UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

GRAMMATICAL ERROR ANALYSIS: AN INVESTIGATION OF THEESSAYS OF PUPILS OF THREE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS OF EFFIDUASE, A/R.

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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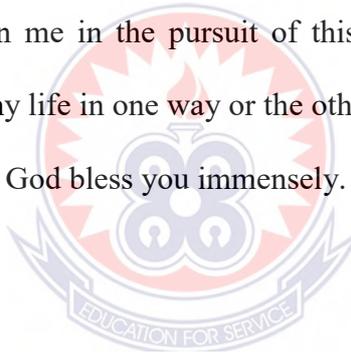
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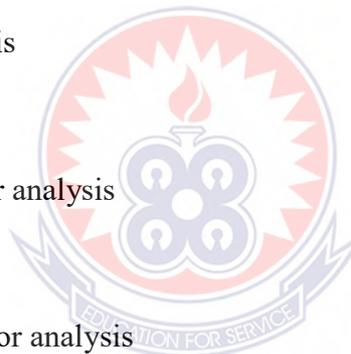# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this study to my parents, the late Mr W. S. Gyimah and Mrs Felicia Dansoa Gyimah who would stop at nothing to have their children educated. May you reap of the fruit of your labour. To you Nkunim my daughter, this is to encourage you to learn to the highest level with nothing deterring you.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to unravel the mystery surrounding the errors committed by some JHS pupils in the Effijam-Sekyere District of the Ashanti region. It was necessary to find out why these errors: Tense, Spelling, Concord, Capitalization and Preposition errors which were identified were committed by pupils in most cases. This study adopted a qualitative approach in examining the grammatical errors in the written essays of 150 JHS pupils of three different schools in the district. The instruments used for the data collection were written essays, informal interviewing and observation. A total of 3463 errors were committed owing to the context of teaching, social networking sites complexity in the L2, differences in the structure of the L1 and L2 and lack of practice. Subsequently four recommendations were made; concerning how the respective stakeholders can effectively play their roles to minimise and eventually eliminate some of the errors and also embark on future research.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

English is a unifying language all over the world. Presently, English is used as the second language in Ghana as it is no longer an alien tongue. The Ghanaian educational system has been using English as a medium of instruction in Pre-school to tertiary level in most schools especially the private ones. It is used as a tool for learning and a medium of communication. The mastery of the four language skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing is necessary for the students to communicate clearly and effectively in order to be competent and proficient in both written and spoken discourse.

Among the four language skills, essay writing is deemed the hardest skill to be developed but very much needed to communicate one‟s thoughts. The present study was undertaken to find out the main types of errors in students‟ sentence writing. As mentioned above writing is a complex task. It is the "most difficult of the language abilities and skills to acquire Corder, (1974). Its level of difficulty varies between native speakers (NS) who think in the language used and non-native speakers (NNS) who think in their own native language.

In the process of essay writing, non-native speakers have to figure out all the rules they need to apply which native speakers apply automatically. Tricia Hedge elaborates on the requirements of effective writing: "Effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of development in the organization of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and careful choice of

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vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers," Hedge (1998).

The skill of writing involves many other minor skills like general knowledge about the subject in question and the ability to translate ideas into grammatical sentences. Rivers (1968) argues that any academic writer must meet four basic conditions: The student must learn:

1. the graphic systems of the foreign language;

2. he must learn to spell according to the conventions of the language;

3. he must learn to control the structure of the language so that what he writes is comprehensible to his reader; and

4. he must learn to select from among possible combinations of words and phrases those which will convey the thoughts he has in mind in the register which is most appropriate.

1.1 Background to the study

Essay writing is a difficult process even in the first language. It is even more complicated to write in a second language as it presents the greatest challenge to the students at all stages, particularly in essay writing in which, writing is usually extended and therefore it becomes more demanding than in the case of writing a short paragraph. A better understanding of the L1 influence in the process of ESL writing will help teachers know students' difficulties in learning English. It will also aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help ESL students learn English writing skills better.

As Richards and Renandya (2002) put it, there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master. Essay Writing is a skill that learners

should possess and demonstrate in academic contexts. It includes numerous considerations and choices to be made regarding "higher level skills", such as content, structure and organization, and "lower level skills", such as punctuation and choice of appropriate vocabulary items and grammatical structures, which are the terms used by Richards & Renandya (2002).

Moreover, writing skills must be practised and learned through experience. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the writer engages in "a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text" (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987, p. 12). Indeed, academic writing demands conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analysing ideas. Holaday (1997) points out that the way to become a better writer is to write. She remarks that students who feel incompetent at writing avoid writing and do not practice and they do not get better. It is true that non-native speakers are more prone to committing errors. Teachers of English currently face the challenge of adopting and developing a wide range of methods to accomplish effective teaching of English writing. A great number of students in Ghana continue to fail in mastering the basics of the English writing even after long years of formal education. Pupils in government schools in Ghana are supposed to be taught with English from the upper primary, and by the end of the senior high school level of education, the students have spent more than ten years of learning ESL. At the end of this period, they are expected to communicate effectively in English in speaking and writing.

The study will first provide information on types of grammatical errors made by pupils, describe the methodology used in collecting the data, then present, analyse and discuss results and finally summarize and make recommendation

1.2   Statement of the problem

Junior High School pupils continue to make errors in their writing, especially the students who have a lot of ideas but do not have enough vocabulary to express what they want to write. Second language writing is linguistically different in many ways from native language writing. Besides, writing skills cannot be acquired in a short time. It requires the students to understand the spelling and punctuation, sentence structure, vocabulary and paragraph development. Because of that, they still make errors when they have to express or describe something in English.

Errors play an important role in learning a second language. From the errors that students make, one can determine their level of mastery of language system and discover what they still have to learn. Second language teachers should realize errors made by the students. In errors analysis, there should be at least two stages of activities that should be carried out. The first is identifying and describing errors based on the type of errors. There are four types of errors; they are addition, omission, malformation, and disordering.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) also opine 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. 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 three junior high schools in the Effija-Sekyere district of the Ashanti region and identifies the various

types of errors they commit, identifies sources and causes of the errors and suggests some ways of minimizing the errors.

1.3 Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Identify types of grammatical errors participants commit in their writing.

2. Examine the causes of errors in the essays of these pupils.

3. Determine the implications of the findings for teachers of English language.

1.4 Research questions

The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of grammatical errors do participants commit in their writing?

2. What are the causes of errors in the essays of participants?

3. What are the implications of findings for teachers of English Language?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to improving teaching and learning of English language by identifying reasons behind the poor achievement of students in English and help teachers to determine the goals of teaching English Grammar in high schools. This means that the teacher will choose grammatical components which are closely related to the students' everyday experience. Consequently it will help them to master the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing.

In addition, it will provide curriculum designers in Ghana with an important methodology in designing the syllabus of English grammar for the analysis of students' errors which may serve as a guide to teaching students what they really need to learn. Corder (1974) states that Error Analysis is useful in second language learning

because it reveals the problem areas to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers.

.   It will further show the frequency of errors and teachers will become conscious of likely problem areas that specific students face and be in a better position to put appropriate intervention strategies into place. This study is also valuable to learners because researchers such as Nunan (2001) and Erdogan (2005) reveal that learners" errors are systematic and many learners tend to commit the same kinds of errors during a certain stage of language learning. Therefore it is obligatory for the teachers to draw pupils" attention to them as often as possible in order to avoid them. The results of this study therefore serve as guidance to teachers on how to assist learners to become better writers, hence it will be very significant to researchers and beneficial to teachers, syllabus designer and textbook authors.

1.6   Limitations of the study

The study was firstly limited by its setting. Regarding time, the last but one week of the second term of the 2016/2017 academic year was dedicated to the execution of the study. This time constraint did not afford the researcher the needed time to uncover all the lapses associated with the grammatical errors made by these students. Neither could the entire school population be involved in this study which would otherwise have helped the researcher to solve, if not all, some of the problems relating to students" writings. Then was the limitation of place: The study was executed in three JHS namely: Methodist JHS, Experimental JHS and Roman Catholic JHS all in Effiduasi, Ashanti. Involving all schools in the district would have been worthwhile however, the researcher limited the study to three schools instead owing to the unavailability of time.

1.7   Organization of the Study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews 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 analysed are discussed. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the study. In the 150 essays analysed, a total of 3463 errors were identified. The results of the present study indicated that tense errors were the highest number of errors recorded in the students" written essays, with a total of 1036 (representing 30%) errors. Second on the list was spelling with a total of 1015 errors representing 29.3%. The different types of spelling errors identified were: vowel omission, vowel addition and vowel substitution. 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. The third highest was concord errors with a total of 692 giving a percentage of 20%. Preposition errors recorded 392 errors representing 11.4%. Capitalisation errors was the least with 328 errors representing 9.3%. Finally, Chapter 5 presents the summary of the results, implications, recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0   Introduction

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

2.1   The skill of writing

Writing is quite complex at all stages especially when it comes to writing in a second language. The researcher, having taught fourteen years in the senior high school opines that writing poses a great challenge to senior high school students in Ghana. The challenge for the composition teacher is to activate the passive knowledge of the students to become more proficient. Again, it will also aid in the adoption of appropriate teaching strategies to help beginning ESL students learn English writing skills better.

