

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**ANALYSING COMMON ERRORS IN THE USE OF ENGLISH  
ADJECTIVE CLAUSES: A CASE STUDY OF ST. PETER'S  
CATHOLIC BASIC SCHOOL NGLESHIE AMANFRO**



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**2017**


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CLAUSES: A CASE STUDY OF ST. PETER'S CATHOLIC BASIC SCHOOL

NGLESHIE AMANFRO

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

2017

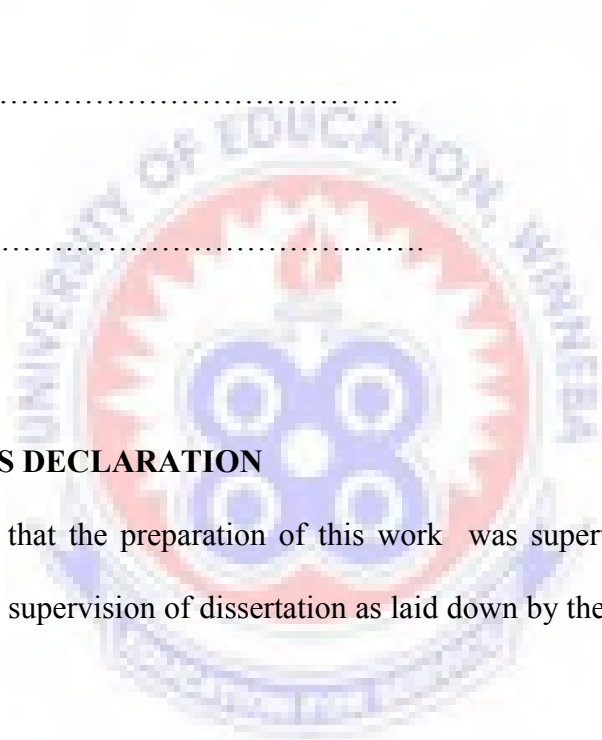
**DECLARATION**

**CANDIDATE’S DECLARATION**

I, MARTINA ADZO KPORNU, hereby declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original work and it has not been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Signature.....

Date.....



**SUPERVISOR’S DECLARATION**

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

Name: DR. CHARLLOTE FOFO LOMOTÉY

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many are the people who deserve to be acknowledged for helping me finish this work, most especially, my supervisor, Dr. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey. She took time to read through and helped me make all the necessary corrections in spite of her busy schedule. The following people also deserve to be acknowledged: My brother, Mr. Innocent Kwame Kporu, My husband, Mr. Wisdom Agorsor, My former Headmistress Madam Barbara Mamle Dzikunu and all the authors whose printed work I have quoted as backbones underpinning this dissertation.



## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to the glory of the Almighty Father for giving me the strength to finish, to my brother, Innocent Kpornu, my husband, Mr. Wisdom Agorsor and MTN Foundation for their financial support and to my children, Kekeli, Kafui and Klenam Agorsor for their prayers and support.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
DECLARATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
DEDICATION	iv
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ABSTRACT	xi
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Objective of the Study	6
1.4 Research Questions	7
1.5 Significant of the Study	7
1.6 Limitation of the Study	9
1.7 Delimitation of the Study	9
1.8 Organization of the Study	9
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE</b>	<b>11</b>
2.0 Introduction	11
2.1 The concept of errors	12
2.1.1 Errors and mistakes	13
2.1.2 Categories of Errors	15

2.1.2.1	Omission	15
2.1.2.2	Addition	16
2.1.2.3	Double Marking	16
2.1.3	Regularization	17
2.1.3.1	Simple Addition	17
2.1.3.2	Misformation	18
2.1.3.2.1	Regularization Errors	18
2.1.3.2.2	Archi-form	19
2.1.3.2.3	Alternating forms	19
2.1.3.3	Misordering	20
2.1.4	Kinds of errors	20
2.1.4.1	Grammatical errors	20
2.1.4.2	Morphological errors	21
2.1.4.3	Phonologically-induced errors	22
2.1.4.4	Lexical errors	22
2.1.4.5	Intralingual errors	23
2.1.5	Sources and causes of Errors	24
2.1.5.1	Language transfer	24
2.1.5.2	Overgeneralization	26
2.1.5.3	Language Fossilization	26
2.1.5.4	Transfer of training	27
2.1.5.5	Complexity of English Grammar rules	27
2.1.5.6	Students' attitude towards learning	29

2.2	Adjective clauses	30
2.3	Types of adjective clauses	32
2.3.1.	Restrictive clauses	32
2.3.2.	Nonrestrictive clauses	33
2.4.	Differences between restrictive clauses and nonrestrictive clauses	34
2.5.	Forms of adjective clauses	35
2.6.	Functions of adjective clauses in sentences	36
2.7.	Studies on Adjective Clause	37
2.8.	Conclusion	38
<b>CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY</b>		<b>40</b>
3.0.	Introduction	40
3.0.	Research design	40
3.2.	The population of the study	41
3.3.1.	Information about the teachers	41
3.4.	Sample and sampling technique	41
3.5.	Research instruments	42
3.5.1.	Interview	42
3.5.2.	Test	43
3.5.3.	Written essays	44
3.6.	Data collection procedure	44
3.7.	Data analysis and classification of errors	44
3.8.	Conclusion	45



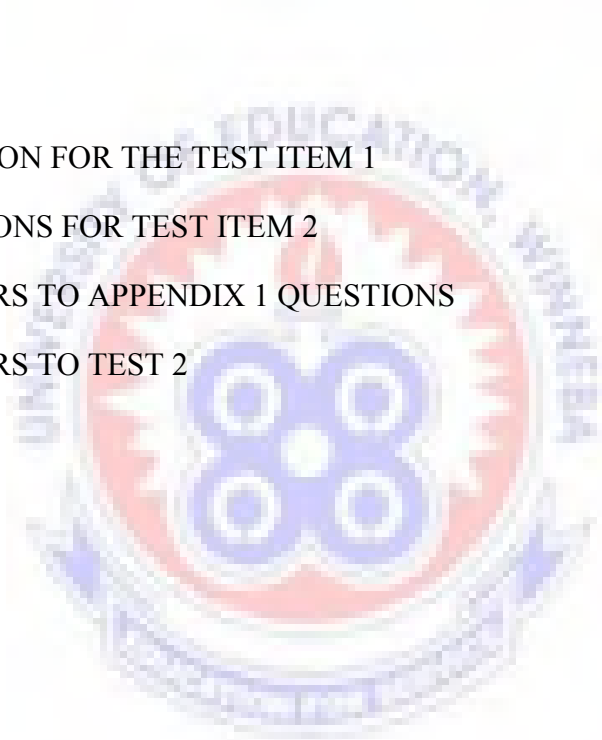
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION</b>	<b>46</b>
4.0. Introduction	46
4.1 Categorization of Students' Error	47
4.1.1. Misuse of relative pronouns	48
4.1.2 Omission of relative pronouns	51
4.1.3 Blend or cross-association errors	54
4.1.4 Errors of simple addition	57
4.1.5 Errors in the use of adjective clauses	59
4.1.6 Summary	61
4.2 Interview	62
4.3 Causes of Errors	63
4.3.1 Errors caused by language transfer	63
4.3.2 Errors caused by complexity of rules	64
4.3.3 Errors caused by transfer of training	65
4.3.4 Errors caused by students	65
4.3.5 Summary of causes of errors	66
4.5 Conclusion	66
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>68</b>
5.0 Introduction	68
5.1 Summary of findings	68
5.1.1 Categorization of errors	68

5.1.2	Causes of errors	70
5.2	Pedagogical implications	72
5.3	Suggestions for future studies	73
5.4	Conclusion	74

<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>75</b>
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<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>78</b>
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A	QUESTION FOR THE TEST ITEM 1	78
B	QUESTIONS FOR TEST ITEM 2	80
C	ANSWERS TO APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONS	85
D	ANSWERS TO TEST 2	86



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>	<b>Page</b>
3.1. Layout of Multiple choice Tests taken	43
4.1.1 Misuse of relative pronouns	50
4.1.2. Omission of relative pronouns	53
4.1.3 Blends errors or cross-association	56
4. 1.4. Errors of simple addition	58
4.1.5. Summary of adjective clause errors	59



## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure</b>	<b>Page</b>
4.1.1. Misuse of relative pronouns	51
4.1.2. Omission of relative pronoun	53
4.1.3. Blends or cross-association errors	56
4.1.4. Errors of simple addition	59
4.1.5. Summary of adjective clause errors	61



## ABSTRACT

This study examined errors made in the adjective clauses by the students of St Peter's Catholic Basic School Ngleshie Amanfro. To achieve this, essays from 132 final year pupils were analyzed for different types of adjective clause errors. Interviews were also conducted to solicit information on trainees and teachers' view regarding adjective clause errors among students. The results are classified into two main categories: error types and causes of errors. The common errors committed by the participants were misuse or wrong use of relative pronouns, omission of relative pronouns, blend or use of both relative pronouns and personal pronouns and simple addition. Findings showed that participants committed more misuse errors than any types of adjective clause error identified in this study. The findings showed some major causes of these errors as: complexity of English language rules, students' poor reading habits, language transfer, inappropriate teaching methods and ignorance of the grammar rules or carelessness.



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter gives a brief overview of the English language in Ghana, the standard of the language and its impact on education in the country today. It also shows how the understanding of adjective clauses as inevitable tools of grammar can reduce the problems encountered in the country with regard to the fall in the standards of the English language. The chapter further discusses the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, limitations as well as the delimitations of the study. The chapter ends with the organization of the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

In this modern era, technology and science make life easy. How to use and develop technology and science definitely needs good human resource quality that is supported by mastering an international language to be precise; English, being our target language. The role of English gives ease to understanding information. Without mastering English, people will have problems understanding the English language, both in written and spoken. By mastering written English, learners will be able to read. Also, with adequate speaking skills, they can express their ideas, thoughts, or feelings. Thus, the use of English in Ghana originated from the time of the coming of the British, whose arrival marked a very significant shift in the growth of English.

Since Ghana is a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, English language has assumed a substantially higher status in the country. It has been emphasized that because English is the official language of Ghana and also forms the foundation for the study of

other subjects, it needs to be given considerable attention in the educational system. It has served as a medium of instruction for all subjects at all levels of education in Ghana. As a result, English is studied by all students of both junior and senior high as a core subject and has been expanded in content to enhance students' communication skills (De Heer-Amisshah, 1994). A multi-lingual country like Ghana with over 40 languages spoken nationwide sees English language as a unifying factor. This is because it would be difficult to choose one specific language for interaction, since it may present a recipe for ethnic dominance on the one hand, and inferiority complex on the other, among those whose language(s) may not be chosen.

Subsequently, and depending on the prevailing public policy, the exercise of free speech in certain public fora might be restricted to those who possess the ability to speak, read and write standard English. Moreover, the major and dominant language we use for communication is English. English language is our lingua franca, official language and language of education. This is the language used for politics and trade. English is used worldwide. Because of this, every learner of English as a second language needs to be conversant with the rules and structure of the language. With regard to its worldwide use, Thirumalai (2002, p. 7) also observes that, "English is learned everywhere, because people have found out that knowledge of English is a passport for a better job, better pay, advanced knowledge and for communication with the entire world. English is also learned for the variety and rich experiences it provides."

Human beings cannot survive without a language. However, language is broad and has numerous components. It is for this reason that the present research tries to focus on only one part which is adjective clauses or relative clauses. Altenberg and Vago

(2010,p.121) defines adjective clause as “a kind of dependent clause; it provides additional information about a noun phrase in the main clause”. In addition, Huddleston and Pullum (2010) also observe that an adjective clause is a special kind of subordinate clause whose primary function is to modify a noun or nominal phrase. In English there are many types of relative pronouns and they also have different function and usage. First, relative pronouns used for person are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *which* or *that*; *who* has function as subject, *whom* has function as object, *whose* has function as possessive adjective, and *that* has function as subject or object. The second is the use of *which* or *that* ; *which* or *that* has function as subject or object. In L1, the relative pronouns are not specified as in the L2. According to Musonah (2014,p. 16 ) relative pronoun is one of the materials that should be learnt by the students. In her study, she gave pre-test to the students that consist of 20 questions, it is divided into two parts. The first one consist of 10 questions of multiple choice, to choose the right one, whether A, B, C, or D. Second, one consist of 10 questions asking the students to complete the sentences by filling in the blank spaces with the right relative pronouns (*who*, *whom*, *which*, *whose*). For example; students chose **whom** for; 1. Aminah **whom** won the English debate came to my home. Instead of **who** for; Aminah **who** won the English debate came to my home.

2. The letter **whose** came from Andi is on the drawer. Instead of The letter **which** came from Andi is on the drawer. According to the writer, the test is conducted to know whether the students do errors in using relative pronouns or not.

Commonly, students faced difficulties in learning, it is because of their learning attitude. When the teacher explained the materials, some students give their attention



fully, and some did not. Furthermore, some students can receive the materials easily, and others cannot.

Again, one of the yearly Chief Examiners' reports from the West African Examinations Council states that "... as usual, the poor performance of the majority of candidates was attributed to their inability to express themselves well in English Language" (WAEC 1999, p. vi). And, since English is the main language for writing other subjects, it goes without saying that failure to use it to express one's self inevitably affects the other subjects. This is amply confirmed by Dolphyne (2001, p. 9), who comments on a number of reports by WAEC that "... reports on all the other subjects did regularly express concern about the inadequacy of the English of many candidates which result in their poor performance in those subjects".

