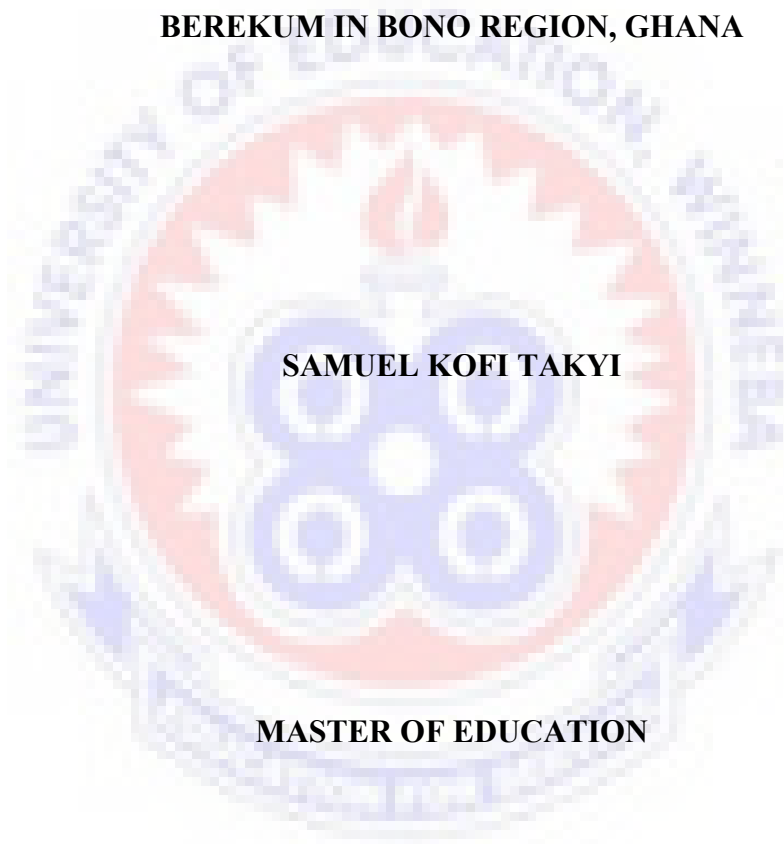**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN COMPOSITIONS OF THE

SHS 3 STUDENTS OF METHODIST SENIOR HIGH/TECHNICAL SCHOOL,

BEREKUM IN BONO REGION, GHANA

SAMUEL KOFI TAKYI

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of

Master of Education
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in the University of Education, Winneba

SEPTEMBER, 2019

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I Takyi, Samuel Kofi declares that this dissertation is entirely my own original work, except with quotations and references contained in published works which have been duly identified and acknowledge and this has not been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE ………………………………..

DATE …………………………………………..

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

**SIGNATURE ……………………………………………………**

DATE …………………………………………………………

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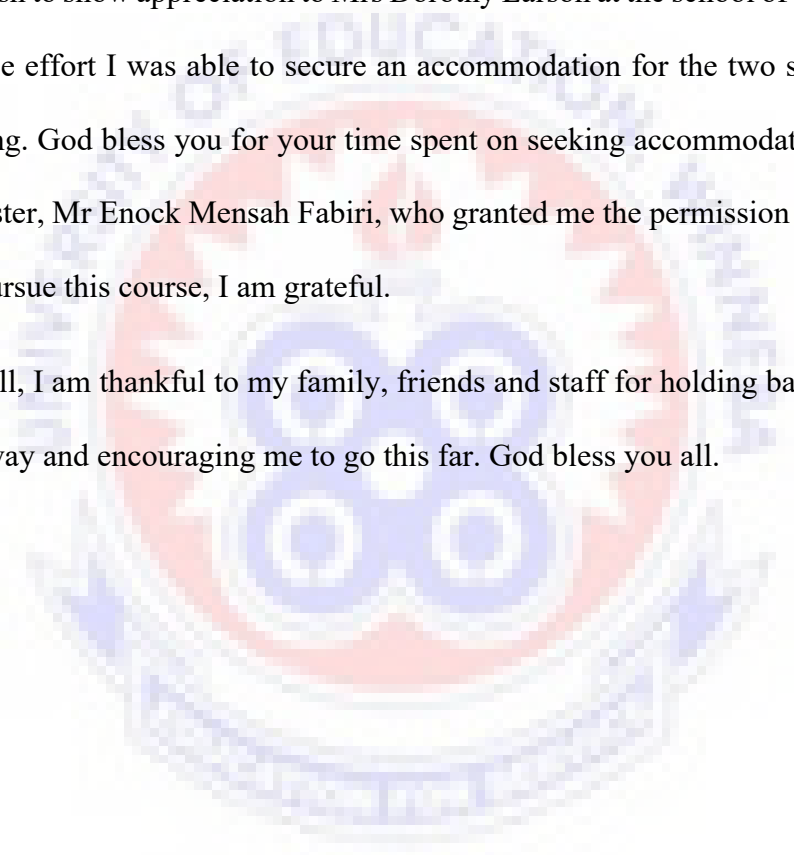
DEDICATION