The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these notions into legible text. Writing includes numerous considerations and choices to be made regarding „higher level skills," such as content, structure and organization, and „lower level skills," such as punctuation and choice of appropriate vocabulary items and grammatical structures. These are the terms used by Richards & Renandya (2002). Moreover, writing skills must be practised and learned through

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experience. By putting together concepts and solving problems, the writer engages in a two-way interaction between continuously developing knowledge and continuously developing text.

Indeed, academic writing demands conscious effort and practice in composing, developing, and analysing ideas. Therefore, students" writing in their L2 have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills, in order to write error-free texts. Often, they enter language courses with the expectations of becoming more proficient writers in the L2. Therefore, teachers have to anticipate certain common types of errors. They may also find other types of errors, which can be revealed by analysing the written essays of students. Writing is one of the four language skills and it is difficult and complex because it involves thinking and need good understanding on grammar and its structures which are extensive.

As indicated above writing is a complex task; it is the "most difficult of the language abilities and skills to acquire." Corder, (1974). Its level of difficulty varies between native speakers (NS) who think in the language used, and non-native speakers (NNS) who think in their own native language. While writing, non-native speakers may have to think of all those rules they need to apply or use, rules that native speakers are expected to have automatically.

2.1.1 Genres of writing at the Junior High School level

Writing can be categorized into fiction and nonfiction. Fiction is all about the power of one"s imagination and creativity. At the JSS level, writing is basically a creation. Writing at this level is also not academical in nature. Pupils are groomed to write all the forms of discourse using their power of imagination.

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2.2   What constitutes an error?

Language learning is a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner, Corder (1973). In order for this discovery to take place, learners have to go through several stages and processes. One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is committing errors.

Error is defined by Corder (1973, p. 260) as "the use of linguistic item in a way which a fluent native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning." He draws a distinction between performance errors which are those violations of grammatical conventions and competence errors which are consistent in an individual"s speech or writing which indicates an internalized system different from that of the target language.

In Latin, error (errare) means a deviation from accuracy or correctness. Obi (2009), also defines errors as "breaches of a code of a language." Postulating that errors are deviant structures or unacceptable utterances which are a sign of imperfect knowledge of the linguistic code which are committed by those who are not grounded in the structure of the language. Hence errors are inevitable. In addition, Myles (2007) also adds his voice to the concept of errors by noting that, they do happen intermittently until the second language learner has internalized the entire language,

Dulay and Burt (1974) observe that errors are expected and that they would appear necessary and essential to language learning. As a matter of fact, they are indicative of the fact that the language learner actually develops and internalizes the rules of the language. Though the errors a learner commits provide no direct measure of his knowledge of the language, it is probably the most important source of information about the nature of his Knowledge.

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From the analysis of the learner‟s errors, teachers are able to assume the nature of his knowledge at that point in his learning and discover what he still has to learn. Teachers can form a picture of the features of the language which pose a challenge to the learner by classifying and describing the errors. Hence, a learner‟s errors are significant to the teacher, as they tell if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn, Corder (1981).

On the other hand, learners‟ errors provide to researchers evidence of how language is learnt and acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner employs in his discovery of the language. Consequently, errors are essential to the learner himself and it is a method the learner uses to test his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. In fact, teachers can gain much benefit from error analysis and description because errors provide them with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques. In addition, errors enable teachers to decide whether they can move on to the next item they have been teaching and they provide the information for designing an improved syllabus or a plan of improved teaching.

Therefore, errors made by students are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning. It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he modifies his teaching procedures or materials, the rapidity of the progress, and the amount of practice that he plans at any point in time. In view of this, Corder claims that teachers should be able not only to discover and describe errors linguistically but also understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence. He also asserts that for teachers, to be aware of the diagnosis and

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correction skills for errors is fundamental as it might help them understand why and how they can intervene to help their students.

2.2.1   Errors and mistakes

This section sums up the theoretical distinction between `Errors' and 'Mistakes' made by students in the classroom. For the sake of clarification, I will begin by indicating that 'errors' arise because the correct form or use of a target item is not part of a speaker or writer's competence, Errors are systemic. They are the failure to apply the language system correctly because the learners have not yet mastered a full command of the language system. Norrish (1983) makes a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He stated errors are" systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong." He added that when a learner of English as a second or a foreign language makes an error systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form. Errors are no longer a reflection on the teaching method of teachers, but are rather, indicators that learning is taking place.

On the other hand, Corder (1981) posits that mistakes are the failure to use a known system correctly which arise from reasons of fatigue, stress, lack of concentration etc. etc. even though the correct form or use is a part of the user's competence thus, they are accidental. Some would argue that second language learners could not possibly make 'mistakes' until their L2 competence is at such an advanced level that they can be labelled „near native speakers." Mistakes may not require special ways of handling to enable them overcome them. They can be corrected by the originator whereas, errors require special ways of treating and cannot be corrected by the originator.

2.2.2   Errors

Errors are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition. Scovel and Brown (2001), postulates that errors concern "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner." Non-native speakers and L2 learners also commit errors and are unable to correct the errors that they commit. Thus the learners" errors reflect a lack of underlying competence in the language that they are learning. Errors are systematic, likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would recognize them, as Grass and Selinker, (2001) put it.

In the cognitive approach, errors are seen as a clue to what is happening in the mind. Errors are seen as a natural phenomenon that must take place during the learning of a second language before correct grammar rules are completely internalized. 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. Errors are "systematic," likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the learner.

2.2.3   Mistakes

Mistakes are inaccuracies in linguistic production either in our native language (L1) or in the foreign language (L2) that are caused by memory lapses, physical states and conditions such as fatigue, inattention, or strong emotion. According to Brown, mistakes refer to "a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Mistakes do not require special treatment assuming they are recognized. When speakers make mistakes, they can identify and correct them immediately because they have almost a full knowledge of the linguistic structure of their mother tongue. Mistakes are mainly slips of the tongue or lapses, even native people make mistakes in speech and writing.

Mistakes are not systematic; they occur accidentally, the learner is immediately aware of them and can correct them.

2.3.0. 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 committed when learners are tired 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 (1972). 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) classifies such other errors as "unique", in that they are identified only with the second language learners.

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2.4.0. Sources of errors

Brown (2004) posits that the main sources of errors are interference from the mother tongue, from the target language and the second language the students may be learning. Myles (2007) also identifies both social and cognitive factors as sources of errors in second language acquisition. He explains further that learner may commit errors in their writing for these social reasons: negative attitudes towards the target language, stagnation in the second language no integrative mechanism and a wide gap between the social and psychological culture of the second language. Cognitively, Myles discusses that learners commit errors due to difficulty in acquiring academic and discourse style, lack of coherence in organizing information both at the sentence and text level, the process of writing in a second language and language transfer due to learners" lack of the appropriate information in the second language.

Perhaps, one of the first and most important studies in the field of Error Analysis was the one undertaken by Richards (1971). His study involved learners from different language background (Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese, and Indian and West African Languages) and showed the different types of errors relating to production and distribution of verb groups, prepositions, articles, and the use of questions. Based on this, he distinguished three sources of errors:

2.4.1. Interference errors

Errors resulting from the use of elements from one language while speaking/writing another.

2.4.2 Intralingual errors

Errors reflecting general characteristics of the rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

2.4.3. Developmental errors

Errors occurring when learners attempt to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experiences.

According to Richards (1971), intralingual errors are also subdivided into the following categories:

1. Overgeneralization errors: the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language.

2. Ignorance of rule restrictions: the learner applies rules to context where they are not applicable.

3. Incomplete application of rules: the learner fails to use a fully developed structure 4. False hypothesis: the learners do not fully understand a distinction in the target language (e.g. the use of „was‟ as a marker of past tense in „One day it was happened‟). However, as Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) pointed out, the distinction between intralingual and developmental errors is rather fuzzy in their term.

Dulay and Burt (1974) classified learners' errors into three broad categories:

1. Developmental errors: those are similar to L1 acquisition.

2. Interference errors: errors that reflect the structure of the L1.

3. Unique errors: errors that are neither developmental nor interference.

Stenson (1974 cited in Karra, 2006) proposed another category, that of induced errors, which resulted from incorrect instruction of the language.

Brown (1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002) further classified sources of errors into the following categories:

1. Interference transfer: that is the negative influence of the mother tongue of learner.

2. Intralingual transfer: that is the negative transfer of items within the target language. In other words, the incorrect generalization of the rules within the target language,

3. Context of learning: this overlaps both types of transfer. For example, the classroom with the teacher and its materials in the case of school learning or the social situation in the case of untutored second language learning. In a classroom context, the teacher or the textbook can lead the learner to make wrong generalization about the language.

4. 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.

There are five main communication strategies, namely:

1. Avoidance,

2. Prefabricated patterns,

3. Cognitive and personality style,

4. Appeal to authority,

5. Language switches (Brown, 1980 cited in Hasyim, 2002).

Later, James (1998), in his study, showed the different types of learners' errors relating to omission, over inclusion, miss election (use wrong words not wrong forms), disordering, blends (blending arises when two alternative grammatical forms are combined to produce an ungrammatical blend.)

2.5.0   Causes of errors

Richards (1974) classified errors, according to their causes, into two categories later on. The two categories are:

1. Interlingual errors: these errors are caused by mother tongue interference.

2. Intralingual and developmental errors: this kind of errors occurs during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge. In addition, errors are also caused by the difficulty or the problem of language itself.

James (1998) also stated that there are four causes of errors.