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

One of the most important educational tools that teachers of English can employ to minimize the problem shown above is the proper handling of adjective clauses (relative clauses) in sentences. It is obvious that adjective clauses occur in almost every complete sentence, even if implicit. Learning English in the classroom includes language skills which are divided into two kinds; receptive and productive skills. The receptive skills are listening and reading while the productive skills are speaking and writing. It is argued that if the language skills are learnt well, students will acquire good English. In addition to these skills is grammar. Grammar has an essential role in mastering English. It is the study about how to combine words to convey ideas and information. To add to this, grammar helps writers to use the language appropriately.

Clauses occur as part of the concepts taught from the English textbooks. A clause is a group of words that includes a subject and a verb. It can be distinguished from a phrase, which does not contain a subject and a verb ( e.g., in the afternoon, drinking from the bowl ). An independent clause can express a complete thought. A dependent clause is usually a supporting part of a sentence, and it cannot stand by itself as a meaningful proposition (idea). Therefore, based on its functions, there are three types of dependent clauses. One of these three clauses that should be taught by the English teacher at the junior high school is *adjective clauses*. Azar (1999) defines the adjective clause as “a dependent clause that modifies a noun. Likewise, it has two kinds; namely, restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses” (p. 250). Typically, when students learn adjective clauses, they appear to face problems caused by the lack of knowledge in this area. In order to master this knowledge, learners need to acquire knowledge about relative pronouns.

The most commonly used relative pronouns are *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*, and *which*. Examples of wrong use of relative pronouns shown in Swan (1982) are as follows:

1. There’s the man *who* he teaches me the guitar.
2. I don’t like people *which* lost their temper easily
3. I think you should stay faithful to the person *whom* you are married to.

A cursory look at examples 1-3 shows that the sentences are wrong. Sentence 1 is wrong because „he“ has been added as though it is an adjective clause functioning as the object, although it is functioning as the subject. Based on the function, it does not need the use of „he“ after the relative pronoun *who*. Sentence 2 is also wrong because the student does not know the function of relative pronoun *which* when the antecedent of person is used in this sentences. Thus, it will be expected that *who* is used instead of

*which*. On sentence 3, it is wrong because the student uses informal language. Typically, the function of a relative pronoun as the object of the preposition does not need the preposition at the end of the sentence, but before the relative pronoun.

The sentences will be rewritten as:

1. There's the man *who* teaches me the guitar.
2. I don't like people *who* lose their temper easily.
3. I think you should stay faithful to the person *to whom* you are married.

An Adjective clause as a topic is embedded in Grammar and English language as a whole. If the student is not able to use the correct forms of adjective clauses and other parts of speech, it affects the language use. In view of this, we cannot talk about adjective clauses without talking about the structure of the sentence, which is Grammar. Adjective clauses are part of grammar and they affect the entire language use. In order to use adjective clauses correctly, students must understand the morphological processes (that is, word formation), syntax (sentence construction or the structure of sentences) and semantics, which deals with the meaning of the sentence. Clearly, it is an undeniable fact that the use of English adjective clause is quite complex and can confuse students. It is in this view that the researcher decides to delve into the problem and come out with the major adjective clause errors and what can be done to minimize the problem.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify errors in the use of adjective clauses by students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School, Ngleshie Amanfro;

2. To determine the causes of such errors;
3. To find out and discuss how the errors could be minimized.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions that the study seeks to answer are as follows:

1. What are the most common errors in the use of adjective clauses committed by students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School, Ngleshie Amanfro
2. What are the causes of these errors?
3. How could these errors be minimized or reduced?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study aims to improve teaching and learning of English language, more specifically, teaching and learning of adjective clauses. This is done by identifying the causes of students' inability to perform well in the use of English adjectives clauses. To do this, it is important to identify the students' level of achievement in their English writing skills and the problems they encounter in the process of learning English as second Language. Lightbown and Spada (2007) are of the view that when errors are persistent, especially when they are shared by almost all students in a class, it is useful for teachers to bring the problem to the attention of students.

According to Xie and Jiang (2007), errors can tell the teacher how far the learner has progressed and consequently and what remains for them to learn. They add that students' errors are valuable feedbacks to teachers and syllabus designers. Error analysis helps teachers to identify in a systematic manner the specific and common language problems students have, so that they can focus more attention on these types of errors. The significance of this study is to inform educators and language material developers

about the kind of errors that students make in respect of adjectives. It further shows the frequency of errors. If teachers become conscious of likely problem areas that specific students face, they would be in a better position to put appropriate interventions in place.

This study is also valuable to learners. Researchers such as Nunan (2001) and Erdogan (2005) reveal that learners' errors are systematic, rather than random, and many learners tend to commit the same kinds of errors during a certain stage of language learning. It is therefore the obligation of teachers to summarize these frequently appearing errors, and remind students of these errors as often as possible so that they can make greater effort to avoid them. The results of this study therefore serve as a guide to teachers on how to assist learners to become better writers. This study paves the way to other grammatical errors to be identified by teachers. The misuse of relative pronouns which outnumbered other errors shows clearly that students have problems with grammar.

This study further contributes to the debate on error analysis studies and identifies key issues that need further investigation. The study can be extended to investigate the origin of certain error patterns found in the writings of specific learners of the same mother tongue. In this regard, the results of this study are not only beneficial to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers, but are also significant to researchers. The findings can be used as reference for those who would choose to conduct further research in error analysis. This study further enhances the understanding of second language learning, especially in the field of error analysis.

## **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The research was conducted only in the St. Peter's Catholic Basic School, Ngleshie Amanfro. It could have been expanded to cover all junior high schools in the circuit. However, this was not possible because of certain constraints. This included financial and time constraint: the researcher did not have enough time to travel throughout the area for data collection. This is because she is still teaching and could not leave the classroom. Also, the time used for the study was not enough to cover all schools in the circuit. The study is therefore limited to this school because it was readily accessible to her.

## **1.7 Delimitation of the Study**

The study, which covered selection tests, written test and interviews was delimited to only JHS 2 and 3 students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. The research could have covered the whole school or some other sister schools in the circuit or even in the municipality. This is because the problem of English Language for that matter, adjective clause use, may be widespread. The researcher is aware that other students are also facing similar problems in the use of adjective clauses. The study was delimited to only JHS 2 and 3 students because they are supposed to be taught adjective clauses as the syllabus stipulates. Thus, it is important to teach them to understand how they use them in writing. The researcher could not combine work with the study that is why she could not cover a wider area.

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 discusses the review of literature. The first part presents a discussion on the concept of errors, differences

between errors and mistakes, and approaches to the analysis of errors. Under this, errors are analyzed based on contrastive, error analysis, and interlanguage. Sources and causes of error are also discussed. The second section discusses literature on the types of adjective clauses as well as the functions of adjective clauses. It further discusses some studies on the use of adjective clauses among pupils in other English-speaking contexts. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the study. In this chapter, the design for the collection of the data, and how the data are analyzed are presented. Chapter 4 discusses the results of the study. The findings revealed that majority of students have difficulty using relative pronouns in adjective clauses. The other most frequently occurring categories of errors were in the following order: errors of omission of relative pronouns in adjective clauses, blend of relative pronouns with personal pronouns, and errors of simple addition. Chapter 5 presents the summary of the results, implications, recommendations and suggestions for further studies. It is argued that errors are feedback to teachers and so teachers should guide learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter review forms the theoretical background of this study. Errors are positive signals to both teachers and learners of second or foreign language. They point to the learners what they are not doing right, and they also help teachers to plan their lessons very well. On the other hand, errors are considered to be a sign of inadequacy of teaching techniques. They are seen as a natural result of learning. The fact is that since by nature we cannot avoid making errors, we should accept the reality and try to deal with them. As human beings, we are bound to commit errors and mistakes. According to Brown (2006), errors are part of the student's interlingual, that is, the version of the language which a learner has at any one stage of development, and which is continually reshaped as he or she aims toward full mastery.

Ningsih (2004) believes that analyzing learners' errors serves two purposes: One, it provides data from which inferences about the nature of the language learning process can be made. Two, it helps teachers and curriculum designers to decide on teaching materials that best fit the learning needs of language learners. Therefore, Dulay (1982) argues that an error is the flawed side of learner speech or writing. Those are parts of conversation composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance. In effect, an error is a part of the second or foreign language learning process that is made by the students caused by their lack of comprehension in the target language rules. When the students learn the target language, they make a lot of errors, and this is a natural part of language acquisition process.



According to David (1992), error analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms produced by someone in learning a language, especially, a second or foreign language. Thus, since students in Ghana are second language learners, it takes only error analysis to determine their errors. Shama (1982) also notes that error analysis is defined as a process based on analysis of learners' error with one clear objective; evolving a suitable effective teaching learning strategy and remedial measure necessary in certain clearly marked out area of the foreign language. From these explanations, it can be concluded that the error analysis is the study of the way teachers identify and correct the students' errors in order to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

## **2.1 The concept of errors**

As stated by Amara (2015), before the 1960's, during the dominance of the behaviouristic view of language acquisition, there existed a dominated view of language to consider learners' errors as something undesirable. Making errors was seen as a sign of mislearning and regarded as unwanted to proper processes of language learning. According to the behaviouristic point of view, the reason behind making errors lies in inadequate teaching methods which if had been „perfect“ would never be committed. Amara (2015) further goes on to observe that this way of thinking was considered to be naïve. This is because there is nothing called „perfect“ methodology, especially with the appearance of the Universal Grammar concept proposed by Chomsky in 1965. Chomsky claimed that each human being has an innate capacity that can guide him through a vast number of sentence generation possibilities. Since then, a shift by language teachers

towards the cognitive approach has started. Chomsky's theory contributes in raising researchers' interests about learners' errors as a source of hypotheses formation.

According to Richards and Schmidt (2002 p. 184), an error is the use of a word, speech act or grammatical items in such a way it seems imperfect and significant of an incomplete learning. This way, the analysis could be helpful to researchers of second language learning processes (Amara, 2015). There are a lot of definitions developed for the concept of error. Brown (2000), opines that an error is a linguistic form or combination of forms which, in the same context and under similar conditions of production, would in all likelihood, not be produced by the speaker's native speaker counterparts.

In apply linguistics, errors are deviations from accepted rules of a language which are made by a learner of a second or foreign language. Such errors result from the learner's lack of knowledge of correct rules of the target language. They are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition because they are goofs in the learner's underlying competence. When native speakers make mistakes, they can identify and correct them immediately because they have usually full knowledge of the linguistic structure of their mother tongue (Scovel, 2001). Non-native learners on the other hand, do not make only mistakes but they also commit errors. And, as they have incomplete knowledge of the target language, they are usually not able to correct their errors. Thus, learners' errors reflect a lack of competence in the language that they are learning.

### **2.1.1 Errors and mistakes**

In order to analyze learners' language in a proper perspective, it is important to distinct between mistake and errors. Errors and mistakes are the two synonyms, that a

little bit have the same meaning. There are various definitions of errors and mistakes that have been presented by linguists. However, basically those definitions have same meaning while the difference lies only on the very way they formulate it.

Brown (1994; p. 224-257) states that a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess a “slip”, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. Whereas errors of second language learner, idiosyncrasies in the language of the learner that are direct manifestation of a system within which a learner is operating at the time. An error, a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflects the competence of the learner. James (1998; p77), stated that an error arises only when there was no intention to commit one. Furthermore, an erroneous utterance is that which was made unintentionally, whereas when there is an intention to produce a deviant utterance we call it deviance.

Sivakumar (1994) also intimates that while speaking or writing in an L2, the use of words or grammatical features showing faulty or incomplete form may occur. These incomplete forms are referred to as errors. He goes on to say that incomplete knowledge is the main reason for the occurrence of errors.

Larsen (1992) claims that a mistake is a random performance slip caused by fatigue or excitement and therefore can be readily self-corrected. On the other hand, Larsen (1992) states that an error is a noticeable deviation reflecting the competence of the learner. It is a systematic deviation made by the learner who has not yet mastered the rules of the target language. In this sense, the learner cannot self-correct an error because it is a product reflective of their current stage of L2 development, or underlining competence.

Considering Lennon's (1991) definition it can be argued that errors are mostly committed by learners of a second or foreign language. However, it is also the case that native speakers also commit certain errors at times. For this reason, Khansir (2008) mentions that every user of a language such as a learner of one's mother tongue, learner of a foreign or second language and even native speakers make mistakes occasionally. In this regard, Norman (2013) also complains that English grammar is tough. He notes even people who enjoy reading and writing have a difficult time getting all the rules right. Mistakes can therefore be said to be caused by lack of attention, fatigue or carelessness while errors may be caused by ignorance of the rules of the language.

### **2.1.2 Categories of Errors**

Dulay and Krashen (1982), in lengthy consideration of errors, describe three major types of error taxonomies. These are (1) error types based on linguistic category, (2) surface strategy taxonomy, and (3) error types based on comparative taxonomy. In this study, students' errors are classified based on the surface strategy taxonomy. Surface strategy taxonomy highlights the ways surface structures that are altered. In this sense, learners may omit necessary items (omission), or add unnecessary ones (additions). They may also deform items (selections), or disorder them (disordering).

#### **2.1.2.1 Omission**

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. Although any morpheme or word in a sentence is a potential candidate for omission, some types of morphemes are omitted more than others. For example,

*1. Here is the camera which/ that I promised to give you.*

2. *Here is the camera I promised to give you.*

Even though the two sentences are correct, the relative pronoun introducing a non-defining adjective clause cannot be left out. It turns to be an omission in a relative clause without a relative pronoun. In the second sentence, the relative pronoun has been omitted. This error happens to be the second highest in this research.

### 2.1.2.2 Addition

Addition errors are the opposite of omissions. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. They usually occur in the later stages of L2 acquisition, when the learner has already acquired some of the target language rules. In fact, addition errors result from the all-too-faithful use of certain rules. An example is seen in

*The books is here.* The „s“ which is added to the „book“ is just an addition.

Addition Errors are subclassified into three types: double marking, regularization, and simple addition.