This work dedicated solely to my wife, Mrs Comfort Annan Takyi, and my children who are dear to me ; Nana Yaw, Paa Kow, Ewurabenaa, for your unflinging support and prayers for me throughout this studies.

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ABSTRACT

This work is a qualitative study that analyses grammar errors in the written essays of SHS graduate in Ghana, specifically Berekum Methodist Senior High/Technical School. The research sought to establish the types and causes of grammar errors in the written composition of SHS graduates and how it could be addressed. A total of two (2) teachers and one hundred and forty (140) students out of four hundred and fifty six (456) population, were selected through purposive sampling technique for the study. The data used for the analysis comprised written essays/exercises of the students, interviews, and observations from teachers. Five major error types were identified and they include; agreement errors, morphological and lexical omissions, capitalization errors, spelling errors and intralingua transfer. From this, agreement errors had the highest frequency with specific errors on word omission being the lowest. Based on the findings of the study, causes of errors in learners' writings were identified as incomplete learning of rules, ignorance of rule restrictions, and context of instruction as well as L1 interference. Suggestions to minimize the errors of students are given with emphasis on teachers' attitude towards the teaching of English language. Other suggestions are made to various stakeholders to ensure effective teaching and learning of the English Language through supervision and those teachers of English language show mastery in the teaching of the language.
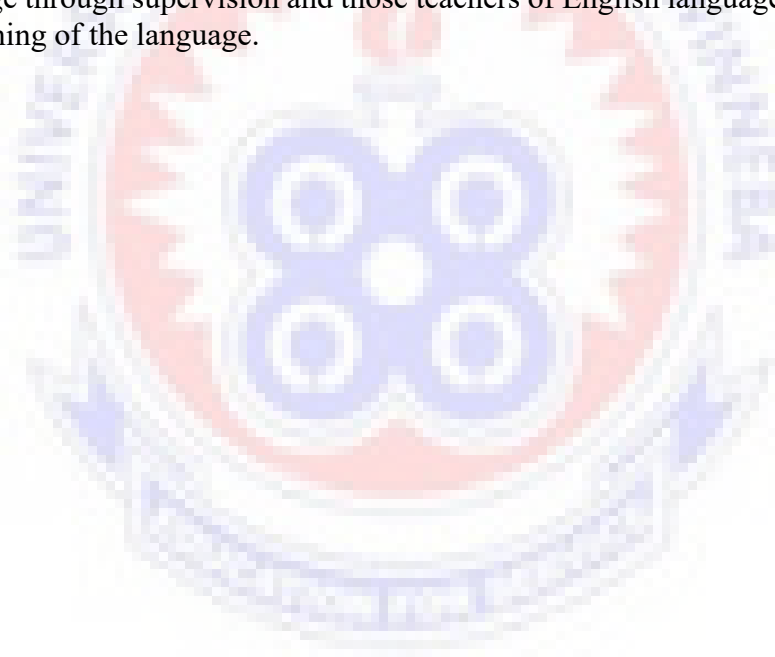
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

English language has become the medium of instruction and an official language for communication in Ghana. The concept of grammar errors in students' writings has called for different responses and approaches from different scholars in the Applied Linguistics. This is a worrying trend especially in the SHS graduates, since it conflicts with the idea. The focus of language teaching is to make learners to be proficient in all the basic language skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, which is confirmed by Brown (2000) that, for one to master the English language, learners have to be adequately exposed to all the four basic skills. For this to be realized the teaching of English language should be aim at imbibing in the learners the basic rules and concept of grammar structure and pronunciation. Since English is the medium of communication at all official gatherings and is used for all instructions and answering of all subjects in the WASSCE except Twi, it becomes essential for the SHS graduates to strive to understand and use the Standard English language.