1. Interlingual errors (Mother-tongue influence): these kinds of errors are influenced by the native languages which interfere with target language learning,

2. Intralingual errors: these types of errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it under generalization as the learners do not use all the rules), Exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy. This is shown throughout the system in tte form of unnecessary morphology and double signalling), Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (this error is caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), Hypercorrection or monitor

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overuse (this results from the learners" over cautious and strict observance of the rules), Overgeneralization or system-simplification (this error is caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules),

3. Communication strategy-based errors: which are subdivided into the holistic strategies or approximation and analytic strategies or circumlocution, and

4. Induced Errors: these errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities.

In other words, the errors are caused mostly by the teaching and learning process as follows: Materials-induced errors, Teacher-talk induced errors, Exercise-based induced errors, Errors induced by pedagogical priorities, Look-up errors.

In fact, most researchers have been contented with a general distinction between transfer errors and intralingual errors.

2.6.0 Approaches to the study of errors

In recent years, there have been a growing research interest in the analysis of errors adults make while learning a second language. The study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners (Error Analysis or EA), either in their speech or writing or both have been brought under consideration by many educators, EFL teachers, linguists, and researchers throughout the world. In fact, learners' errors have been the subject of controversy for a long time.

Generally, as Keshavarz (1999, p. 11) stated, "There have been two major approaches to the study of learners' errors, namely Contrastive Analysis and Error Analysis." He further discussed that, "Error Analysis emerged on account of the

shortcomings of Contrastive Analysis which was the favoured way of describing learners' errors in the 1950s and 1960s

2.6.1. Contrastive analysis

Contrastive Analysis (CA) is a comparison of the native language (NL) with the target language (TL) made with the purpose of determining similarities and differences between the two. In second language teaching, teachers refer to the differences between the two languages, the TL and NL and contrast in one way or the other them. However, its predictive value has been questioned by several linguists and course planners; for a long time it was believed that errors in second language learning were caused exclusively by mother tongue interference. This was contested alongside the development of research into CA. It has been concluded that errors are not caused by language transfer only but that they may also stem from the internal structures of each language. This analysis is done by systematically studying a pair of languages with the view of identifying their structural differences and similarities.

2.6.2. Error analysis

The field of EA in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) was established in the 1970s by Corder and colleagues. A widely-available survey can be found in chapter eight of Brown (2000). A key finding of EA has been that many learner errors were produced by learners misunderstanding the rules of the new language. EA is a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make. It comprises a comparison between the errors made in TL and within that TL itself.

Corder (1967) based on his article titled "*The significance of learner errors*" took EA to a new dimension. Errors used to be "flaws" that needed to be done away with. Corder (1967) presented a completely different point of view. He contended that

those errors are "important in and of themselves". In his opinion, systematically analysing errors made by language learners made it possible to determine areas that needed emphasis in teaching.

EA emphasizes "the significance of errors in learners" interlanguages system" Brown (1994). The term interlanguages introduced by Selinker (1972), refers to the systematic knowledge of an L2 which is independent on both the learner"s L1 and the TL. Nemser (1974) also referred to EA as the „Approximate System," and Corder (1967) opined it was an „Idiosyncratic Dialect or Transitional Competence." Ilomaki (2005) concludes that learners do not necessarily make the same errors in written and oral production, due to different processing conditions. Learners with one native language do not necessarily make the same errors as learners with different native language.

The study also reveals that adult learner"s errors result from cross-linguistic influence, that is, when one language influences another through borrowing, interference and language transfer.

2.7.0. 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, but they speak it as a second language. Consequently, there is a likelihood of ESL teachers using some wrong aspects of the English language.

"The recognition of error ... depends crucially upon the analyst [researcher], making a correct interpretation of the learner"s intended meaning of the context" Corder, (1974). 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 to 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.

2.8.0. Related studies

Error analysis in the past have dealt with linguistic aspects of learners" errors such as identifying and describing the origin of the learners" errors which is an activity that has received worldwide attention for a couple of decades now. In Ghana, Dadzie and Bosiwah (2015), investigated the spelling errors committed by sixty pupils of the schools within the Cape Coast metropolis. This revealed that the pupils had a problem with spelling and could also not write error free essays. The research attributed the commission of these errors to L1 interference, false analogy carelessness and ignorance.

In South Africa, Nzama (2011), conducted a research to determine errors committed by Isizulu speakers learning English in some selected South African school. His sample size was ninety and he used the quantitative design. He discovered that students had difficulties in the use of tense, concord, articles, and prepositions plurals. Mother-tongue interference to mention a few.

Similarly, Liu (2013) also did some studies and found out that, the participants who were Chinese committed error in their English sentences attributable to carelessness and mother tongue influence. In addition, Eun-pyo (2002) conducted

an error analysis study on Korean medical students" writing. The subjects in the study were 35 second year premedical students who took English Writing in the third semester of their two-year English curriculum. The primary purpose of the study was to analyse what errors intermediate to advanced level learners, at a medical college make in their writing by reviewing their formal and informal letters.

Since these learners were considered relatively of advanced level according to their scores of the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), the results were also compared with other results of basic level learners from a previous study. The number of errors and length of students" writing were analysed to see if they correlated with their official test scores. The subjects" writing was evaluated and the sentences with errors were recorded to identify the types and frequency of errors. The study revealed that approximately one fourth of errors (26%) resulted from L1 transfer. Other major errors identified were wrong words (16%), prepositions (15%) and articles (14%).

Eun-pyo"s (2002:1-9) study is relevant to the present investigation, since both studies evaluate students' long written pieces and identify the types and frequency of errors made. The distinction lies in the fact that Eun-pyo"s (2002:1) study focuses on students who scored high marks in the TOEIC test that they wrote at tertiary level, while the present study focuses on all levels of Grade 12 students" performance during their final examination.

It can therefore be concluded that learners of English as a second language all over the world encounter challenges which can be traced to negative transfer of L1 and incomplete knowledge of the target language.

2.9.0. Significance of error analysis

It has been accepted that errors play an important role in the learning process. To language learners, language learning is not so much a question of acquiring a set of automatic habits, but rather a process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the language by some sort of processing by the learner of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher Corder, (1973). In order for this discovery to take place, learners have to go through several stages and processes. One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is error making.

Dulay and Burt (1974) stated that error making is expected and that it would appear necessary and essential to language learning. In fact, it is a clear sign to show language learners actually develop and internalize the rules of the language. While the errors a learner makes provide no direct measure of his knowledge of the language, it is probably the most important source of information about the nature of his knowledge.

From the analysis of the learner's errors, teachers are able to assume the nature of the learner's knowledge at that point in his learning and discover what he still has to learn. By describing and classifying his errors, teachers may build up a picture of the features of the language which cause him learning problems. A learner's errors, therefore, are significant to the teacher, in that they tell him if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn (Corder, 1981).

On the other hand, learner's errors provide researchers evidence of how language is learnt and acquired, what strategies or procedure the learner employs in his discovery of the language. Errors are essential to the learner himself and it is a

method the learner uses to test his hypotheses about the nature of the language he is learning. In fact, Teachers can gain much benefit from error analysis and description because errors provide them with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching materials and their teaching techniques.

In addition, errors enable teachers to decide whether they can move on to the next item they have been teaching and they provide the information for designing an improved syllabus or a plan of improved teaching. Therefore, errors made by students are major elements in the feedback system of the process of language teaching and learning. It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from errors that he modifies his teaching procedures or materials, the rapidity of the progress, and the amount of practice that he plans at any point of time.

Consequently, Corder asserts that teachers should be able to discover and describe errors linguistically as well as understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence. He also claims it is necessary for the teachers, to take cognizance of the diagnosis and correction skills for errors as it might help them understand why and how they can interfere to help their students. Learning a FL is a step-by-step process, during which mistakes are to be expected during this process of learning.

Corder (1967) states that errors are visible proof that learning is taking place. He has emphasized that errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. He also agrees that studying students" errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. In his view, errors provide feedback; they tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of his teaching. According to Ancker (2000), making mistakes or errors is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition.

A prominent researcher of EA is J. C. Richards. In his 1971 book on Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition, he argues that many of the learners' errors happen due to the strategies that they use in language acquisition, especially their L2. The problem includes the interference of the target language items which he deems reciprocal; i.e., negative effect of their prior knowledge of their L1 on their absorption of L2. In this situation, EA would allow teachers to figure out on what areas to be focused and what kind of attention is needed in an L2 classroom. Weireesh (1991) also considers learners" errors to be of particular importance because the making of errors is a device the learners use in order to learn. According to him, EA is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. He goes on to say that EA serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. Sercombe (2000) explains that EA serves three purposes.

Firstly, to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. Secondly, to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and thirdly, to find out how people learn a language. Candling (2001) considers EA as "the monitoring and analysis of learner"s language". He refers to an error as a deviation. Candling adds that the L2 learners" errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of SLA.

Olasehinde (2002) also argues that it is inevitable that learners make errors. He also cited that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning process. Mitchell and Myles (2004) claims that errors if studied could reveal a developing system of the students L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. Vahdatinejad (2008) maintains that error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. It provides the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence.

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

This chapter discusses the method employed in carrying out this study. It also discusses the sources of data, population and sampling, sampling size of the study, and the factors that influenced the choice of sample population by the researcher. The presentation of procedures used in the collection of data, the reliability and validity of the research instruments are also addressed. Some ethics pertaining to the research are also discussed.