### 2.1.2.3 Double Marking

Many addition errors are more accurately described as the failure to delete certain items which are required in some linguistic constructions, but not in others. For example, in past tense error:

1. she didn't went/goed.

in present tense:

2. He doesn't eats.

Sentence (1), does not need additional past item because the verb „went“ has assumed its base form „go“ because the auxiliary „did“ has already shown that the action has been

down and completed in the past. So sentence(2) also does not need additional present marker because the „does“ has shown that the action is in the present.

### **2.1.3 Regularization**

In regularization, the students regularize the irregular verbs. Based on Brown (2007), the source of this kind of errors is intralingual transfer because students regularize the irregular verbs into regular verbs. A rule typically applies to a class of linguistic items, such as a class of main verbs or the class of nouns. In most languages, however, some members of a class are exceptions to the rule. For example, the verb *eat* does not become *eated*, but *ate*. In the same vein, *sheep* is also *sheep* in the plural, not *sheeps*. In this research, there is no error of regularization.

#### **2.1.3.1 Simple Addition**

Addition errors are not the “grab bag” subcategory of additions. If an addition error is neither a double marking nor regularization, it is called a simple addition. No particular features characterize simple additions other than those that characterize all addition errors. According to Dulay and Krashen (1982), addition errors occur when learners give more than one marking in constructing the utterance or sentence. More so the use of an item which should not appear in a well-formed utterance, simple addition errors observed in both L1, and L2 child speech. Example as shown in this research:

1. *She is the young woman whom delivered the triplets. (who)*

1. *He is the man whom helped me yesterday. (who)*

In the two sentences “m” has been added to the relative pronoun “who” which is not supposed to be there, for that matter the meaning has been affected.

### 2.1.3.2 Misformation

According to Dulay and Krashen (1982), in misformation errors, the learners supply something, but it is not correct. Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. While in omission errors the items are not supplied at all, in misformation errors, the learner supplies something, although it is incorrect. For example,

1. The dog *eated* the chicken.

The past tense marker supplied by the learner was just not the right one. As in the case of additions, misformations are usually not random. This error occurs sometimes because of the pattern that is memorized by rote in a drill but improperly contextualized. For example:

1. *Last year, I join a competition*”.

Based on the sentence, the verb “join” has been put in a wrong form. It should be the past form of the word „join“ because the adverb of time is “last year” which means the event is already done. There are three types of this class: regularization, archi- form, and alternating form.

#### 2.1.3.2.1 Regularization Errors

Regularization errors that fall under the misformation category are those in which a regular marker is used in place of an irregular one. An example of such use is found in *runned*, rather than *ran*. Another example is:

1. *I sleeped in the car.*

In the sentence, the irregular “sleep” verb sleep has been regularized to be slept. The word should be “slept” because it is an irregular verb. Thus, the sentence should be “I slept in the car”.

#### **2.1.3.2.2 Archi-form**

The selection of one member of a class of forms to represent others in the class is a common characteristic of all stages of second language acquisition. We have called the form selected by the learner an archi-form. For example, a learner may temporary select just one the English demonstratives *this*, *that*, *these* and *those* to replace several of them:

That dog

That dogs

For this learner, *that* is the archi-demonstrative adjective representing the entire class of demonstrative adjectives.

#### **2.1.3.2.3 Alternating forms**

Dulay and Krashen (1982) observe that errors of alternating form occur when the learners put a morpheme or group of morphemes in incorrect order. As the learner’s vocabulary and grammar grow, the use of archi-forms often gives way to the apparently fairly free alternation of various members of a class with each other. Thus, we see for demonstratives.

Those dog

This cats



### **2.1.3.3 Misordering**

Based on Dulay and Krasshen (1982), errors of misordering are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an utterance. For example, in the utterance

*He is all the time late (all the time misordered).* In this research, there is no error of misordering in using the past tense. Moreover, errors of misordering usually deal with phrase. The students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School may have peculiar problems in terms of errors they commit but the researcher believes that not all the errors discussed above will be committed by the students. This is because not all the errors discussed fall under the area of study. Misformation errors for instance are characterized by the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure. It is a situation in which the learners supply past tense markers wrongly. For example:

1. *The dog eated the meat.*
2. *The boy falled from the tree.*

### **2.1.4 Kinds of errors**

When we mention errors, our attention is drawn to kinds of linguistic errors that language learners commit. It is important to categorize these errors on the basis of linguistic levels testifying to their manifestation. Lee (1990) and Nordquist (2017), for instance, elaborate on the following classification of learner errors:

#### **2.1.4.1 Grammatical errors**

A grammatical error is a term used in prescriptive grammar to describe an instance of faulty, unconventional, or controversial usage. This can be a misplaced modifier or an inappropriate verb tense. It is also called a usage error. According to

Nordquist (2017), grammatical errors are usually distinguished from factual errors, logical fallacies, misspellings typographical errors and faulty punctuation. The expression *grammatical errors* sounds, and is, in a sense, illogical for the reason that a form cannot be grammatical and erroneous at the same time. Because of the apparent contradiction of terms, the form *grammatical error* should be avoided and *error in construction* (syntactic error) or generally, *error in English* should be used instead. (This covers the whole language use). Of course one should never say *good grammar* or *bad grammar*. These kinds of errors may hinder communication if not checked and corrected. However, according to Lee (1990), immediate teacher correction is not necessarily appropriate. For instance: 1. We go to the zoo yesterday.

2. We are very happy to visit the zoo.

The two sentences have an error in subject-verb agreement. The correct sentence for (1), should be *We went to the zoo yesterday*. While sentence (2) is *We were very happy to visit the zoo*. The student write the infinitive ,go' but the correct one for the subject to agree with the verb is the past tense ,went'. By comparing the two sentences, we can see that the student has used ,are'' instead of ,were' which make the two sentences ungrammatical.

#### **2.1.4.2 Morphological errors**

In the field of language, morphology means the structure of words. That is, how words are formed and how the parts fit together. If you get the wrong morpheme in the wrong place at the wrong time, a morphological error is committed. For example, Usher and Kader (2016) observed that Secondary School Students of Kerala committed morphological errors in their writings. Aknade (2003) also conducted a study on the

acquisition of the eight inflectional morphemes in English. The purpose his study was to find out the occurrences as well as the misuse of these grammatical morphemes. After analyzing the errors, the study reveals that the students have poor mastery of the use of English past participle, possessive, past tense and plural inflectional morphemes. Babalola and Aknade (2002) conducted a study to find out the phonological, orthographic, morphological and syntactic problems concerning the morphological problems, they claimed that „English is not free of inconsistency in the area of Morphology“ (p. 250).

#### **2.1.4.3 Phonologically-induced errors**

These errors are manifested in wrong pronunciation and/or intonation. In the case of English, such errors necessitate timely correction on the part of the teacher because of vowel length, voiced and unvoiced final consonants and word stress. They may have a meaning differentiating function, as in live/leave and leave/leaf. Phonological processes are patterns of sound error that typically developing children use to simplify speech as they are learning to talk. Phonological disorder occurs when phonological process persist beyond the age when most typically developing children have stopped using them or when the process used are much different than what would be expected.

#### **2.1.4.4 Lexical errors**

In relation with choice of vocabulary, register and the rest, this in combination with errors belonging to the linguistic levels, may also hamper communication and intelligibility. In this study, all the above mentioned errors will be explored except phonological errors. One of the related studies on lexical error is the of Karadawi (1994). He used the cross-sectional design questionnaire, and teachers' opinionnaires in

analyzing the Sudanese Higher Secondary School students' composition. The study claimed that both inadequate and ineffective exposure to composition writing in the Higher Secondary School (HSC) is the reason for the inability of the final year students of the higher secondary school to write error-free types of tests. Gharab (1996) proved that the types of the lexico-semantic errors have become a problem to the learner the extent that they bound to no choice except transfer from the first language, Arabic. The study comes to the conclusion that MT interference, overgeneralization of TL are major variables in the choice of lexical items.

#### **2.1.4.5 Intralingual errors**

Intralingual errors result from faulty or partial learning of the target language. They may be caused by the influence of one target language item upon another. For example, learners attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence. This is because they have not mastered the language yet. When they say *He is comes here*, it is because the third person singular requires *is* in present continuous and *-s* at the end of a verb in simple present tense. In short, it occurs as a result of learners' attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it. According to James (1998), the types of intralingual errors are as follows:

- 1) Learning strategy-based errors: false analogy, misanalysis, incomplete rule application, exploiting redundancy, overloading co-occurrence restrictions, hypercorrection (monitor overuse), and overgeneralization or system simplification.
- 2) Communication strategy-based errors: circumlocution (expressing the concept indirectly, by allusion rather than by direct reference).

- 3) Induced errors: they result more than from the classroom situation than from either the student's incomplete competence in English grammar (intralingual errors) or first language interference (intralingual errors): material induced errors, teacher-talk induced errors, exercise-based induced errors, errors induced by pedagogical priorities and look-up errors.

### **2.1.5 Sources and causes of Errors**

According to the interlanguage theory, the various sources and causes of learners' errors are classified as language transfer, overgeneralization, transfer of training, strategies of language learning, and strategies of communication. Language transfer, overgeneralization and transfer of training will be discussed separately in the next sections. However, strategies of language learning and communication will be discussed under language fossilization because in the researcher's view, fossilization deals with learner's strategies to develop their own knowledge and to speak a language whereas avoiding the laid down rules of that language. Apart from the causes of errors mentioned above, some other errors can be attributed to weakness or failure of memory, ill health, carelessness or emotional state Ningsih (2004) Others may be due to the complexity of language rules, inconsistency of the English orthography(2006). Incorrect forms of grammar on media and learners' attitude to learning may also be other causes of students errors.

#### **2.1.5.1 Language transfer**

Language transfer is one of the major sources of errors committed by second language learners. Nunan (2001) argues that the proponents of Contrastive Analysis claim that where the first and second language rules are not the same, errors are likely to

occur as a result of interference (language transfer) between the two languages. According to Selinker (2001), language transfer gives rise to interlingual errors. These errors are based on interlanguage theory where the grammatical structures of the native language tend to be transferred to the second language. The structures that are different will be difficult to master, hence, negative transfer. It is possible that this might be one of the greatest challenges pupils of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School face. This is because most often you hear the students who are Ewes say, Kofi father (Ewe-Kofi fofo) instead of Kofi's father, which is transferred directly from Ewe. The expression is perfectly grammatical in Ewe as it does not employ the use of apostrophe *s* but it is ungrammatical in English. The phrase is transferred directly from the students' L1 to L2 due to negative language interference.

Oluwole (2006) states that evidence of first language interference is most prominent at the phonological level. This makes it possible to situate the ethnic background of for instance, some Nigerian users of English by the way they speak and write English. The researcher believes strongly that the same problem may apply to the students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. When they utter any English word, one easily identifies their ethnicity. Though language transfer is seen as a major source of errors, it is often exaggerated and made a scapegoat of second language errors. For instance, a study carried out by Oluwole (2006) revealed that just about 45% of errors made by Nigerian secondary school students are as a result of first language interference. It is important to note that this study is not limited to Nigerians alone. It may be applicable to Ghanaian students, including pupils of St. Peter's Catholic Basic school.

These pupils may also have a problem of language transfer, but it does not mean that is the only cause.

### **2.1.5.2 Overgeneralization**

Apart from language transfer, overgeneralization is seen as another major cause of errors. Overgeneralization, according to James (1998), refers to the situation where one form or rule of the language is over generalized to other forms. Once rules are overgeneralized, this becomes the cause of errors in language learning. This phenomenon is also observed in children while learning their first language. For example, it is appropriate to add an *s* to the word *cat* but inappropriate for a word like *lorry*. The plural form has to be *lorries* as a result of a specified exception to the rule. The tendency to add the *ed* morpheme to any word to show past often leads to some wrong forms. By overgeneralization, the past tense of *keep* becomes *keeped* while that of *broadcast* becomes *broadcasted* instead of *kept* and *broadcast* respectively.

### **2.1.5.3 Language Fossilization**

Another cause worth discussing is language fossilization. This is a situation where linguistic or grammatical development in certain areas is stopped in the course of language development (Oluwole, 2006). For example, many advanced learners who have Spanish as an L1 do not distinguish between *he* and *she*. This could be a fossilized error. Errors in general take time to correct but a fossilized error may never be corrected. It takes a substantial amount of time unless the learner sees a reason to do so. In such cases, teachers can help learners notice their fossilized errors, for example, by recording them speaking. They can also ask them to keep a record of writing errors as part of a language portfolio. Substitution and simplification of language rules are some fossilization

strategies that learners adopt in order to avoid the complexity of the rules. Simplification is the situation where learners avoid the use of complex structures and prefer to use the very simple forms. Sometimes, this also results in errors, posing a challenge to language learning.

#### **2.1.5.4 Transfer of training**

Again, another cause of errors may be due to transfer of training. Some errors may derive from the way the learners are taught. This may also be based on the unavailability of certain resources. For example, teachers may negatively transfer knowledge to their students due to certain factors. These are lack of appropriate instructional materials/textbooks and techniques, inadequate preparation before class, incompetent language teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and overdependence on textbooks. This fact is confirmed by Idris (2016), who argues that about two-thirds of Malaysian English teachers are incapable to teach the subject. Amoah (2012) also intimates that lack of appropriate teaching materials leads to poor performance. Murray (2001) also reiterates that the public and policy makers believe that many teachers with good credentials from accredited schools of education are not competent in their work.

