence of the social media which include internet chatting (whatsapping and facebooking) and SMS technology and propose mechanism for addressing the issue.

5.5 Conclusion

The utmost aim of this research work was to evaluate errors in the written essays of J.H.S. students. In this context, the scripts of Odumase-Aman from M/A Basic School "4" JHS students were assessed. The field notes made during observations, interviews, examination of students' written essays, notes and students' exercise books were categorized for analysis in line with the research questions from which conclusions were drawn for discussion and recommendations. The study identified errors committed in the writing as spelling, verb tense, omission, wrong pronoun use, and wrong preposition use errors. The study also revealed that the most frequently committed error was spellings errors, followed by verb tense errors, concord errors, capitalisation errors, sentence fragments errors, preposition errors and

article errors. Based on the results, teachers are encouraged to be conversant with learners' L1 and have adequate training in L2 teaching strategies. For, this is the only way to minimize L1 interference in the English writing of their students. This study adds to existing knowledge on students' errors. It is therefore hoped that more research may be undertaken to expand the current study to cover other areas of English writing.



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APPENDIX 1

AN ANALYSIS OF ERROR IN THE WRITING OF J. H. S. STUDENTS IN ODUMASE-AMANFROM M/A BASIC SCHOOL “4” J. H. S.

QUESTIONNAIRE

DESCRIPTIVE COMPOSITION

ANSWER ONE (1) QUESTION ONLY FROM THE QUESTIONS

FORM ONE (1)

Your composition should be about **one hundred and eighty (180) words** long

1. Describe your Best Friend.

GUIDELINES: Name, Age, complexion, Height, Sex, nature of his or her face, eye, nose, legs, etc., her postural building, family, education status, unique qualities e.g. generous, humble, industrious, obedient etc., likes and dislikes, how is your friend helpful and important to you? Why do you like your friend?

2. Give a vivid description of your Home Town.

GUIDELINES: state the name of the Home Town, the region it can be located in Ghana, name the closest city or town, historical fact, its inhabitants, size, population (densely/sparsely) give reason, type of building, social amenities and infrastructural, occupation, describe the town or village life generally throughout the day, changes you want to see etc.

3. Describe your pet.

GUIDELINES: the name of the pet, kind of animal, age, color, likes, dislikes, it's food, life style, why you like it, recommendations

FORM TWO (2)

Your composition should be about **two hundred words (200)**.

1. Describe a particular building that has attracted you recently.
2. Describe the oldest person you have seen.
3. You once found yourself in a messy room. Describe what you saw.

FORM THREE (3)

Your composition should be about **two hundred and fifty words (250)**.

1. Describe a festival which was celebrated recently in your area.
2. Describe a dream you will never forget.
3. Describe an interesting function you attended recently.

APPENDIX 2

Do not write in this margin	Question No. Write on both sides of the paper	Do not write in this margin
	My best friend	
	I have a lot of friends but the one I like best is Edwina Oputu. She is very kind and respectful. She stay at Abaapram and she come from Kumase. Her father is a driver and her mother is a trader.	
	She has two sisters and one brother. She is the second born. She is dark in skin colour. She is 3½ feet tall. She is 12 years old and she is in programme (1) at Achimota school.	
	Edwina is a good girl and like to read different story book. She is a kind person to me. She always advise me to take my learning seriously. She even come to my house and help me with my home-work. She is very hard working. Last year she was won the first prize in her school. She also told me that I should take part in school activities. She told me that she was the second prize when she took part in school activities competition. She is very decent so she told me to be also decent too. She likes to eat banku with ekuwa soup. And her best game is ampe.	
	She told me that I should respect my parent, friends and teachers. She has a round face, small eyes and nose, short neck and she is tall.	
	She has a small ears. She has ^{no} tribal marks.	
	She is a good friend and I am happy to have a good friend like Edwina Oputu.	

Do not write in the margin	Candidate's No. _____ Write on both sides of the paper	Do not write in the margin
	<u>THE I FINN' MY SELF IN A MESSY ROOM</u>	
	<p>Once I got to my sister's home the day was Saturday and the date was 9th November 2017 and also the time was 11:00pm and the weather started began to change to be evening. When this was an option.</p> <p>The initial change of the day was to become evening when one says:</p> <p>I then got to my sister's room I saw her cooking ^{her} meals in her kitchen and I saw her dresses on the floor while her sandals was also in the kitchen and also the kitchen was very very dirty and also there was dirt.</p> <p>Secondly, when I entered the room I saw her dresses, sandals, chairs, hatches and books on the floor and she has packed her dirty tools in a rubber bowl and she has cover it. So when I enter there, her and I saw all this things I was very surprised because the room was very dirty and also is like a where we always refuse.</p> <p>Once again, I told her ^{that} she sweep her room and she started insult-ing me and I couldn't talk to her because I was very angry with what she said.</p>	

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So I go to the bath room and I saw the
soap soap on the floor and I also saw
the sponge on the floor and the bath
room was too dirty, also the water in
the shower has flow down, and when
I also saw the toilet too it is too dirty
and I packed all the things well
and arrange it well.

So this is the end of my essay

Describe a dream you will never forget.

A DREAM I WILL NEVER FORGET

One Saturday morning afternoon on 7th December December 2019, I had a very ^{bad} nice dream and I will never forget. I dreamt that I was the best beach.

In the dream, I was walking with my friends. We went out to have fun, so we went to the Achimota mall. My mum told us not to go but we didn't mind her and we went. So on our way going we saw three eggs in an earthenware bowl and a lot of coins.

We didn't know what it means so we ~~we~~ ignored it and we went. As we were going we had a flat tire but nothing happened to us. So we reach Achimota at 8:00 pm. We have a lot of fun. We ate a ~~lot~~ lot of food stuffs, all kinds of drinks, etc. We were also taking pictures.

We decided to come home and the time was 2:00 am. When we got out from the mall, it was too dark so we were afraid. We managed to go to the road side to pick a car. There was no "motor" nor taxi so we stood there for about 80 minutes. So we decided to go back to the mall but the mall was closed.

We saw a ~~private~~ private car and we rushed to take it, not a ~~tenant~~ knowing they