3.1   Research Design

This study was poised at investigating errors in the written essays of 150 pupils of three junior high schools: Methodist JSS, Demonstration JSS and Roman Catholic JSS all of Effiduase in the Effija-Sekyere District of the Ashanti Region. Qualitative case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon in a real life context in which multiple sources of evidence is used. It is an approach to social science research that emphasises collecting descriptive data in the natural setting, using inductive thinking and emphasises the subject point of view. Research design as Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016), opine, provide the most accurate and valid feedback in response to research questions.

Burns and Groove (2003) also postulates that text is considered a rich source of data in qualitative studies and the text of participants may be a component of a larger study using a plethora of data sources. According to Wheeler & Holloway (1985), qualitative research involves deriving information from observation,

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interviews or verbal interactions and focuses on the meanings and interpretations of the participants. Kahn (2006) also asserts that qualitative research is one that seeks to provide answers to carefully outlined research questions void of hypothesis. The researcher analysed the data of written essays on a given question to arrive at the answers to the research questions in the study. The Research method follows the analytical descriptive method which involves the identification and interpretation of errors in the written essays of the pupils of form two and three students of three junior high schools in the Effija-Sekyere District of the Ashanti region. This approach was cost effective as essay scripts of participants were used.

3.2   Data Sources

The data assembled as the basis for this analysis are the written essays of 150 form two and three pupils of three selected schools in the Ashanti region. The essay scripts were the major instrument of this study and the analysis of the students" written errors is the main objective of this study. This study aims at answering research questions with data from the basic source, thus, students and teachers" direct responses concerning errors in students" writings. Data were collected from pupils" essay scripts and responses from both students and teachers.

3.3   Population and sampling

Burns and Grove (1993) notes that a population is defined as all the elements that meet the sample criteria for inclusion in a study. A population is a group of individuals that have something in common which is of interest to the researcher, (Best & Kahn 2006). A population according to Blanche (2006) is a pool of individuals from which a sampling element is drawn and to which findings are generalized. The population of this study comprises all pupils, both male and female

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of the form two and three classes of the three junior high schools in Effiduasi, namely: Methodist JSS, Roman Catholic JSS and Demonstration JSS. Maree (2007) postulates that sampling is the process used in selecting a section of the population for study. The target population are all speakers of English as a second language. The study involved a total of 150 junior high pupils of three schools.

3.4   Sample size of the study

The process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is referred to as sampling by (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001).The sample used for this study consisted of 25 pupils each from form two and three respectively in the three schools. The population is made up of 150 pupils, 63 males and 87 females. The participants were between the ages of 14 and 17.They also represent a cross section of the major ethnic groups in Ghana though the predominant ethnic group was Akan, specifically Twi speaking due to the geographical location.

In addition, these pupils have been studying English as a school subject for more than 8 years and the number of English periods taught per week is six and the duration for each period is 40 minutes. The mother tongue of the pupils is Twi, and English the target language, is being taught as a second language (SL). These pupils live in a predominately Twi speaking community. Just like all Ghanaian pupils, those who participated in this study experienced approximately the same number of 6 years of education through the primary school.

The participants have something in common in terms of their socioeconomic, linguistic and educational background in the sense that they all speak Twi, they come from low income families and are in the public schools. The purpose of the essay was

to identify the types of errors students commit in their writing and group them. These are participants who scarcely communicate in English after instructional hours.

The instrument used for this study was participants‟ written essays. All errors in the essays were identified and categorized. The results of the study show that five most common errors committed by the participants were Tense, Misspelling, Subject-verb agreement, Capital letters and Preposition errors.

3.5   Sampling technique

Parahoo (1997) referred to purposive sampling as a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide the necessary data. Purposive sampling was consequently used for this study as the form two and form three pupils were targeted because the form three pupils had had almost nine years of basic education and were preparing feverishly for their Basic Education Examination Certificate (BECE) and should possess a considerable knowledge of the English grammar whereas the form two‟s were also about entering their final year and should also possess an average knowledge of grammatical rules. Permission was sought from the heads of the three target schools involved, to spare me 40 minutes of the instructional hours.

3.6   Data collection instrument

Instrumentation in research refers to the tools employed by a researcher to facilitate data collection. Without instruments, there cannot be a research since every research is based on empirical evidence known as data (no data, no research). The major source of data used to provide answers to the research questions were the essays of 150 participants of three selected junior high schools. The topic for the essay was a narrative, "The day I will never forget," a narrative composition and

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the purpose was to identify the types of errors and categorise them. The researcher chose a narrative because her experience in the junior and senior high school exposed her to the discourse the students prefer writing on. The teachers of English were supportive in accomplishing this task. Both teachers and pupils were told about the purpose of my visit which was to administer an essay topic to be analysed for their grammatical errors. All of the 150 participants were required to write on the same topic. They were asked to write approximately 300 words within a period of forty minutes.

3.7 Data collection

Written essays of pupils were the main sources of data collected for this research. Pupils wrote the essay in a very relaxed atmosphere right in their classrooms under the supervision of their teachers while the researcher shuttled between the two forms. Pupils were required to write their full names, form and class. They were also promised not to use what they write against them in any way. They had a duration of 40 minutes to begin and complete the essay and were given no option but one topic to be written on by all.

3.8 Data analysis and classification of errors

Data analysis is a process of inspecting, cleansing, transforming and modelling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions and supporting decision-making. The following four steps were followed: Data collection, Identification of errors, Classification of errors into error types and a statement of error frequency.

In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998), categories and sub-categories such as the following were used for this research to

record all the occurrences of errors made by the students: *grammatical* (prepositions, tense and subject-verb agreement)**,** *semantic and substance* (capitalization, and spelling)**.** The written essays used in this study were read, marked and analysed. Every error was recorded only once from each participant even if it reoccurred. The errors were categorized into: Tense, spelling, Subject-verb agreement, Capitalization and Preposition. The major source of data used to find answers to the research questions was the written essays of 150 participants of three selected junior high schools. The topic for the essay was a narrative. The result of this study showed that junior high school pupils commit different kinds of errors in their writing, notable among them are grammatical errors. It is therefore obvious that native Twi speakers and native Ghanaians for that matter commit a lot of errors in their English writing assignments.

3.9   Reliability and Validity

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure and perform as it is supposed to perform. According to Maree (2007) reliability is the consistency with which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure.

For any research to be considered factual and usable for societal growth, it must be subjected to some litmus test. This, in his opinion, means the work must satisfactorily answer some pertinent questions such as the mood of the participants during data collection, the period used for data collection and the mode of data collection.

The researcher, in order to get the correct responses from the respondents, sought the help of the Teachers of English of the schools concerned and together,

briefed all the respondents (pupils) on what was required of them when the task were given them. The students were asked to do the intervention exercises the very day the exercises were given them. The researcher made the students know that she had not intended to find out their weaknesses for anything bad. She assured them that whatever responses or information they gave were to be held confidentially.

3.10   Conclusion

This chapter basically sought to describe how the study was conducted. It discussed the research design, population, sample, instrumentation, and sources of data, data collection tools as well as validity and reliability as well as the demographic characteristics of the research participants. Having spelt out how the study was conducted, we shall look at the analysis of the data collected in the subsequent data.
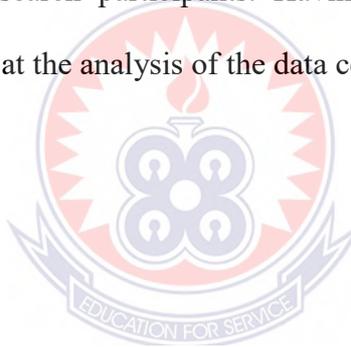
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of analysis of the data obtained from all the one hundred and fifty (150) Form two and three Students of Effiduase Catholic JHS, Effiduase Methodist JHS and Effiduase Experimental JHS who took part in the study. The results indicated that students commit different errors in their writings, and this is a sign that they have difficulties in using the English language. The chapter is divided into two parts; the first section presents analysis of the common errors students commit in their written essays. Here, it was observed that the errors were varied: tense errors, spelling errors, subject-verb agreement errors, capitalisation errors and preposition errors. It was also revealed that the highest number of the errors committed was spelling errors while the lowest was errors in the use of capitalisation. The second and final part discusses the causes of these errors. Here, the researcher observed different causes which include the students" attitude towards learning of the English language, the teachers" attitude towards teaching of English language, Social networking sites, differences in structure between L1 and English, lack of constant practice in speaking and writing, context of teaching and complexity of the English language.

4.1 Categorization of Students' Errors

After analysing the data, the researcher identified different types of errors in students" written essays. These are: tense, spelling, subject-verb agreement,

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capitalisation and prepositions. The error types identified are discussed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Tense errors

The word „tense" is derived ultimately from the Latin word „tempus" meaning „time." Tense is a verb-based way of indicating the time, and sometimes the continuation or finality of an action or state in relation to the time being referred to. In English, tense is used to refer to present and past. Amongst the word classes, it is only the verb that has tense. The past tense is formed by adding – „ed" to the base in regular verbs, as in „loved", „danced", and „jumped". There are also irregular verbs such as „wrote", „shook", and „went". An error occurs when a student uses the past tense of a verb where the present tense is required and vice-versa.

Tense commonly refers to the time of the situation which relates to the situation of utterance or at the moment of speaking (Komala 2014). For example, the commonest tenses found in languages are present, past and future. Since tense refers to the time of the situation which relates to the situation of the utterances, it can be described as „deictic" (Downing 2008). In other words, „deictic" refers to an interval or period of the time which contains the moment of utterance. It can be expressed by some words: yesterday, now and tomorrow.