#### **2.1.5.5 Complexity of English Grammar rules**

Moving away from transfer of training, the next cause of learning errors is the complexity of English Grammar rules. This also leads to learners' errors. To this end, Norman (2013) complains of English grammar been tough. According to him, even people who enjoy reading and writing have a difficult time getting all the rules right. As stated by Seidu (2006),



The study of English Language is not only complex but also illogical and full of irregularities. Its study does not easily lend itself to rules, because very often, there are many exceptions to the rules, and most rules are only conveniently arranged to suit a particular group or level of learners. As one progresses in this study, one realizes that there are many contradictions to the rules. (p. 21)

Taking the gradability of adjective clauses for instance, the first rule states that „never use commas with a defining adjective clause. Thus, it is wrong to say *I like people who are on time*. The second rule is the use of relative pronouns who, which, that, whose, where. a relative pronoun is a word which signals the beginning of an adjective clause. If the adjective clause describes a person, we can use „who“ or „that“. For example,

- i. The family who live next door to us bought a new car.
- ii. The family that live next door to us bought a new car.

If the adjective clause describes a thing, we can use „which“ or „that“. For instance,

- i. The car that they bought was red.
- iii. The car which they bought was red.

If the adjective clause shows some kind of possession or who something belongs to, then we use „whose“. For example,

- i. We threw away the chairs whose legs were broken.
- ii. She’s the girl whose boyfriend was in an accident.

We can also use “whose” for people and things. We can sometimes use the relative pronoun „where“ for places.

- i. *Do you know a place where I can buy an interesting birthday card?*

The final one is the tricky rule. We can omit the relative pronoun if it is not the subject of the clause. However, if the relative pronoun is the subject of the clause, then we have to use it as in

- i. We can't throw it away. For example:
- i. The shirt that she gave me was too big.
- ii. The shirt she gave me was too big.

In the first example, the defining adjective clause is „that she gave me“. In the second example, one notices that it is possible to drop the relative pronoun. This is because it is not the subject of the verb in the clause. Both examples are good- you can use either one. Students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic school have difficulty applying these rules due to their complexity.

#### **2.1.5.6 Students' attitude towards learning**

Studying errors alone is not enough to solve all the problems of errors. Learners' attitudes must also be studied. It is believed that students who have positive attitudes towards language learning, and are keen to learn it show interest and the zeal for it. Students' interest, their learning habit, and aptitude also affect the teaching and learning of English. Students may defer in respect of personal goals and motivation. Keeping the goals in mind, they put in varying levels of effort into language learning. Some students are good listeners and pick the language quickly. For instance, an extrovert student with an outgoing personality may perform better in the classroom than an introvert. He can interact with the teacher better than those who feel shy and are hesitant to ask questions in class.

On the other hand, a student who feels that a language has been imposed on him without due regard to his interest, needs and so on, may have an indifferent attitude towards it. Their main aim is just to pass in order to move on in life. Choy and Troudi (2006) suggest that attitude can help learners to express whether they like or dislike the objects or surrounding situations. It is agreed that the inner feelings and emotions of learners influence their perspectives and attitude towards the target language. Finally, Eshghinejad (2016) also points that learners' attitude is considered an essential factor influencing language performance.

The argument is that we cannot get the right approach or apply all the theories without paying attention to learners' attitude towards learning since everyone is different, beliefs differ, values differ and attitude can be different for each person on a daily basis.

## **2.2 Adjective clauses**

Adjective clauses are essential because writers of textbooks, magazines, and newspapers frequently use them in their writing. According to Altenberg and Vago (2010, p. 121), an "adjective clause is a kind of dependent clause; it provides additional information about a noun phrase in the main clause". In addition, Huddleston and Pullum (2010) observe that an adjective clause is a special kind of subordinate clause whose primary function is to modify a noun or nominal phrase. From the two definitions, adjective clauses, like adjectives, are used to describe nouns. As Wishon and Burks (2008) state, an adjective clause in a dependent clause is used similarly as how an adjective is used. That is, it modifies a noun or a pronoun.

These clauses are introduced by two different kinds of words which always occur just after the noun they modify. From the definitions, it can be said that adjective clauses

are groups of words that can explain a noun or pronoun either by describing it or providing more information about it. This noun or pronoun can function as the subject, object or possession. An adjective clause is also called a relative clause. Azar (1999, p. 267) defines a relative clause as “a dependent clause that modifies a noun”. The description of a relative clause is similar to that of an adjective clause. This is because they both describe, identify, or give further information about a noun. Adjective clauses begin with relative pronouns. The types of pronouns used in these clauses are explained as follows:

There are five relative pronouns which are:

**Who** - used as subject or object pronoun for people. For example,

- i. I told you about the woman *who* lives next door.
- ii. He is the boy *who* told the money yesterday.

**Which** - used as a subject or object pronoun for people animals and things and is reserved for a nonrestrictive function. For example,

- i. Do you see the cat *which* is lying on the roof?
- ii. This is the house *which* caused such a sensation.

**Whose** - used as a possession for people, animals and things. For example,

- i. Do you know the boy *whose* mother is a nurse?
- ii. I know the man *whose* car was stolen.

**Whom**- used as an object pronoun for people, especially in non-defining relative clauses (in defining relative clauses we colloquially prefer *whom*). For example,

- i. She introduced me to her husband, *whom* I had, hadn’t met before.
- ii. He paid the man *whom* he had hired.

**That-** used as a subject or an object pronoun for people, animals and things in defining relative clauses. (**who** or **which** are also possible). For example,

- i. I don't like the table *that* stands in the kitchen.
- ii. He is the best student *that* has ever studied.

### 2.3 Types of adjective clauses

According to Nettle and Hopkins (2003), there are two types of adjective clauses. These are *restrictive* and *nonrestrictive* clauses.

#### 2.3.1. Restrictive clauses

Restrictive clauses perform as limiting or identification functions. According to Gorrell and Laird (1996), restrictive clauses are modifiers and limit closely, especially when they supply the information that identifies or distinguishes the subject or complement. Restrictive clauses are also called defining relative clauses and help identify or define the noun phrase which they modify. For instance,

- i. The professor *who teaches chemistry 102* is an excellent lecturer.

Here, no commas are used as the adjective clause is necessary to identify which professor we are talking about. Thus, when the antecedent is limited by the adjective clause, the restrictive clause does not use commas. For example,

- ii. The children *who wanted to play soccer* ran to an open field as soon as we arrived at the park. The others played a different game.

Here, a lack of commas means that only some of the children wanted to play soccer. The adjective clause *who wanted to play soccer* has been used here to identify which children ran to the open field.

### 2.3.2. Nonrestrictive clauses

Nonrestrictive clauses are called additive or appositive relative clauses. They are set off by commas in writing and by pauses in speaking. They are also called non-defining relative clauses. As Thomson and Martinet (1986) opine, non-defining relative clauses are placed after nouns which are already definite. They do not therefore define the noun, but merely add something to it by giving some more information about it. Unlike restrictive clauses, they are not essential in the sentence and can be omitted without obscuring the meaning of the sentence. Also, unlike restrictive clauses, nonrestrictive clauses are usually separated from their nouns by commas. Relative pronouns can never be omitted in non-defining clauses because non-defining relative clauses are composed of a relative pronoun, a verb, and optional element such as the subject or object of the verb. The construction is fairly formal and more common in written than in spoken English.

The function of nonrestrictive clauses is not to limit or identify. They do not affect the intention, nor restrict the number of nouns or pronouns they modify. A nonrestrictive clause contains additional information which is not required to give the meaning of the sentence. A nonrestrictive clause is set off from the other clauses by commas. The relative pronouns *who*, *whom*, *which* can be used in both restrictive and nonrestrictive clauses. However, *that* can only be used in restrictive clauses. Normally, *that* is the preferred word to use in a restrictive clause, although *which* is also acceptable. One of the ways to determine the difference between restrictive and nonrestrictive in writing is the use of the comma:

- If the antecedent is a proper noun, for example,

- i. *Professor Wisdom*, who teaches Mathematics, is an excellent lecturer.

Here, commas are used so that the adjective clause is not necessary to identify who Professor Wisdom is. We already know who he is; he has a name. The adjective clause simply gives additional information.

- If the antecedent is one of a kind, for example,

- ii. *His aunt*, who lives in California, came to visit him recently.

The adjective clause does not single out one aunt from the others. (He may have only one aunt).

- If the antecedent is identified by the preceding context, for example,

- iii. Late in the evening they sent out for some coffee. *The coffee*, which has been boiling for a long time, tastes rancid.

- If the antecedent refers to all of a class, for example,

- iv. *The chair*, which were in bad condition were sent out to be repaired and refinished.

(All the chairs were in bad condition).

#### **2.4. Differences between restrictive clauses and nonrestrictive clauses**

The restrictive clause identifies something or somebody while the nonrestrictive clause gives extra information. For example,

- i. Kofi Frimpong is the teenager who runs his own retail business. (*restrictive*)

- ii. Last month, when he was still only worth ten million, he was running his own business. (*nonrestrictive*)

The restrictive clause does not have commas (in written English) or pauses (in spoken English), while the nonrestrictive clause is separated from the main clause by commas (in written English) or pauses (in spoken English). For example:

- i. The car that I want is out of my price range. (*restrictive*)
- ii. The chair, which were in bad condition were sent out to be repaired. (*nonrestrictive*)

The restrictive clause can use *that* instead of *who* or *which* while nonrestrictive clause does not use *that*. For example,

- i. Kofi Frimpong is the teenager that runs his own business. (*restrictive*)
- ii. Kofi Frimpong, who is worth about 4 million Ghana cedis, hands the phone to his accountant. We do not say: Kofi Frimpong, that is worth about 4 million Ghana cedis. (*nonrestrictive*)

The restrictive clause can sometimes leave out the relative pronoun while the *nonrestrictive* clause must have the relative pronoun. For example,

- i. The business (which) he started is now worth 4 million. (*restrictive*)

We do not say: The business, he started five years ago, owns a chain of shops.

Or we can say:

- ii. The business, which has started five years ago, owns a chain of shops. (*nonrestrictive*)

## **2.5. Forms of adjective clauses**

According to Eastwood (2012, p. 343), there are five forms that the adjective clause can take. These are explained as follows:



Identifying clause –an adjective clause without commas can identify which one the writer means. For example,

- i. Who was the man who said hello?
- ii. The man who talks to me in the office is my boss.

Classifying clause -an adjective clause without comma identifies what kind of thing the writer is talking about. For example,

- i. We're looking for a machine *that serves food*.

The clause *that serves food* describes the kind of pub the writer means.

Clause used for emphasis - an adjective clause can be used without commas in a pattern with *it +be*. For example,

- i. It's my husband who does the cooking.

Adding clause - an adjective clause with commas can add more information. For example,

- i. I was with Esi who lives upstairs.(this add more information about Esi)

Connective clause -an adjective clause with commas can tell us what happened next. For example,

- i. I shouted to the man, *who ran off*.

That clause *who ran off* tells us that the man ran off after he was shouted at.

## **2.6. Functions of adjective clauses in sentences**

Adjectives are used to modify and give information about nouns. Adjective clauses are also used to give more information about nouns.

An adjective clause is a group of words. It looks like a sentence because it has a subject and a verb, but it can't stand alone. It can only be used as part of a sentence. Relative (adjective) clauses describe or give information about nouns just like adjectives do.

An adjective clause is started with a relative pronoun and its function is to give more information about things. For example,

1. *The man who stole the bicycle* has surrendered. (Subject)
2. I want to know *the man who has this brilliant idea*. (Object)
3. Children are unhappy about parents *who set limits*

The normal position of a relative clause is immediately after the noun or pronoun to which it refers. However, sometimes a prepositional phrase or a particular phrase may intervene. Where a phrase intervenes, the antecedent of the clause may be ambiguous.

- For example:
1. The friends of the participants *who were told to order soft drinks*.
  2. The man *in our church who won the lottery* was given a car.

## **2.7. Studies on Adjective Clause**

There have been some studies on the use of adjective clauses by pupils and students from different areas around the globe. Ahmed Syarif (2011) conducted a study with second year students of MAN 4 Cijeruk Bogor. The objectives of his study were to know the students' errors in using adjective clauses and to know why the students face such difficulties in using adjective clauses. He found that most of the students made error on 'whom' with the average of error 82.8%. On the other hand, the lowest one 'who' with the average error 30.11%. From this, he concluded that the causes of the students' difficulties in using adjective clauses emanate from internal and external factors.

In addition, Andriyani (2012) studied the use of pronouns in adjective clauses among students of SMA Nusantara Plus. The result of her study showed four types of errors in the use of the relative pronoun. They were misselection (270 or 64%), misordering (88 or 21%), addition (37 or 9%), and omission (25 or 6%). From this, she argued that errors were caused by ignorance of rule restriction, false concept hypothesized, over generalization, and incomplete application of rules. Based on the related study above, it was almost the same as the researcher's findings as the types of errors and the method being descriptive and the research design being qualitative. This research has also found the causes of errors in using relative pronouns that occur in adjective clauses. Different from this research, this research did not identify error of misordering in the students' exercises done.

In St. Peter's Catholic Basic School, the researcher realized that those same errors were committed by the students and the method of study is descriptive qualitative. Students committed errors of omission Andriyani (2012) notes, instead of *I know the man whose car was stolen*, they wrote *I know the man car was stolen*. The relative pronoun has been omitted. They also committed an error of simple addition which Andriyani (2012) identifies too. Instead of writing a sentence such as *This is the boy who won the first prize*, they wrote *This is the boy whom won the first prize*. They did this by adding the „m“. They also could not use the relative pronouns well which was confirmed by many other researchers.

## **2.8. Conclusion**

The chapter has reviewed the literature related to the present study. The various opinions of different authors have been sought and analyzed alongside the objective of

this study. The discussion was done based on the: concept of errors, errors and mistakes, categories of errors, kinds of errors, sources and causes of errors, Adjective clauses, types of adjective clauses, forms of adjective clauses, functions of adjective clauses in sentences and studies of adjective clauses. The discussion has showed that students commit different categories of errors as discussed earlier and most of these errors are caused due to the complexity of the English grammar rules, transfer of language, transfer of training and students attitude towards learning.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the procedure adopted for this study. The chapter gives an overview of the research design, the population sample of the study and the type sampling technique used, as well as the sources of the data collected. It also throws light on the instruments employed for the study.

#### **3.1 Research design**

This study employed a qualitative research design and adopted a descriptive survey method. Amoani (2005) states that using a descriptive design is an attempt at providing an accurate description of an on-going situation or real life setting. It describes a relationship that exists between variables. Key (1997) also postulates that descriptive surveys are appropriate for assessing current practices and conditions and to make wise decisions and plans to improve upon such current issues. In addition, Robson (2003) maintains that many or probably most surveys are carried out for descriptive purposes and are hence labeled as descriptive survey.

In a descriptive survey, no attempt is made to change the behaviour or conditions. The researcher measures and describes the characteristics of the participants in their natural environment (Borg and Gall, 19996; Gay, 1992). A descriptive survey was chosen in tune with the purpose of this study. That is, it aims to focus on errors committed by students in the use of adjective clauses. It also provides a meaningful and accurate picture of events on the basis of data collected from the pupils involved in the study. A

descriptive survey is therefore considered the most appropriate since the study reports on issues the way they are.

### **3.2 Population of the study**

The population was the JHS 2 and 3 students. The researcher's aim of choosing these classes was to make sure they complete lessons on adjective clauses/relative clauses in their syllabus. There were 74 JHS 2 students and 58 final .year students which made a total population of one hundred and thirty-two (132) for the study in St. Peter's Catholic Basic school. In addition, there were two (2) English teachers in the school.

#### **3.2.1 Information about the teachers**

Although two English teachers were in the school, they all said they came to the school that year and the students also confirmed it. Only one of them was interviewed because she teaches grammar. The teacher is a trained teacher with a first degree in Social Studies and a master's degree in administration. She is in her first year of teaching at St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. She teaches English grammar and composition and Social Studies from JHS 1 to JHS 3.

### **3.3 Sample and sampling technique**

The researcher adopted a purposive sampling technique which focuses on where the units investigated are based on the judgment of the researcher. The researcher chose purposive sampling technique because she wanted to concentrate on people who have knowledge about the topic for the study, who are students of JHS2 and 3 and the English language teachers. The researcher believed these students would be able to assist with the relevant information since the topic for study (adjective clause) is in their syllabi and would have been taught as at the time of the study. As a result the technique was used to

select seventy-four (74)JHS2 and fifty-eight(58)JHS3 students. In all, a sample of one hundred and thirty-two(132) respondents including one English teacher took part in the study. St. Peter’s Catholic School was selected because it is a very popular school in the circuit with respect to academic performance. It is also the only basic school in the circuit that is not running shift. With these, many people expect the students to perform well.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The purpose of this study was to describe the types and causes of errors made by students. This includes why they commit those errors and how often these errors occur. As such, it is necessary to use reliable instruments for data collection. The data was obtained from interviews, test, and written essays. These instruments were chosen in line with the assertion by Creswell (2000) that descriptive survey research lends itself to questionnaire and interview to determine the opinions, attitudes preferences and perceptions of persons. Interviews were appropriate, as far as the present study aimed at finding the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of students of Junior High Schools in respect with the study of grammar in general and adjective clauses in particular.

#### **3.4.1 Interview**

Interviews were used as part of the data collection procedure because they “permitted open ended exploration of the topics as well as elicited responses that were couched in unique words of the respondents” (Borg, Gall & Gall, 1996, p. 290). An interview is a two way approach which permits exchange of ideas and information. It has the advantage of respondents seeking for clarifications which cannot be done in a questionnaire. Where the respondent misinterprets the question, the researcher can follow it up with explanation or an alternate question. The interview can be individual or group,

single or panel. An individual or a group of individual may be interviewed; likewise, a single researcher may conduct the interview with a panel of researchers.

The researcher chose to use focus group interview because the study sought to critically and thoroughly probe attitudes and responses of participants on the given topic. Only one teacher was interviewed at St. Peter's Catholic Basic School on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2017 because the other one did not teach grammar. The teacher was interviewed in order to find out the general perception and students attitude towards the English language, especially the teaching of adjective clauses. The teacher was asked about her views on whether students consider adjective clauses as an indispensable grammatical tool in the teaching of the English language. It was also to check whether the way adjective clauses are treated in textbooks is adequate or not. She was also interviewed on the reactions of the students to the teaching of adjective clauses.

### 3.4.2 Test

There were two separate tests presented to the students with 30 and 20 items respectively. These items were based on functions and forms of adjective clauses and the use of relative pronouns in adjective clauses. The test items demanded that students show their comprehension of relative pronouns. The relative pronouns contained in the adjective clauses were *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that* and *which*. The items of the right answers were based on formal language. The details of the tests and marks allotted as follows:

*Table 3.1. Layout of Multiple choice Tests taken*

NO	Instruction	MARKING SCHEME
1.	Choose the correct answer	30/30 = 100%
2.	Underline the correct adjective clause	20/20 =100%



### **3.4.3 Written essays**

Descriptive essay was given to the students as a test and one hundred and thirty two (132) scripts were collected for the study. The aim was to find out how students of Junior High Schools used adjective clauses/relative clauses to construct acceptable sentences in the written discourse.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher sought permission from the headmaster of the school. The selected students were also briefed on the purpose of the study before the test items were administered to them. In each case the students wrote their responses in the presence of the researcher, after which they were collected to ensure 100% retrieval rate. For the written scripts, a topic which demanded the use of adjective clauses was presented to the students to write on. The topic for the essay was *Describe your best friend and the food he/she likes best.*

### **3.6 Data analysis and classification of errors**

Data analysis involves working to uncover patterns and trends in data sets while data sets and data interpretation involves explaining those patterns and trends. One hundred and thirty two (132) written scripts were collected from the students. The scripts were read and analyzed by the researcher for errors in adjective clauses. The next step was the classification of the errors according to the use of relative pronouns. After categorizing the errors, they were quantified according to their frequency of occurrence. These are misuse/wrong use of relative pronouns, blends/cross association/contamination and simple addition.

### **3.7. Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the procedure for the study. It highlighted the design for the research sources of the data, population used, the subject and sample size as well as the research instruments used for the data collection. The chapter also discussed how the data were analyzed in order to answer the research questions. The next chapter presents the analysis of the data collected.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results obtained from the analysis of the data. The results showed that students of St. Peters Catholic Basic School commit different adjective clause errors in their writings. This is an indication that they have little knowledge of how English adjective clauses are used. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first section presents an analysis of the common errors students committed in their written essays and adjective clause-based test. The scripts were read to identify specific adjective clause errors and then classified into error types. Errors are described into three major types of taxonomy as stated by James (1998), 1) error types based on linguistic category, 2) surface strategy taxonomy, and 3) error types based on comparative taxonomy. Based on their error types, the research concluded that students committed most of the errors under surface strategy taxonomy. These errors are omission; characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance.

The second one is simple addition errors; the opposite of omission. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. This usually occurs in the later stages of L2 acquisition when the learner has already acquired some target language rules. The third one is misuse or wrong use. While in omission error the item is not supplied at all, in misuse or misinformation error, the learner supplies something, although it is incorrect. The fourth error is blends; this is one category that complements the target modification taxonomy. It is typical of situations

where there is not just one well-defined target, but two. Here, the learner is undecided about which of these two targets he has in mind. This error is sometimes called the contamination or cross-association or hybridization error. The analysis revealed that the highest number of adjective clause errors committed was misinformation or misuse errors of relative pronouns to form the correct adjective clause. The lowest was simple addition where students use more than one relative pronoun or pronouns or add morphemes to words.

The second and final part of the chapter discusses the causes of these errors. The analysis revealed that some of the causes are lack of knowledge in adjective clauses, transfer of language, complexity of English language rules, improper attention to explanation of students, social media influence, and incorrect grammar in the media. The questionnaire and the interview also revealed that irregular teaching of grammar, especially adjective clauses, inadequate explanation and examples given in the textbooks, lack of a school library, and lack of financial support as well as discouragement from peers.

#### **4.1 Categorization of Students' Error**

After analyzing the data, the researcher identified different types of errors in students' written essay and adjective clause-based tests. These are misuse or wrong use of relative pronoun, omission of relative pronoun, simple addition of relative pronoun, and blends errors. The error types identified are discussed in the following sections.

#### 4.1.1 Misuse of relative pronouns

The first category of errors committed by the students is misuse of relative pronouns to form correct adjective clauses. It was revealed that students had difficulty in using some of the relative pronouns to form correct adjective clauses. This category has the highest frequency of errors committed in this study. Misuse or wrong use of relative pronouns affected the meaning of the entire clause or made the sentence incorrect. There were instances where students wrote “this is the picture *who caused* such a sensation” instead of *which caused*. The correct pronoun is *which* (refers to things and animals) and not *who* because the noun being modified is a thing, not a person. In some cases, the misuse of relative pronouns affected the adjective clause or the sentence as a whole, rendering it meaningless.

The causes of students’ errors in using the relative clause are internal and external factors such as improper attention to explanations given. Students could not study well because some of them were not supported by other English books. They did not understand the difference between the pronouns which could be caused by an irregular treatment of adjective clauses. They did not know the rules of English grammar. Nevertheless, some misuse of relative pronouns might be attributed to a lack of materials such as textbooks. Upon critical analysis, the researcher concluded that this might also be a language transfer because unlike English language, L1 for instance does not specify the relative pronouns. For example, in

*He has two sisters whom he love very much*, the Ewe translation is (Novi nyonu eve le esisiwowo lo vevie).

Similarly, in *The 8.15 train which is usually very punctual*, was late today (Ga enyiminiti wuiator keteke si noa game dzi la ttime gbeegba).

When you study the two English sentences, you realize that *whom* and *which* are used as relative pronouns, but in L1 *si* is used as the relative pronoun for two English both *whom* and *which*. As a result, there is likelihood for the students to be confused because they would use the same word for the two pronouns. This might lead to errors in the use of such adjective clauses. Some of the examples recorded from the tests and the written easy under this category of errors are as follows:

- 1) He has two sisters *which* he loves
- 2) I live in a hall *whom* residents come from many countries.
- 3) All the apples *who* fall are eaten by the squirrel.
- 4) I have two books *who* colour are red and green.
- 5) The 8:15 train *whose* is usually very punctual, was late today.

In the sentences, the students used relative pronoun *which* instead of *who* in sentence (1). It is an error because the subject of the sentence is a person for that matter *who* should be used instead of *which*. In sentence (2), the student used *whom* instead of *which*. The sentence is incorrect because the subject being described is a thing and for that matter *which* or *that* could be used instead of *whom*. Sentences (3) and (4) are also incorrect because the subjects or nouns being described are not persons for which *who* would be used. The pronoun *which* is rather used to describe things so the correct relative pronoun in sentences (3) and (4) is *which*. In the last sentence, the possessive form of *who* is used instead of *that*. The sentence is not correct because the subject is not a person for *whose* to be used.

The relative pronouns were wrongly used in all the adjective clauses. The main causes of these errors might be ignorance of English language rules and language transfer. This has been confirmed by Bakkal (2010) with a study which is entitled “the techniques of relative clauses to Turkish speakers”. Relative clauses have always been an important issue to EFL/ESL learners. This is because they have complex syntactic structure, and so poses a challenge to the language learner. The use of *which* instead of *whose* in genitive construction was found to be problematic to Turkish learners. The total frequency for this category is 73 for JHS2 and 29 for JHS 3. This type of error recorded the highest frequency. Table 4.1.1 presents this information.

*Table 4.1.1. Misuse of relative pronouns*

<b>Class</b>	<b>Frequency of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage of Errors</b>
JHS 2	73	71.5%
JHS 3	29	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

The information on Table 4.1.1 is presented on Figure 4.1.1.

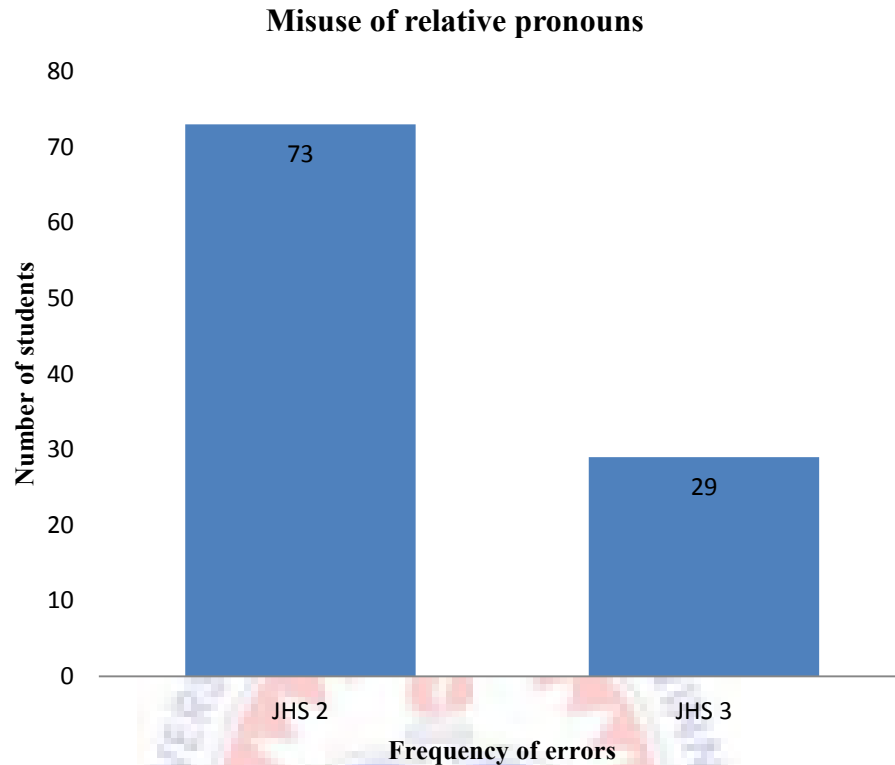


Figure 4.1.1. Misuse of relative pronouns

#### 4.1.2 Omission of relative pronouns

Moving away from misuse of relative pronouns, the next classification of errors worth discussing is error of omission. Dulay (1982) explains omission as an instance where an item which must be present in a well-formed utterance is absent. It was realized that during the answering of the test items, students omitted relative pronouns which should make the clauses correct adjective clauses. In some cases, the relative pronouns which should be used to form correct adjective clauses to modify the noun were omitted as in “He called the company usually supplies the pipes”. Instead of “He called the company *that* usually supplies the pipes”. The student omitted the relative pronoun “that”



the reader may not be able to identify the adjective clause in the sentence since the adjective clause is the main objective of the exercise. The causes of some of these particular errors might be negligence or ignorance of English language rules. Some of these errors have been listed below:

- 1) Mr. Abraham..... always helps the headteacher of the school is dead. Mr. Abraham who always help the headteacher of the school is dead.
- 2) The stairs..... lead to the cellar are rather slippery. The stairs that lead to cellar are rather slippery.
- 3) The tortoise.....the hunter brought home could sing. The tortoise that the hunter brought home could sing.
- 4) Students..... are intelligent get good grades. Students who are intelligent get good grades.
- 5) The kids.....were called first will have the best chance of getting a seat. The kids who were called first will have the best chance of getting a seat.