This finding may explain that the use of English verbs was a major learning difficulty for all the students who took part. Tense errors was the highest with a total of 1036 errors representing 30% of the total errors committed in the entire study. The errors in verb tense show that most Ghanaian pupils still find difficulty in the usage of tense and the form of the verb. The tenses most commonly misused were the simple present tense, present continuous and past tense.

4.1.1.1   Simple Past Tense

The simple past tense is formed with the past form of the verb. In this instance pupils used the simple present tense instead of the past.

1.   Many things <u>happen</u> in my life.

2.   The next day, he <u>send</u> the money.

3.   I was very <u>surprise</u>

4.   I welcomed him and <u>give</u> him some place to sit.

5.   When I <u>finish</u> eating, I <u>go</u> to sleep

From the errors above, it can be deduced that pupils have difficulties with the formation of the past tense of both regular and irregular verbs. This is an error because it alters the meaning of the sentences. According to Richards and Renadya (2002), such errors are from faulty comprehension of distinctions. In the target language arising from the poor graduation of teaching items.

4.1.1.2   Past perfect t

Errors in the past perfect are committed due to the influence of the native language and poor learning. This construction is formed by adding the auxiliary verb had to the past participle of the verb.

1.   I <u>have</u> eaten mine in the morning.

2.   He <u>has</u> seen the man‟s face.

3.   They <u>have</u> opened the windows.

4.   He <u>has</u> put a stick through the window

5.   MY grandmother <u>has</u> locked the gate.

These constructions proved that pupils knowledge in the use of the past perfect was far-fetched hence their inability to write in the past perfect.

4.1.1.3   Past perfect progressive

The past perfect progressive is formed with the past auxiliary verb „*had,*" the past participle auxiliary verb „*þeen*"and the participle form-ing of the main verb. It is used when the first past action continues until the second past action.

1. The man had been <u>watches</u> me.

2. He had <u>being</u> throwing the rope every day.

3. The neighbour had <u>being</u> sleeping.

4. Ama had being <u>steals</u> from the teacher.

5. We had all been <u>wait</u> a long time.

Sub categorization of Errors of Tenses

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 1.

Table 1: Sub categorization of tense errors

Tense	Number of errors	Per cent (%)
Simple past	645	62.4
Past perfect	211	20.3
Past perfect progressive	180	17.3
Total	**1036**	**100**

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Figure 1: Frequency of tense errors
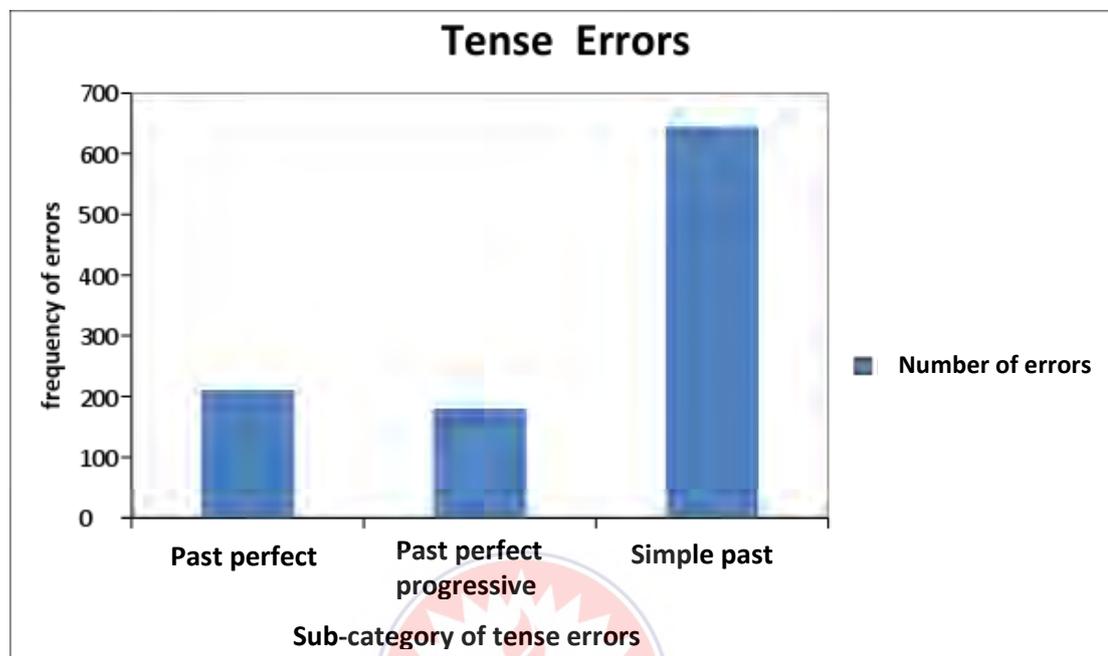
4.2   Spelling errors

Spelling is the art of forming words from letters. It has to do with the process of writing words by using the letters which are conventionally accepted for their formation. The common spelling errors identified in the data collected are spelling errors due to addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters. Misspelling often renders the intended meaning of text void. Fagerberg (2006), notes that misspelling may eventually alter the intended meaning a writer may want to convey.

Spelling errors in this study accounted for the second highest number of errors with a total of one thousand and fifteen (1,015) representing 29.3% out of three thousand, four hundred and sixty three errors. The different types of errors identified in the study were: vowel omission, vowel addition and, vowel substitution. Bancha (2013) opines that spelling errors are caused by mismatches between English and the

learner‟s first language, phonological differences between English and learners first language, poor morphological knowledge and limited orthographical knowledge of the English language. Table 2 presents a summary of the spelling errors found in the data.

4.2.1   Spelling errors due to omission of letters

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

Quikly - quickly, **chrismas**- Christmas, **wach**-watch, **had**-hard, **mised**-missed

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

4.2.2   Spelling errors due to addition of letters

Addition is adding to something. Hence addition of letters to words which are otherwise not accepted by the words making them misspelt and therefore incorrect.

Boiled - boiled**,   scent-**sent**,   match-**march,   **wild-**wide**.   Off -** of

This outcome presupposes that pupils read less thus making these words unfamiliar to them though they have previous knowledge on them because they hear them spoken. Hence pupils spelt words according to how they hear them spoken.

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4.2.3   Spelling due to substitution of letters

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

Price -prize,   **nathing**-nothing,   **paster**-pastor,   **lettle**-little,   **sea**-see

Errors of this nature is also attributable to the improper pronunciation of words thus words are spelt just as they are pronounced. Here also, the analysis suggests that the substitution is seen to arise out of the fact that learners write the words just as they pronounce them. A summary of the spelling errors found in the data are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of spelling error
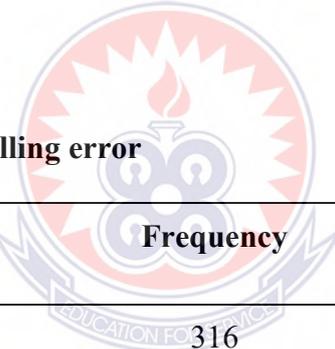
Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	316	32%
Addition	158	14%
Substitution	541	54%
Total	**1015**	**100%**

Table 2 presents the sub-categorization of the spelling errors discussed in this section. This information is illustrated in Figure 2. It is evident that spelling errors originating from substitution were the highest recorded with 541 out of 1015 cases accounting for 54% out of the total number while spelling errors due to omission recorded the second

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highest of 316 representing 32% of errors found in the data. Then errors of addition recorded 158 representing 14%. Jordan (2002) posits that the way people usually spell reflects what they hear. As a result, it contributes to misspelling.

Figure 2: Frequency of spelling errors
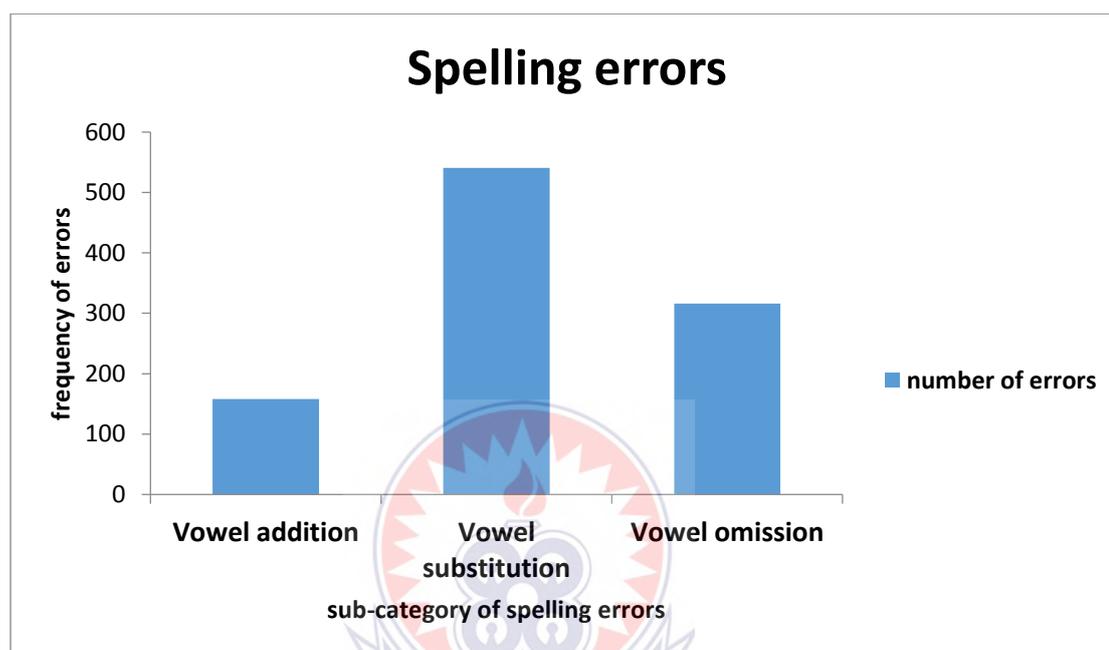
Examples of spelling errors found in the study

    Coupes-corpse, **see**-sea, **price**-prize, **quikly**-quickly, **no**-know, **preturn**-pretend, **nathing**-nothing, **carry-**crying, **still**-steal , **fordown**- fall down, **lettle**-little, **boilliedk-** boiled, **nursed**-nurse, **paster**-pastor, **brake**-break, **roll**-row, **quite**-quiet, **chrismas**-christmas, **wach**-watch, **had**-hard, **mised**-missed

4.3   Subject-verb agreement errors

    According to Penston (2005) a subject must agree in number or person with its verb thus, if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular; if a subject is plural, its verb must also be plural (Sawalmeh, 2013).