All the five sentences are wrongly formed in relation to adjective clause structure. This is because an adjective clause must begin with a relative pronoun and all the relative pronouns are omitted from the sentences. The causes of these errors might be negligence, ignorance of English language rules and transfer of knowledge. This error recorded the second highest frequency of (51 or 71%) for JHS 2 and (20 or 28.2%) for JHS 3. Rina (2014) confirmed this in her study by categorizing students errors under misselection, disorder, addition and omission. In her study, she found that students committed errors of omission of (25 or 6%). Based on the types of errors, the researcher concluded that students' errors were caused by ignorance of rule restriction (210 or 49%) and false

concept hypothesized (89 or 21%). The frequency of errors according to class is presented in Table 4.1.2 and Figure 4.1.2 respectively.

Table 4.1.2. Omission of relative pronouns

Class	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
JHS 2	51	71.8%
JHS 3	20	28.2%
TOTAL	71	100%

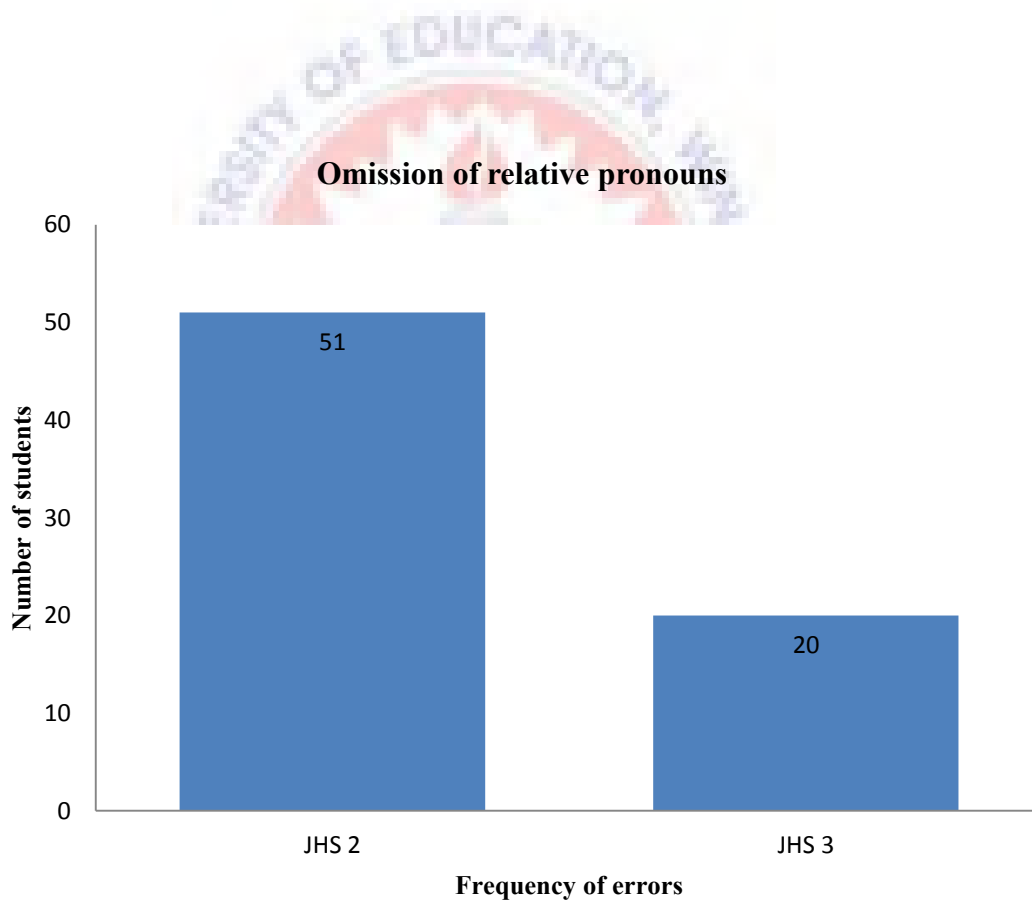


Figure 4.1.2. Omission of relative pronoun

Figure 4.1.2 represents an illustration of the omission errors in students' written essays and selection tests. In the 132 essays and selection tests analyzed, JHS 2

committed 57 errors representing 71% and JHS 3 had 20 errors representing 28.2%. In a similar study, Musonah (2014) documented students' errors in his research and found that there were 47 occurrences or 20.09% of errors of omission of relative clauses in their essays. According to his analysis, the highest frequency of errors occurred in relative pronoun *whose* with 15 representing 33.5% errors. The next relative pronoun to be used wrongly was *who* with a frequency of 12 representing 28%. The third item was *whom* with 10 representing 21.3% errors and *which* being the least occurring error with 8 representing 17%. The researcher concluded that the students made such errors because they learned and produced new language data, which produced new rules. Thus, they made errors in using relative pronouns within the adjective clauses due to confusion about the usage of relative pronouns. He further argued that the students could not determine the functions of the pronouns.

#### **4.1.3 Blend or cross-association errors**

This is one category that complements the target modification taxonomy. It is typical of situations where there is not just one well defined target, but two. Here, the learner appears undecided about which of the two targets he has "in mind". This was shown in the researcher's test given to the students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. The student wrote *He is the man who he teaches me the mathematics*. Instead of *He is the man who teaches me mathematics*.

The student used the relative pronoun "*who*" and the personal pronoun "*he*". Meanwhile, it is only the relative pronoun that is needed for the adjective clause. In this case, the student has blended the two pronouns (relative pronoun and personal pronoun) which shows that he/she is undecided. The causes of some of these particular errors might be

ignorance of the English rules or lack of understanding of the use of the relative and personal pronouns. Some examples of these errors are as follows:

- 1) Pizza which that most people love is not very healthy.

Here, the student uses two relative pronouns because s/he is confused or undecided about which of them to use. The correct sentence is Pizza which most people love is not very healthy.

- 2) He is the man who he teaches me the mathematics.

In this case the student used two pronouns but a relative pronoun and personal pronoun. The correct for would be He is the man who teaches me the mathematics.

- 3) The people whom whose names are on the list will go to camp. The student used two relative pronouns making the sentence ungrammatical instead of writing (The people whose names are on the list will go to comp.) as the correct one.

- 4) My neighbor, that who is very pessimistic, says there will be no apples this year. This is also incorrect because the student used two of the relative pronouns making the sentence ungrammatical. The correct sentence is (My neighbor, who is very pessimistic, says there will be no apples this year.)

- 5) The car that which I hired broke down. In this sentence, the student committed an error of bend by using two relative pronouns making the sentence ungrammatical. The correct sentence is (The car that I hired broke down). The causes of these errors might be ignorance of the English rules or lack of understanding of the use of the relative pronouns and the personal pronouns. Table 4.1.3 and Figure 4.1.3 are illustrations of the information on these errors.

Table 4.1.3. Blend or cross-association errors

Class	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
JHS 2	24	64.8%
JHS 3	13	35.2%
TOTAL	37	100%

The total frequency of blend or cross-association errors committed by students for JHS 2 is 24 or 64% and that of JHS 3 is 13 or 35%. This may be because they did not understand the use of relative pronouns in adjective clauses or did not know the difference between relative pronouns and personal pronouns. They also appeared to be ignorant of English language rules. Musonah (2014) explained earlier.

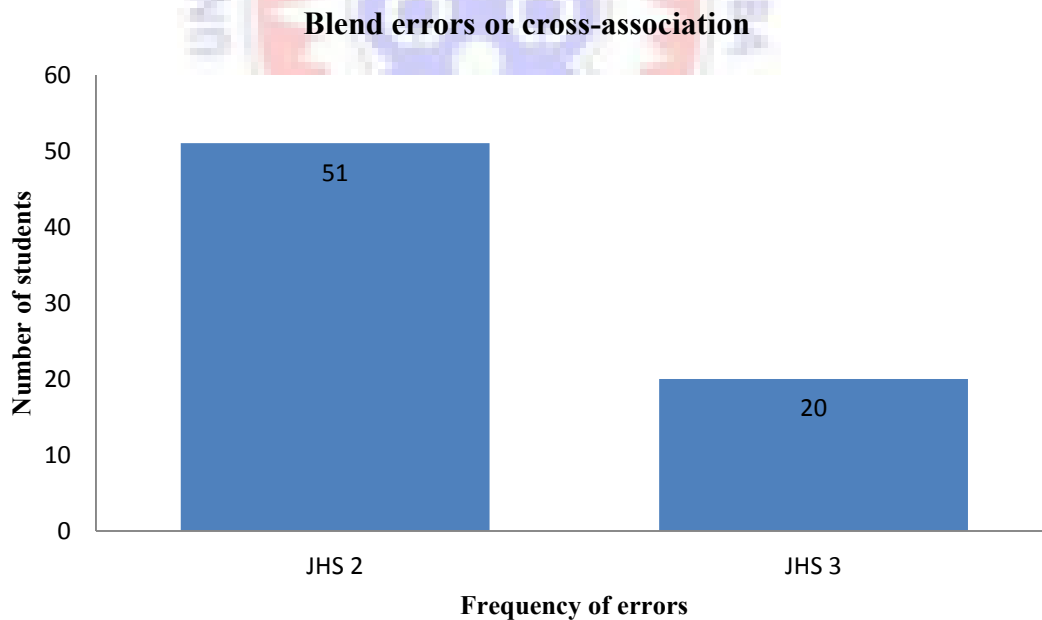


Figure 4.1.3. Blend or cross-association errors

#### 4.1.4 Errors of simple addition

The final category of errors identified in this study is errors of simple addition. This type of simple addition error caters for all additions. It is not described as double markings or regularizations. For example, in

*The young woman whom sits in the corner is my sister,*

the student used the relative pronoun “whom” rather than “who”. The correct sentence is

*The young woman who sits in the corner is my sister.*

The student added the morpheme „m“ to the “who” and this affected the meaning of the sentence. The correct relative pronoun is “who” which functions as the subject. More examples of errors of simple addition are as follows:

- 1) Yes, he is the man whom helped me yesterday. Yes, he is the man who helped me yesterday
- 2) She is the young woman whom delivered the triplets. She is the young woman who delivered the triplet
- 3) This is the boy whom won the first prize. (This is the boy who won the first prize.)
- 4) The man whom made the mess needs to clean it. (The man who made the mess needs to clean it).

The sentences are wrong because the students have added the morpheme „m“ to the relative pronoun “who” which made the sentences ungrammatical. The causes of some of these errors might be ignorance of the English rules or lack of understanding of the use of the relative pronouns. Table 4.1.4 represents the frequency of errors students made.

Table 4.1.4. Errors of simple addition

Class	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
JHS 2	18	72%
JHS 3	7	28 %
TOTAL	25	100%

Simple addition is the lowest errors with JHS 2 students having a total of eighteen (18 or 72%) while the JHS 3 students have a total of seven (7 or 28%) errors. Rina (2012) demonstrated this in her study on Error in using adjective clauses by students of SMA by categorizing students' errors under misorder, misselection, omission, and addition errors. The researcher recorded addition errors as 37 or 9. She stated that the errors were caused by ignorance of restricted rules, false concept hypothesized, overgeneralization and incomplete application of rules. The information presented in Table 4.1.4 is represented in Figure 4.1.4.

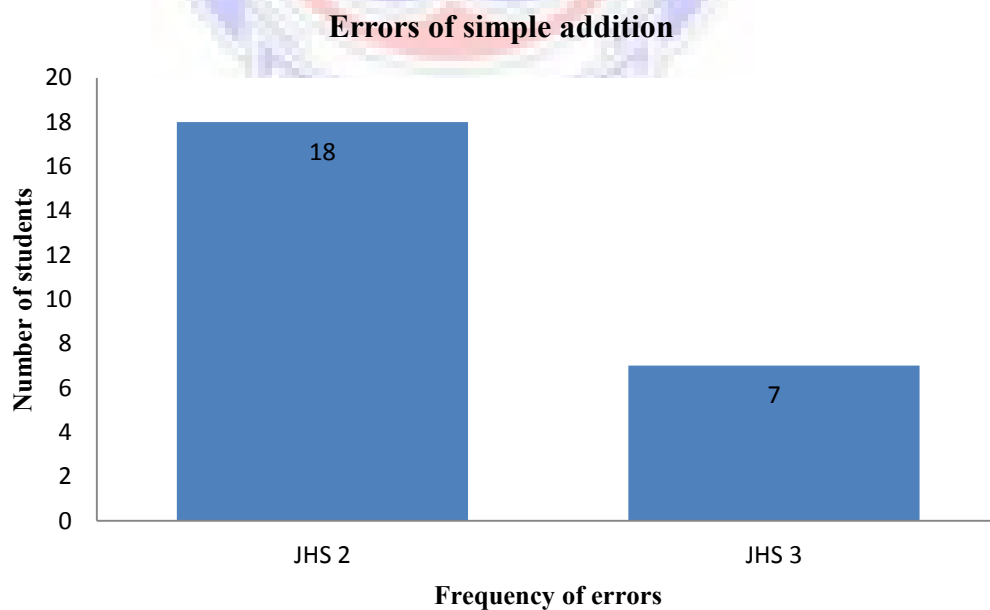


Figure 4.1.4. Errors of simple addition

#### 4.1.5 Errors in the use of adjective clauses

Table 4.1.5 and Figure 4.1.5 provide the summary of the adjective clause errors identified in the data.

*Table 4.1.5. Summary of adjective clause errors*

Type of error	JHS 2	JHS 3	Total	Percentage
Misuse of relative pronouns	73	29	102	43
Omission of relative pronouns	51	20	71	30
Blends	24	13	37	16
Simple addition	18	7	25	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>100</b>

Figure 4.1.4. Frequency of simple addition

Table 4.1.5 presents a summary of the errors committed by pupils in their use of adjective clauses. In all, there were four different types of adjective clause errors committed with a total of frequency of 235. Out of this, JHS 2 students had 166 while JHS students had 69 times. The results of the study point out that Misuse of relative pronouns has the highest number of errors recorded representing 43%. The findings suggest that misuse of relative pronouns is a major learning difficulty for the students. However, most of the wrong use of adjective clauses appeared to be the results of language transfer or lack of knowledge.

The second highest frequency of errors is the omission of relative pronouns within adjective clauses. In the written essays and based tests, JHS 2 students recorded 51



omission errors and JHS 3 students recorded 20 errors respectively. These findings suggest that the omission of English relative pronouns in adjective clauses is another major learning difficulty for students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. Simply put, students' performance in this area shows that they find it difficult to understand the general system of English adjective clauses. Some of the students interviewed admitted that their inability to understand grammar rules is responsible for their inability to read wide and practice. The major reason for this is that they do not have textbooks in the school library.

Errors of blend or cross-association follows with the third highest frequency recorded with JHS 2 students having 24 errors and a total of 13 for JHS 3 students. Although errors committed by students may be blamed on lack of complete knowledge here, it was also observed that some errors were due to negligence. An instance where students chose *whom, whose names are* instead of using or choosing only one which is *whose names are* is an evidence of carelessness. The least number of errors recorded occurred with simple addition. Here, JHS 2 students had 18 while JHS 3 students had 7 errors. The summary in Table 4.1.5 is represented in Figure 4.1.5.



Figure 4.1.5. Summary of adjective clause errors

#### 4.1.6 Summary

Four major types of errors in the students' written essays and adjective clause-based tests have been identified with a total frequency of 235. The error categories were misuse/wrong use of relative pronouns to form correct adjective clause, omission of relative pronouns which make a relative clause, Blends or cross-association of relative pronouns and personal pronouns and the last one being simple addition. In all, the results of the research indicated that the majority of students have difficulty in using relative pronouns to form correct adjective clauses. Its total frequency for both classes is 102 representing 43.4%. The other occurring categories of adjective clause errors are in the following order: omission of relative pronouns had 71 representing 30.2%. Blend or cross-association had 37 representing 15.7% and the lowest being simple addition with 25 representing 10.6%. Table 4.1.5 presents a summary of the adjective clause errors identified for both classes in their written essays and adjective clause-based tests.

In a related study, Ajah (2011) conducted a study on the use of adjective clauses among students of SMAN 1 in Malaysia. His study described the types of errors as well as the causes of those errors. The results showed that the types of error made by the students in using adjective clauses can be classified into four groups. The highest error was misordering with a frequency 85 representing 80.95%. The second highest error made were omission with a frequency 9 representing 8.57%. The third error made by students was misinformation with a frequency 9 or 8.57%. The least-occurring error was addition with a frequency 2 representing 1.90%.

#### **4.2 Interview**

From the interview, it was revealed that the students faced difficulties in learning adjective clauses. They were asked few questions. The questions were based on grammar, specifically on adjective clauses. Although most of the students were afraid to answer questions such as *were you taught adjective clauses? Can you use adjective clauses well in your essay writing? Does your teacher explain things to you the way you want it when teaching?*, few of them gathered courage to do so. In answering the first question, only two (2) students were able to say that they were taught but they did not understand it well. This student answered question (2) by saying that he cannot use adjective clauses because he did not understand them.

They also explained that the major problem they face is the lack of textbooks in the school. They said that this challenge is preventing them from learning on their own. One student also indicated that they need more explanation from the teacher, especially when he teaches grammar. With respect to the teacher, she complained about students' inability to pay attention in class in addition to reading at home. She also lamented about

the government's inability to supply textbooks to schools. Finally, she complained that most of the textbooks do not adequately cover grammar topics for students to learn on their own and understand.

### **4.3 Causes of Errors**

According to Al-haysoni (2012), researchers interested in error analysis have consistently observed that errors are advantageous for both learners and teachers. They note that they provide teachers information on students' errors. This helps teachers in three ways; First, to correct their errors, Second, to improve their teaching, and Third, to focus on those areas that need reinforcement. Brown (2000) classifies causes of errors into two main categories; interlingual and intralingual causes. Interlingual (interference) errors are those that are traceable to first language interference. These errors are caused by negative interlingual transfer. For intralingual errors, they result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language transfer (e.g. Fang & Jiang, 2007; Keshavarz, 2003). Four main types of intralingual errors are identified: overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, and false concept hypothesized. The analysis of the tests, interview and questionnaires revealed the causes of errors committed by the students in the use of adjective clauses. These are explained as follows:

#### **4.3.1 Errors caused by language transfer**

One of the causes of errors committed by the students is language transfer. It has already been discussed that language transfer is where one language is learned in the presence of another language (Perhaps L1). This is sometimes done on the basis of similarities in two languages. According to Selinker (2001), language transfer gives rise

to interlingual errors which are based on the interference theory. The transfer of the learner's first language patterns into that of the second (target) language constitutes the basis for interlingual errors. When this transfer has a negative effect on the second language, then it results in errors. For instance, the adjective clause *whom he loves* in L1 is **siwòwò lɔ** and *which is usually* is **sinɔgaga me dzi**. One notices that *which* and *whom* in English language is **si** in L1. Since L1 does not specify the relative pronoun as it is used in English, students substituted both *whom* and *which* with the L1 equivalent *si*. This resulted in transfer errors because the two languages are completely different.

#### **4.3.2 Errors caused by complexity of rules**

Another cause of errors from the analysis is complexity of grammar rules. Norman (2013) claims that English grammar can be tough. With this, even people who enjoy reading and writing have a difficult time getting all the rules right. Seidu (2006) also posits that the study of English language is not only complex but also illogical and full of irregularities. For example, an omission of *who* from *Mr. Abraham always helps the headteacher of the school is dead* has rendered it meaningless. In applying the rules, a relative pronoun is usually seen in a sentence at the beginning of an adjective clause. Since our target is on the use of adjective clauses in sentences, the rule has to be applied by inserting *who* in the sentence after the noun *Mr. Abraham*. In some cases, the relative pronouns are misused due to the complexity of the English language rules. For instance, in using *which* and *that*, *which* is used in a nonrestrictive clause while *that* is used in a restrictive clause. However, since students are ignorant about grammar rules, they sometimes become confused as to which one to use, hence, the errors.

### **4.3.3 Errors caused by transfer of training**

In the interview, it was revealed that some of the errors students committed were caused by transfer of training. Idris (2016) admitted that about two-thirds of English teachers in Malaysia have been classified as „incapable“ or „unfit“ to teach the subject in schools. This problem affects other nations including Ghana. For example, some English teachers teach grammar in isolation since the teachers did not prompt learners on the need to apply the grammar rules in both written and oral communications. In some cases, teachers teaching languages have not received any formal training, yet authorities allow them to handle language subject. It is also believed that because these teachers lack of a strong content knowledge, they tend to teach the wrong concepts when it comes to teaching grammar.

### **4.3.4 Errors caused by students**

Finally, the researcher discovered from the interview that lack of in-depth reading and practice by students is one of the causes of errors. Students on the other hand blamed this attitude on lack of a school library, lack of textbooks and lack of financial support. They lamented that there are no government-approved textbooks provided while the few that are in the school are not suitable for them to actually understand grammatical rules. They commented that since their parents face financial difficulties, it is difficult for them to get their own story books and textbooks. Therefore, the blame should be apportioned between management and the students themselves because they claim they feel shy to speak English language with the fear of being mocked for making mistake. According to Luke and Mhlauli (2014), lack of students“ preparedness for change and students not being serious with their school work are also causes of errors. Lacour and Tissingon

(2011) suggest that due to poverty, many students struggle to reach the same academic achievement levels of students not living with poverty. This confirms the finding in this research that due to lack of financial support, students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School pay less attention to their books.

#### **4.3.5 Summary of causes of errors**

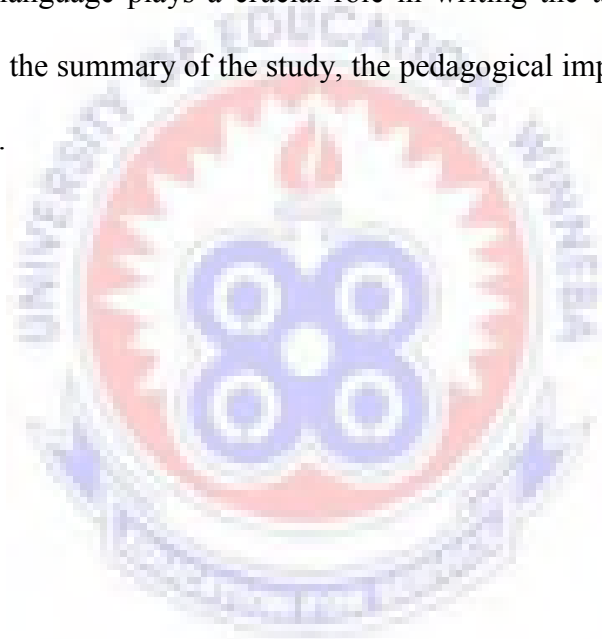
The analysis has revealed that the errors in the selection test and written essays could be traced to several causes: language transfer, complexity of grammar rules, transfer of training, lack of library facilities, lack of textbooks, lack of financial support, and a lack of attention to explanation. In addition, students see grammar as a difficult aspect to learn so most of them do not pay attention to explanation during grammar lessons. Norman (2013) confirms it by saying that English grammar can be tough. With this, even people who enjoy reading and writing have a difficult time getting all the rules right.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has analyzed the data gathered from the written essays, grammar-based tests, and interviews granted the students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School. The study highlighted some common errors made by the students and the causes that account for these errors. The first research question addressed the errors in the use of an adjective clause by the students. Four (4) major error types were identified in the tests and written essays totaling 235. These categories are misuse of relative pronouns, omission of relative pronouns, blend or cross association or contamination, and simple addition. Misuse or wrong use recorded the highest number of errors with 102 representing 43% while omission is the second highest recording of 71 errors representing 30.2%. In

addition, blend or cross-association recorded 37 errors representing 16% while simple addition had the least number of 25 errors representing 11%.

The second research question sought to identify the causes of the students' adjective clause errors. The causes were identified as language transfer, complexity of grammar rules, transfer of training, and errors caused by students. A related study by Taiseer (2008) demonstrated that the number of interlingual transfer errors found in the essays was 445 which constitute about 38% of the total number. This indicates that students' native language plays a crucial role in writing the target language. The next chapter discusses the summary of the study, the pedagogical implications and suggestions for future studies.





## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings based on the analysis of adjective errors committed by the second and third year students of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School, and concludes the entire study. The researcher chose a qualitative design for this study; 132 selected grammar-based test and essays were carefully read and analyzed followed by interviews with one (1) English Language teacher. Many adjective clause errors were found and were classified according to different error types. The first two research questions which sought to find the commonest adjective clause errors committed by the students and the causes of these errors were answered in chapter four. The final research question, "How could these errors be minimized or reduced?" is answered in the discussion of pedagogical implications in this chapter. The first section of the chapter presents the summary of the findings. The second section presents a discussion of pedagogical implications, followed by suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.1 Summary of findings

##### 5.1.1 Categorization of errors

One hundred and thirty two (132) scripts containing adjective clauses-based selection test and essays written by the students were thoroughly read and analyzed. During the analysis, it was realized that the participants committed many adjective clause errors which are: misuse/ wrong use, omission, simple addition and blends. Chapter 4 presented the results of the findings and we realized that misuse errors recorded the highest frequency of errors committed by the participants, which is 102 representing

43%. It can be argued that pupils of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School lack knowledge in the use of relative pronouns. Also, they also do not understand adjective clauses and the rules of English language. That is why instead of *The car that I hired broke down*, students wrote *The car who I hired broke down*. They also wrote *This is the house who caused such a sensation* instead of *This is the house which or that caused such a sensation*. In the researcher's opinion, students committed these errors due to language transfer as explained in chapter 4. There is no difference between who and that in Ewe. For instance *The car that I hired* in Ewe is (Uu si me ye) and *The boy who stole the car* is (Nutsuvi si fi uua.) In the two English clauses, we have *who* and *that* as relative pronouns but in Ewe, *si* represents the two relative pronouns. This means that the same *si* that is describing a thing (the car) is also used in describing a person (the boy) as well.