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The third highest errors committed by students in this study was agreement of subjects with their verbs. In this case the subject and the verb phrase in the English sentence should agree in number and person. It is evident that subject-verb agreement recorded 692 errors representing (20%) of the total errors recorded.

4.3.1   Number agreement

Subjects and verbs must agree with each other in number (singular or plural). Thus, if a subject is 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:

1. There <u>was </u>too many people in the house.

2. The men said the goat <u>belong</u> to them.

3. He <u>steal</u> money from Madam‟s bag always.

4. One of my mother‟s friends <u>are</u> living in Kumasi‟

5. Everybody <u>do</u> what he like.

These are examples of subject-verb agreement errors that appeared in the essays of the students in this study. The researcher thus concluded that this type of error arise because unable to relate to the grammatical articles in the proper perspective.

These errors may also 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.

4.3.2   Person/Pronouns agreement

There are three persons in grammar; first person, second person and third person. First, second and third 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 takes the singular verb, am and was and takes all other 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:

1.   He was one of the men who <u>rape </u>women.

2.   They were among those who <u>practices </u>juju on the girls.

3.   One of the girls in the back <u>were</u> sick

4.   She <u>have</u> been watching me.

5.   It was one of the dogs which <u>were</u> knocked down.

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. The student overgeneralized the rule that a singular subject takes a singular verb. A singular subject followed by a plural

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modifier, requires a singular verb. Also when the subject is a relative pronoun, the verb agrees with the antecedent of that pronoun. This is a deviation from set rules governing the targeted language which requires that a third person singular subject takes verbs +s. Errors and their frequencies are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: A sub categorization of subject-verb errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Person/pronoun agreement	405	59%
Number agreement	287	41%
Total	692	100%

The Table 3 shows the different concord errors committed in the written essays of the students in this study, and these have been presented in Figure 3.

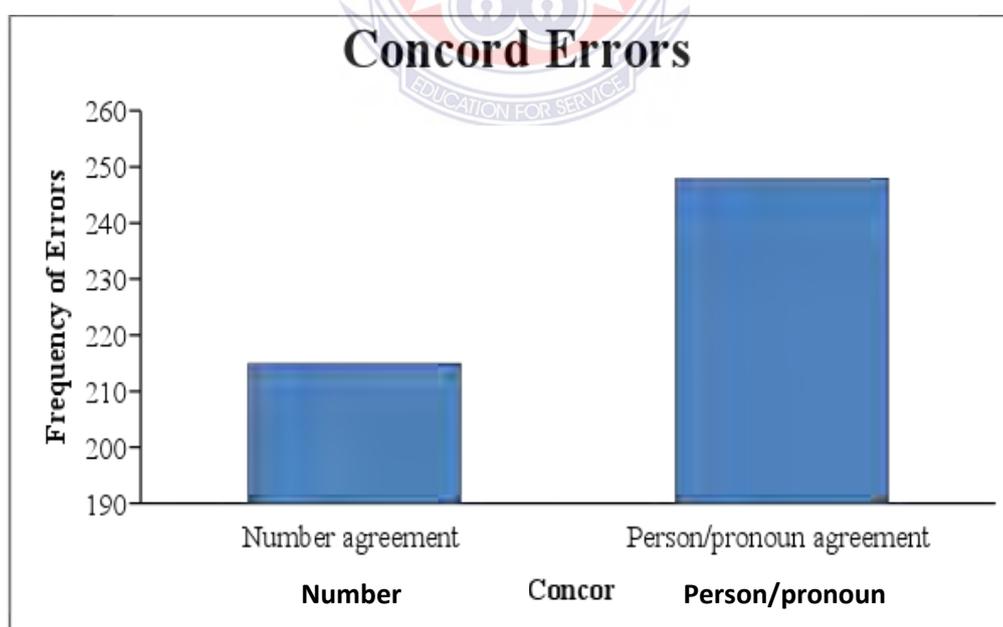**Figure 3 Frequency of sub categorization of concord errors**

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.

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4.1.4 Capitalisation

Capital letters are useful for sentence initials, the beginning of important words, in topics and headings Kroll (1991). Upper case letters refer to capital letters which are used to begin sentences, used to write the initial letters of proper nouns However, learners have problems in using them. This was revealed by the study Contrary to this assertion, Penston (2005) argues that the source of the problem is neither the mother tongue nor from second language interference but due to the carelessness of learners. He further states that the wrong use of capital letters is a pedagogical problem which can be handled by professional teachers in schools, especially at the primary school level.

Capitalisation errors found in the study were grouped under the following category: omission and addition. Sentences which should have of necessity begun with initial capitals were written without them. In addition, proper nouns were also written without initial capital. The examples below illustrate this assertion. The study recorded 328 capitalisation errors representing 9.4% of the total errors found in the data.

Examples of capitalisation errors of omission

1. On **friday**, I went to visit my grandmother.

2. **we** saw big animals like lion and tiger.

3. I **and** my mother **mama** Grace were left alone.

4. From **kumasi** zoo, we went to the airport.

5. **he** took a plane at 9 pm.

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Examples of capitalization errors of addition:

1. The hunter mistook the old woman for Game.

2. The Thief had cut all the net.

3. The whole Farm was burnt down.

4. When the whole School had gone for parade, he sneaked in.

5. My friend had Fallen off the bus.

Table 4: The table shows the various categories of capitalisation errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Omission	145	44
Addition	183	56
Total	**328**	**100**

The table represents the sub categorization of capitalisation errors, the total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 4

Figure 4: Frequency of capitalization error

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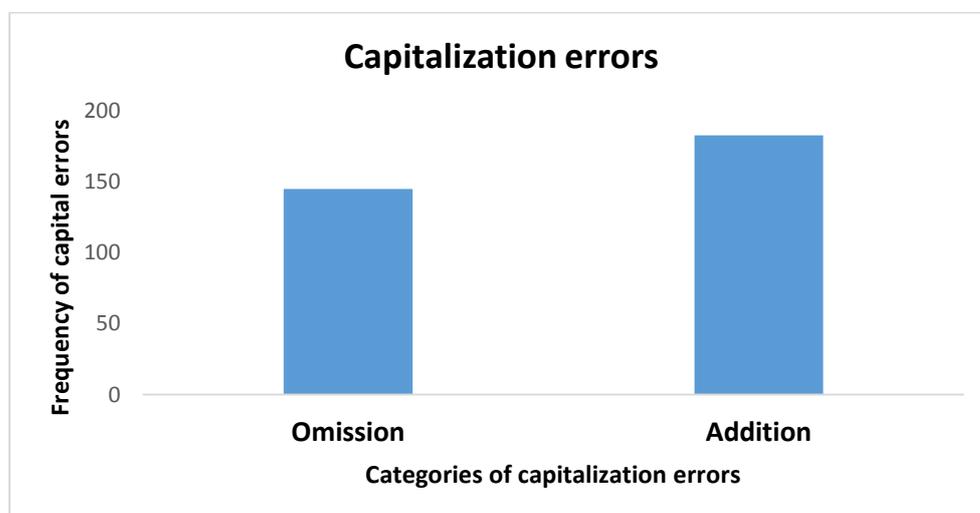
4.1.5 Preposition Errors

A preposition is a word that shows the relationship between a noun and a pronoun and other words in a sentence (Quagie, 2010). According to Kirkpatrick, (2007) a preposition links nouns, pronouns and phrases to other words in a sentence. She further states that prepositions introduce a word or a phrase and that a preposition usually indicates the temporal, spatial or logical relationship of its object to the rest of the sentence. A prepositions is a word that is used to show a connection between a noun and a pronoun. Preposition show place, time, manner, and direction or movement. A preposition is normally followed by a noun, noun phrase or noun clause in an expression. As a closed word class, new members are not readily accepted or introduced into the group, and their roles cannot be easily relinquished to other word classes. Learners of English language have problems when it comes to correctly using prepositions in their communication.