Omission errors were the second highest occurring error with a frequency of 71 representing 30%. This finding also showed that generally, many of the students do not understand adjective clauses and the functions of relative pronouns in adjective clauses. The relative pronouns which serve as direct object or subject of the relative clause were omitted in this case. These errors of omission might be attributed to lack of understanding of adjective clauses and functions of relative pronouns. It can also be seen as language transfer because more than one relative pronoun in Ewe may be represented by the same word, different from what exists in English.

Another category of error is errors of blend or association errors which recorded 37 occurrences of representing 16%. This category is the third and it is also worth discussing. The examples of sentences under this category are (1) *He is the man who \*he teaches me the mathematics*. Here, the student has blended both the relative pronoun and

personal pronoun. This may be due to lack knowledge of the differences and use of relative pronouns and personal pronouns. (2) *Pizza which that most people love is not very healthy*. This sentence needs only one relative pronoun. However, the students committed an error in producing it because they lack knowledge in the relative pronouns.

Finally, simple addition recorded the lowest frequency 25 representing 11%. Most of these errors occurred because the nouns or the subjects in the sentences did not show possession, even though for example, *whom* was used in instances where *who* would have been used. The student committed this error by adding the “m” to the relative pronoun *who*. They committed this error due to ignorance of the English rules or lack of understanding of the use of the relative pronoun. Although we can identify the adjective clause in the sentences, their grammaticality has been affected.

The expectation stakeholders and many other people in the Ngleshie Amanfro community have about the students of St. Peter’s Catholic Basic School is to always come out with the best in their examinations among all the schools in the circuit. This is because St. Peter’s is a mission school and the only school in the circuit that is not running shift. So people expect them to perform very well but they seem not to perform as expected. Their performance during both end of term and final examinations tells a different story and it was observed in their performance during this research too.

### **5.1.2 Causes of errors**

Looking at the individual causes, it was observed that students committed errors of language transfer. Selinker (2001) identified language transfer as one of the major causes of learner’s errors. According to him, language transfer gives rise to interlingual errors which are based on the interference theory where grammatical structures of the

native language tend to be transferred to the foreign language. The transfer of the learner's first language patterns into that of the second (target) language constitutes the basis for interlingual errors. When this transfer has a negative effect on the second language, then it results in errors. An example of language transfer errors committed by the students is *He has two sisters whom he loves very much*. In L1 is *Norvi nyornu eve le esi siwo wo lor vevie*. Students committed this error because the two languages are completely different. The English relative pronouns are not the same as in L1; they are represented with *si* in L1.

It was also observed that they committed errors caused by complexity of English grammar rules. Norman (2013) claims that English grammar can be tough. Seidu (2006) also explains that the study of English language is not only complex but also illogical and full of irregularities. For example, *Mr. Abraham always helps the headteacher of the school is dead* is meaningless and has no relative pronoun to make an adjective clause. In applying the rules, a relative pronoun is usually seen in a sentence at the beginning of an adjective clause. Since our target is on the use of adjective clauses in sentences, the rule has to be applied by inserting *who* in the sentence after the noun *Mr. Abraham*.

Here, it appears the student is not conversant of the types of pronouns in English language and their functions so they wrote, *He is the man who he teaches me mathematics*. Instead of *He is the man who teaches me mathematics*. It is an undeniable fact that some instructors' context of training contributes immeasurably to students' performance. As Idris (2016) argues, about two-thirds of English language teachers in Malaysia have been classified as "incapable" or „unfit" to teach the subject in schools and we believe this finding is not unique to only the Malaysians or pupils of St. Peter's

Catholic Basic school. Some the errors were also caused by the students. As explained by Mhlauli (2014), lack of students' preparedness for change and students not being serious with their school work are also causes of errors. A serious student who reads a lot will be able to detect a simple ungrammatical sentence.

## **5.2 Pedagogical implications**

Based on the outcome of the research, the researcher considers it necessary to give some pedagogical propositions which if utilized, will help bring some relief to instructors, other stakeholders such as government, parents and students themselves, Although the study was on adjective clauses, the implication will involve the whole English language, because adjective clauses are only a part of it. Teachers of English language should be more proactive in finding out the problems of students, and finding solutions to such problems. In this sense, they should help students to erase the negative attitudes they develop towards English. This can only be achieved based on teachers' method of teaching. It is also advised that intensive in-service trainings are organized for teachers on modern and effective ways of language teaching. Their lessons should be task-based where students take part in interesting and lively activities and game-plays. The lessons should also capture the four skills; reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Every student should be given the opportunity to get involved in the lesson. Where necessary, they should be allowed to do more exercises and discuss their own errors in class, under the supervision of the teacher.

Teachers should not be reluctant in helping students after normal lesson periods. Whenever possible, remedial classes should be organized for the students. Teachers should encourage and motivate students to embrace all aspects of the English language

without any reservation. Teachers should also encourage the students to create a good reading habit from the beginning of the child's education. Since one cannot give what he/she does not have, teachers should be resourceful, look for more relevant materials regarding their subject matter, in order to always appear confident in class. Teachers should themselves be positive in their outlook towards the teaching of English, mostly grammar, for students to also embrace grammar.

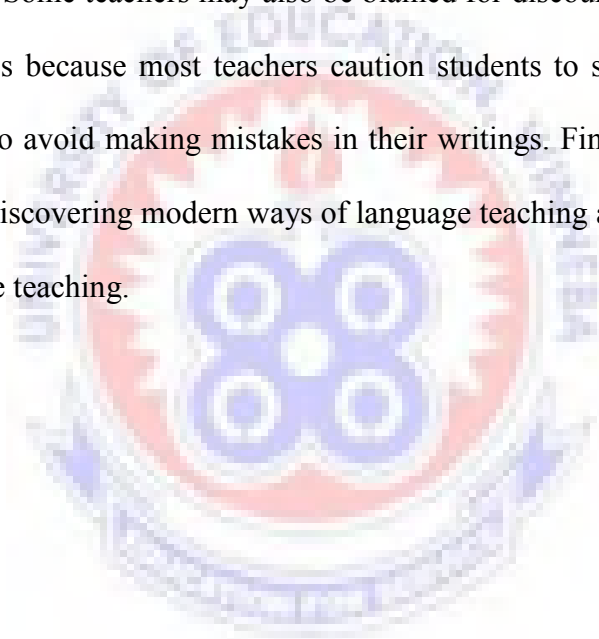
### **5.3 Suggestions for future research**

English language is very broad, yet the study focused on adjective clauses only. There are other areas such as adverb phrases, noun phrases, concord verb-verb agreement, prepositions or word classes in general which can be studied. The error analysis done in this research revealed so many other grammatical errors which were not the focus. Therefore other researchers are encouraged to focus their attention on these areas. The study also involved only second and third year students, but the first year students also have peculiar problems. It is therefore necessary to undertake a study to find out how they also use adjective clauses.

There is also the need to include lesson observation as one of the instruments for data collection so that the techniques used by teachers to teach adjective clauses and grammar in general could be assessed. This way, it helps in triangulating results of this nature. This study is not complete without considering the difficulties encountered by students in the use of adjective clauses. It is hoped that more studies would be conducted to unravel all the problems associated with the use of adjective clauses. This would expose all the difficulties regarding the complexities of the teaching and learning of English grammar.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

In this study, the researcher examined adjective clause errors committed by pupils of St. Peter's Catholic Basic School in the use of adjective clauses. Errors such as misuse had the highest occurrence, followed by omission, blend or association, and simple addition in that order. The teacher who was interviewed also admitted that students did not find grammar a pleasant aspect to learn. From the results, it is argued that teachers may be blamed because it was possible they normally skip or did not teach adjective clauses in detail. Some teachers may also be blamed for discouraging the use of complex sentences. This is because most teachers caution students to stick to the use of simple sentences so as to avoid making mistakes in their writings. Finally, teachers are advised to be current in discovering modern ways of language teaching and also integrate the four skills of language teaching.



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**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTION FOR THE TEST ITEM -1**

Instruction: Underline the correct adjective clauses in the following sentences:

1. She is the young woman (*who delivered the triplets/whom delivered the triplets*).
2. The bus( *that picked the students / who picked the student*) has been hijacked.
3. This is the boxer (*who was robbed / which was robbed*) in the last bout.
4. This is the gold watch (*which he bought/who he bought*) in South Africa.
5. This is the boy (*who won the first prize /which won the first prize*).
6. The book (*which you found/whom you found*) on the table belongs to Kwasi.
7. The tortoise (*that the hunter brought home /who the hunter bought home*) could sing.
8. The dress (*which you designed for me/ whom you designed for me*) has been stolen from the suitcase.
9. The man (*who lives next door/whom lives next door*) is a lawyer.
10. Pizza (*which most people love/ who most people love*) is not very healthy.
11. Fruit (*that is ground originally /who is ground originally*) is expensive.
12. Students (*who are intelligent/ whom are intelligent*) get good grades.
13. Eco- friendly cars (*that run on electricity /who run on electricity*) save gas.
14. The people *whose names are on the list/who names are on the list* will go to camp.
15. The book (*which l had not read fell/ whom l had not read fell*) on my head.
16. The kids (*who were called first/ were called first*) will have the best chance of getting a seat.

17. I enjoy telling people about Janet Kwaa (*whose latest was fantastic which latest book was fantastic*).
18. The man (*who made the mess/whom made the mess*) needs to clean it e.
19. I have two books (*whose colours are red and green/ who colours are red and green*).
20. She is the woman (*whom I told you about/ I told you about*.)



**APPENDIX B**

QUESTIONS FOR TEST ITEM 2

NAME:.....

CLASS.....

DATE/DAY.....

CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER.

1. He is the man .....me yesterday.  
a) Who helped b) whom helped c)is helping d) was helps
2. I have two books .....red and green.  
a)who are colour b) colour are c)whose colour are d) colour
3. The girl ..... I talked to last night is my friend.  
a)who b)which that c)whom d)whose
4. This is the house .....caused such a sensation.  
a) who b) which c) whose d) whom
5. He called the company.....the pipes.  
a) usually supplies b)that usually supplies  
d) that usually d) supplies it
6. The 8.15 train .....is usually very punctual, was late today.  
a) that b) which c)whom d)whose
7. His house, .....all broken, was a depressing sigh.

- a) it b) whose window c) whose windows were d) whose it
8. My neighbor, .....is very pessimistic, says there will be no apples this year.
- a) who b) that c) whose d) which
9. She is the woman..... a) about whom I told you. b) whom I told you about c) you d) you
10. The car ..... I hired broke down.
- a) who b) that c) whose d) that
11. I know the man ..... while he was sleeping yesterday
- a) his car was stolen b) whose car was stolen c) whose was stolen  
d) car was stolen
12. The girls ..... are always complaining about their pay.
- a) who he employs b) whom he employs c) whose he employs  
d) that which he employs
13. He is the best student ..... here.
- a) that has ever studied b) has ever studied that  
c) that her has ever studied d) he has
14. Peter, ..... had been driving all day, suggested stopping at the next town. a) whose b) that c) who d) which

15. The stars ..... lead to the cellar are rather slippery.  
a) whose      b) whom      c) that      d) who
16. The man ..... is a teacher.      a) whom I in Togo  
b) whom I saw in Togo      c) he
17. Akos, ..... children are at school all day, is trying to get a job.  
a) who      b) that      c) whose      d) that which
18. The woman ..... is Lucky's mother.  
a) just now      b) who we just saw now      c) whom we saw just now  
d) we just now
19. All the apples ..... fall are eaten by the squirrel  
a) that      b) whom      c) whose      d) who always helps
20. The movie ..... we saw last night wasn't very good.  
a) who      b) which      c) whom      d) whose
21. I live in a hall ..... many countries.  
a) which residents come from      b) whose residents come from  
c) who residents come from      d) whom residents come from
22. The car ..... very reliable began to slide backwards.

- a) whom handbrake wasn't                      b) whose handbrake wasn't  
c) that which handbrake wasn't              d) who handbrake wasn't

23. Godwin : Do you know the boy .....

Michael : Yes, I do . He is my classmate.

- a) Which helped me last week                      b) he had broken down  
c) who helped me last week.                      d) he saw yesterday

24. This is the picture ..... such a sensation.

- a) it    b) which    c) which caused    d) it caused

25. Mrs. Samson, ....., was very generous about overtime payments.

- a) for that I was working    b) which I was working for  
c) who I was working for    d) for whom I was working .

26. The stairs ..... are rather slippery.    a) that lead to cellar b) that it

- c) lead the cellar    d) lead it.

27. Mr. Abraham ..... the head teacher of the school is dead.

- a) always helps    b) whom always helps    c) he always helps  
d) who always helps.

28. Madam Agnes , ..... everyone suspected, turned out to be innocent.

- a) that    b) whom    c) which    d) whose .



29. Pizza ..... is not very healthy.

- a) most people
- b) which most people love
- c) which that most people love
- d) people love.

30. The people ..... will go to camp. a) whose names are on the list

- b) who names are on the list
- c) names on the list
- d) names are on the list.



## APPENDIX C

### ANSWERS TO APENDIX -1 QUESTIONS

1. who delivered the triplets
2. that picked the students
3. who was robbed
4. which he bought
5. who won the first prize
6. which you found
7. that the hunter brought home
8. which you designed for me
9. who lives next door
10. which most people love
11. that is ground originally
12. who are intelligent
13. that run on electricity
14. whose names are on the list
15. which I had not read fell
16. who were called first
17. whose latest was fantastic
18. who made the mess
19. whose colours are red and green
20. whom I told you about

## APPENDIX D

### ANSWERS TO TEST 2

1. A
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. B
10. D
11. B
12. A
13. A
14. C
15. C
16. B
17. C
18. C
19. A
20. B
21. B
22. B
23. C
24. C
25. C
26. A
27. D
28. A
29. B
30. A