Bond and Hayashi (2006) state that students find it difficult to memorize all the usage and meaning of the prepositions in English language, but they believe understanding of the way they function is crucial. Therefore, students need either to be immersed into an English speaking atmosphere or go through the learning process both deductive and inductive. In effect, constant communication is necessary to overcome the difficulties associated with the use of prepositions. Blom (2006) found nine prepositions that are particularly frequent in errors: to, in, at, of, for, about, on, by and with. Prepositions are classified into simple and complex prepositions. In all 392 errors representing 11.4% were committed both in simple prepositions and complex preposition.

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4.1.5.1 Simple preposition

Simple prepositions are one-word prepositions (Estevez, Johansson, Oltersdorf, Prattala, Martinez-Gonzalez, 2010). Lakkis and Malak (2000) also intimate that simple prepositions were incorrectly used very frequently by Arab learners of English due to the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English Examples of simple prepositions are on, at to, between, behind, for and with. Two hundred and fifty-two (252) simple preposition errors were found to be wrongly used by the students who took part in the study. Examples are as follows:

1. I prefer drawing than working maths.

2. The boy was good than his sister

3. The debate **was among** two school.

4. Adama, don‟t you **remember of** seeing him

5. They agreed in the deal.

4.1.5.2 Complex preposition

Complex prepositions are made up of more than one word, such as „out of‟ and „in between.‟ Many of the students who took part in the study showed lack of understanding of the usage of complex preposition. One hundred and forty (140) complex prepositions errors were found to be wrongly used by the students who took part in the study. Examples:

1. He threw the purse out at the window.

2. They run out into the street.

3. I was sacked because for Joining the bad boys

4. My mummy screamed at the top with her voice.

5. The head teacher was out from town.

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Table 5: Sub categorization of preposition Errors

Types of preposition	Frequency of errors	Frequency of errors
Simple preposition	252	64%
Complex preposition	140	36%
Total	**392**	**100**

The table represents the sub categorization of prepositional errors. The total number of errors committed under the sub categories and their percentages. This is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Frequency of prepositional errors
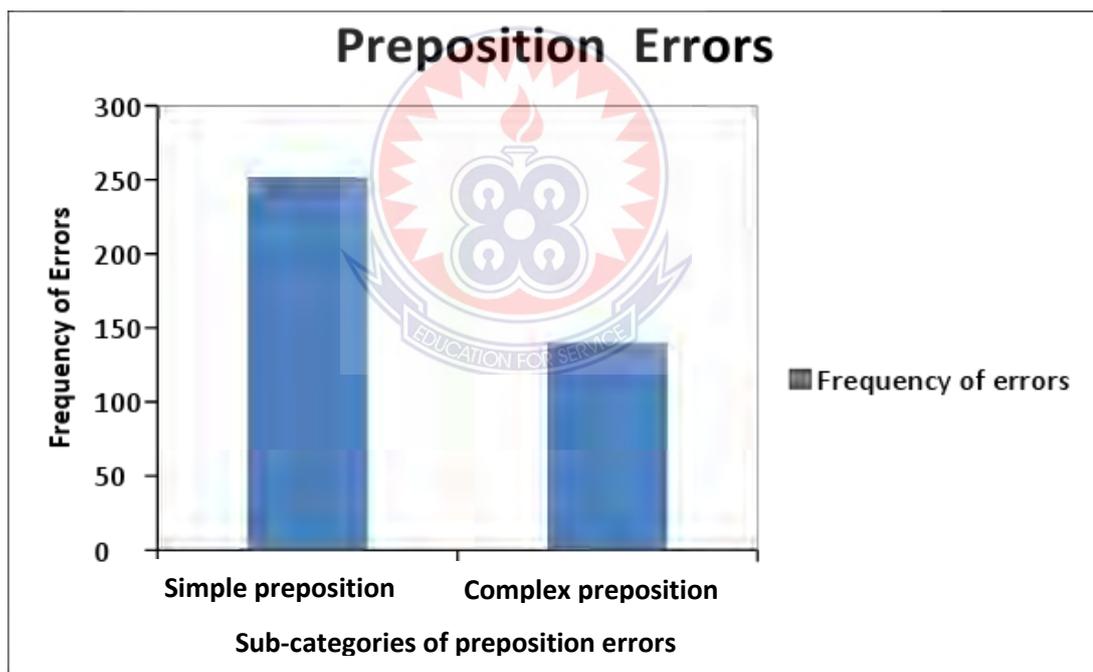
4.1.6 Summary of findings

The Table 6 below gives the statistical summary of the main writing errors noted from the students‟ essays. These are arranged starting with the highest to the lowest frequencies.

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Table 6: summary of Frequency of Errors

Type of Error	Frequency of errors	Percentage (%)
Tense errors	1036	30
Spelling errors	1015	29.3
Concord errors	692	20
Preposition errors	392	11.3
Capitalisation errors	328	9.4
Total	**3463**	**100**

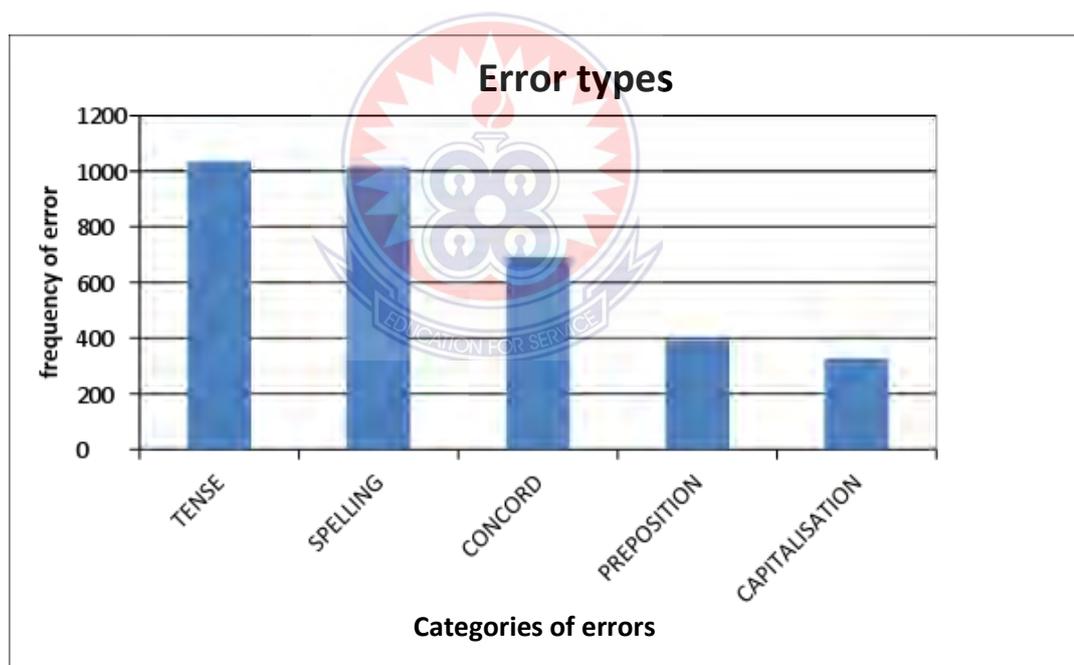**Figure 6: Categories of errors uncovered in the study**

Figure 6 is a summary of Table 6 and illustrates the total number of errors found in students" written essays.

In the 150 essays analysed, a total of 3463 errors were identified. The results of the present study indicates that tense errors was the highest number of errors recorded in the students" written essays, with a total of 1036 (representing 30%)

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errors. Second on the hierarchy was spelling with a total of 1015 errors representing 29.3%. The different types of spelling errors identified were: vowel omission, vowel addition and vowel substitution.

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. The third highest was subject-verb agreement errors with a total errors of 692 giving a percentage of 20%. Preposition errors recorded 392 errors representing 11.4% and capitalisation errors was the least on the hierarchy with 328 error representing 9.3%.

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 do not suit his students.

Norrish (1987) asserts that learning a language (a mother tongue or a second 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

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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 languages 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 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 in the context of teaching

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 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 teachers automatically transfers errors to students. Most

of the teachers I interacted with said they usually taught pupils using code switching thereby using Twi to explain almost everything in the English Language which almost like using the L1 to teach the L2. This technique does not lend support in any way to the teaching and learning of the English language. The use of pidgin by some teachers amongst themselves was also identified as a major factor. This was a major challenge for the school authorities because according to them the pupils were learning from their teachers not only the positive things but also the negative ones which had a telling effect on their academic output.

Another cause of the pupils errors was the weak foundation pupils were exposed to in the lower primary which had been built upon from class to class at the primary level and they the teachers were now bearing the brunt. One teacher categorically stated that he believed the work done on spellings at the basic level was woefully inadequate. His thought was that some of these errors were so basic that he expected students to be conversant with them at this stage. Causes of errors attributed to teachers are equally inimical and can cause tenses error, concord error, prepositional error, and sentence fragments. 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 themselves with regards to the way they speak, write or generally teach the language. Therefore, a greater percentage of the errors committed by students in this study could be teacher-induced.

4.2.2. Errors caused by Social networking sites

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

4.2.3 Errors Caused by differences in structure between L1 and English

Most of the spelling errors identified were due to differences in phonological structure between the learners" L1 and the English language. The difference in phonological structure errors occur as a result of different articulation that occurs as a result of students" use of a particular pronunciation. The irregularities and inconsistency of correspondence between letters and sounds are a challenge to many students. Also, the different syntactic structure that exists between the students L1 and the English language was identified to be a cause of most faulty and incoherent sentences the students committed during the study. Ngangbam (2016) believes syntax

complexity is one of the most difficult structural elements for English as second language learners. Finally, the difference in morphological structure that exists between the learners" L1 and English causes learners to commit inflectional errors such as: „..ed, ..s, and ..ing" in the study. This is because learners do not have a consolidated knowledge of the English grammatical rules.

4.2.4 Lack of practice

According to Davies (1998), „writing is essentially a creative process and good writers must learn to communicate their ideas clearly to an unseen audience". This requires a lot of practice. Grabe and Kaplan (1996,) believe that writing does not come naturally but rather gained through "continuous effort and much practice". In addition, learners must take the responsibility for their learning if meaningful learning is to take place. He also adds that the best ways to learn any skill would be to practise it. To become a good driver, the best way is to drive. Similarity, to become a proficient writer, the best way is to write a lot. Furthermore, Hedge (1988, p. 11) states that his personal experience tells him that for one to be a good writer, one needs to write a lot. Thus a conclusion can be drawn that lack of continuous writing gives rise to more errors in the writing process.

4.2.5 The Complexity of English language

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

will end up contradictory at the end of the it all." Consequently, some of the English grammatical rules were overgeneralised.

4.2.5 Summary of causes of error

This analysis uncovered a plethora of errors in the written essays of the students in English which could be traced to the following sources: carelessness, mother tongue (L1) interference, mispronunciation, misspelling and inadequate motivation to speak and write good English. The challenge of pupils" inability to express themselves well in English is not something new in Ghana and is generated from the common factors as limited or no exposure to the Standard English and laziness on the part of teachers and students to correct their mistakes. Social media influence was also identified as a contributory cause since students have cultivated the habit of watching television, listening to radio, Whatsapping and Facebooking.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the data which comprised the students written essays, informal interviewing, 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 Effiduase Catholic JHS, Effiduase Methodist JHS and Effiduase Experimental JHS. Five (5) major types of errors were identified in the students" written essays, which totalled 3463 errors. The error categories were tense errors (1036); spelling errors (1015); concord errors (692); capitalisation errors (328); and preposition errors (392). 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. Carelessness, laziness, 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 AND CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter discusses the summary of the findings, provide implications, make recommendations and draws conclusions. The summary gives a recap of all the five types of errors analyzed in the study and some causes of these errors. The research questions on the type of errors committed by pupils in the three JHSs in the Effija-Sekyere district were answered. A qualitative interpretative design was used for the analysis revealed that pupils committed varied errors. A summary of the findings of each type of error identified were presented in the previous section and discussion on the causes of errors are also presented. Pedagogical implications of findings and role of both teachers and pupils in the teaching and learning the of English language are also discussed. Finally, recommendations on minimizing errors in students" written essays and future research were also considered.

5.1   Summary of the Findings

The objectives of the research were to find out the types of common errors made by students in their writings, identify the sources and causes of those errors and come up with suggestions on how to reduce those errors. Data for the research were gathered from the Methodist JHS, Demonstration JHS and Roman Catholic JHS, all in Effiduase of the Effija-/Sekyere District of the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The data was gathered from students" written essays, observation and informal interviewing of some teachers and some students. In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998), categories and sub-categories such as the following were

used for this research to record all the errors made by the students: *grammatical* (prepositions, tenses and concord) and *semantic and substance* (capitalization, and spelling). Based on the discussion of the findings and the examples given, it was concluded that the pupils in this study committed common errors, which were, verb tense, spellings, concord, prepositions and capitalization. The highest number of errors recorded was Tense (30%) and the least was Capitalization errors (9.3%). It could be inferred that most of the pupils' errors especially in spelling were due to L1 transfer. The mother tongue had a tremendous impact on their writing of the English essays indicating that teachers needed to take cognizance of the transfer and interference of the students' mother tongue in their spoken or written discourse. There was also difficulty in mastering most of the rules of concord. Capitalization errors are a pedagogical problem which can be handled appropriately by teachers in the schools. The findings of this study suggest that teachers need to undergo in-service training to learn and unlearn some pedagogy which they are used to, but have outlived its usefulness and rather adopt new ones that will facilitate and enhance the easy learning of the L2 in this case English. In addition, errors which keep recurring should be used as samples on the board and students helped to correct them.

Finally, 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 with the sole aim of mastering form, rather than the construction of meaning.

5.2   The role of errors in the language teaching and learning

Learning a **SL** is a chronological and gradual process, during which errors are to be expected as learning progresses. Corder (1967) suggests that errors are concrete proofs that learning is taking place. He thus emphasizes that errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. He also agrees that studying students" errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. In his view, errors provide feedback; they tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of his teaching. According to Ancker (2000), making mistakes or errors is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition.

Richards (1971) argues that many of the learners' errors happen due to the strategies that they use in language acquisition, especially their L2. The problem includes the reciprocal interference of the target language items which are negative effect of their prior knowledge of their L1 on their absorption of L2. In this situation, EA would allow teachers to figure out on what areas to be focused and what kind of attention should be directed in an L2 classroom. Weireesh (1991) also considers learners" errors to be of particular importance because the making of errors is a device the learners use in order to learn. According to him, EA is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. He goes on to say that EA serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. Sercombe (2000) explains that EA serves three purposes. Firstly, to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. Secondly, to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and thirdly, to find out how people learn a language.

Candling (2001) considers EA as the monitoring and analysis of learners" language. He refers to an error as a deviation. Candling (2001) adds that the L2

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learners" errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of SLA. Olasehinde (2002) also argues that it is inevitable that learners make errors. He also cited that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve. Mitchell and Myles (2004) argues that errors if studied could reveal a developing system of the students L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters.

This view is supported by Stark (2001) in his study explaining that the teachers need to view students" errors positively as a process of learning. He subscribes to the view that errors are normal and inevitable features of learning and adds that errors are essential conditions of learning providing the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence. He also makes distinction between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). According to him, lapses are produced even by native speakers, and can be corrected by themselves. They call for on the spot correction rather than remedial, which is needed for errors.

Error analysis is part of the pedagogy of language learning that is learned to help the difficulties of the students. Description of errors can be used as feedback upon analyzing the learners" errors. The practical uses of EA as stated by Sujoko (1989) are as follows:

a. They inform the teacher about how effective his teaching methods have been.

b. EA draws attention to inadequately handled areas of the syllabus which may have been neglected and need further attention.

c. They provide information for designing a remedial syllabus for re-teaching

5.3   Implications for language 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. 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 measures the learners are taking in learning the different languages. 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 aware by establishing a comprehensive taxonomy of the learners" errors Husada (2007) and their sources, that is, interlingual and intralingual errors. It therefore behoves on the teachers to apply the appropriate pedagogy to guide the learners 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 provides 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.

The role of thee JHS teacher is to lay a formidable foundation for the acquisition of competence and performance in the usage of the English language. To achieve this feat, regular in-service training should be organized by the Ghana Education Service intermittently to get teachers to review their teaching methods and

update their teaching skills. The role of the teacher is to guide the learner to inculcate basic language skills and acquire communicative competence. They can also assess pupils" knowledge by giving frequent class exercises and assignment on lexis and structure and essays which will compel pupil to apply the rules of grammar.

Errors, if studied critically, 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 apply all these, there is the probability that the learning of English will be enhanced in this country.

The teacher should adopt the appropriate pedagogy that will assist students minimize errors and improve their writing in English, Teacher intervention in this instance is crucial because it can provide learners with specific information and strategies aimed at overcoming these writing problems:

To begin with, 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 from news and films to enable them identify differences in pronunciation in real language 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.

Also, in the process of reducing errors in students" writing, they should be made to learn more about sentence pattern, tense, spelling, concord, preposition and

capitalization. For teachers of English, they should improve upon their teaching methods. In-service training should be conducted on regular basis for teachers to improve upon their teaching practices which will in turn go a long way in minimizing errors made by pupils in their writing. Emphasis should be laid on the fact that it is only through practice that pupils make the errors and pupils should be involved in their own writing assessment to motivate them and increase their involvement in learning.

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. Undoubtedly, the native language plays a vital role in learning and usage of a second language. In such instances, students apply the interlingual transfer strategy to solve their learning and communication problems in English. When teaching writing, teachers must look for ways to help students learn how to express themselves clearly and how to organize their ideas logically. They must also 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 rely on. This is particularly obvious in classroom situations where exposure to the language is limited to a few hours per week of formal instruction. As a result, many language teachers and researchers refer to 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

The researcher upon analysis of these few categories of errors suggests that in future a closer look should be taken at other errors such as punctuations, ambiguity, misplaced and dangling modifiers which also contribute to the obstruction of intended meaning in the writing of pupils on a larger scale such as all JHS pupils in the three schools under studied and later include the district as a whole. The researcher believes that by so doing, much can be done to minimize and eventually eliminate errors in the writing of pupils in the JHS which will have a telling effect on their writing in the SHS.

5.5   Conclusion

This research work had the sole purpose of analysing errors in the written essays of JHS pupils. Subsequently, pupils of Effiduase Methodist JHS, Effiduase Roman Catholic JHS and Effiduase Demonstration JHSs" written essays were analysed for five grammatical errors. The observations, informal interviews and analysis of pupils" written essays, were assembled and conclusions drawn for discussion and recommendations. The study identified errors committed in the writing as: Tense errors, spelling, subject-verb agreement, preposition and capitalization errors and many more others. 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 writing of their students. This study contributes to the knowledge bank on students" errors in their written compositions.

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