The teaching of English language in the Senior High Schools is supposed to be a built up on the concept gained at the basic school. Though students are exposed to the rudiments of English grammar at the basic level, learners are not exempted from errors in writing and speaking of the language at the Senior High Schools. It becomes worrying when learners commit unpardonable errors at the SHS 3 prior to writing WASSCE. These errors have constantly featured in the chief examiners report of English language in the country (chief examiner's Report, 2012, 2016, 2017). But it is not surprising when students make such errors in their writings. Hendrickson argued that error is like a sin which ought to be avoided and its influences overcome, but it

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presence expected. (Hendrickson, 1978). Learners are expected at this stage to write and speak proper English devoid of several errors or mistakes. Writing becomes a bit complex and complicated especially when it is done in the second language due to the interference of the L1. It's being argued that the impact of the first language of learners English is heavily felt whenever they write in the English language (Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002). Since errors are inevitable to the second language learners, yet scholars argue that it should be avoided. The question then is how we should deal with the learners' grammar errors after they have occurred.

Many have research into this area and hold various view on how to deal with the errors of learners of second language. Hendrickson proposes that error correction should be reserved for manipulative grammar practice and that errors should rather be tolerated more during communicative practice. For Brown (2000), the issue of how to deal with the corrections of error is complex. Similar research has been conducted by Gyasi (2011) on the essays of first year University Students in Ghana and Bondzie (2015), on SDA SHS 2 graduates, all pointing to the fact the errors are evidence in the writings of SHS graduates on grammar written essays. It is apparent that a similar research is done to ascertain the validity of the result. Hence the study on the kind and causes of grammar errors committed by SHS graduate in general and Meth. SH/TS in particular and suggest ways of addressing them.

1.2   Statement of the problem

Grammar errors have been found to be rampant in senior high school students' written essays. Evidence from the WAEC Chief Examiner's report from 2006 till date observed this. It has also been said by Yankson (1994) that students have difficulty in handling tense, spelling and concord. Again, Edu-Buandoh (1997) has also argued that the abysmal performance of students in the English language may be as a result of

inadequate time allotted to the teaching of grammar as well as lack of proper attitudes of teachers in handling grammar. This confirms the observation I made which is not different from the assertion above that SHS graduate from the school had difficulty passing English Language with good grade for the past five years. Most of them could also not easily express themselves orally in the English Language. This reflects in their written essays and exercises in other subject, where they constantly make errors such as wrong spelling of words, wrong use of punctuations, tenses, subject-verb agreement. It has therefore become difficult for teachers to read their scripts, let alone make meaning of their writings. Often, teachers of different subjects complain of how this has affected their performance in class exercises, tests and examinations. The poor performance of students in the use of English language has been a worrying one. All the teachers agree that there was the need to find a solution to this problem.

Earlier, library facilities had been cited as one of the problems in the school, which could have motivated students to have extra time to read wide to enable them acquire enough vocabulary for good writing is absent in the school. There are only five (5) English masters handling SHS 1-3, and two of them are in charge of SHS 3. They have a sole duty of handling a student's population of over 400, teaching all aspect of English Language grouped into eleven classes. This definitely is not enough and will probably result in students having difficulties in learning the target language aspects such as subject-verb agreement, spellings, capitalization, and punctuation well. It is believed that learning a second/foreign language is a gradual process, during which errors are made in all levels of learning. For this to be corrected, appropriate measures should be used such as, the use of Error Analysis to aid effective teaching and learning of English language.

Scholars confirm that Error Analysis (EA) could lessen the number of errors in students' work. Errors play an important role in learning a second/foreign language; identification of errors by teachers will give them a mastery over the teaching of the language which will help them to help students overcome the difficulty in the learning of the language. For Richards & Schmidt, errors occurs from borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending patterns from the target language, and learners expressing meanings using words and grammar which are already known (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). It has been argued that, for better understanding of students' errors, there is the need for proper investigation and examination of errors. For Corder (1974), a systematic analysis of errors made by second language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. When errors are allowed to overtake one's writing, reading becomes somewhat difficult understanding of one's speech is inhibited. Therefore, the focus of this study in the Methodist Senior High School at Berekum is to investigate and examine the kind of grammar errors made by the students in the school and the causes of these errors, since knowing the source of errors is very helpful in reducing its occurrence (Penny, 2001).

1.3   The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate and identify the grammar errors that SHS graduates commit, and to find out the causes of these errors in the written composition of the learners. The study will analyze these errors and the implication it on for the teaching and learning of English Language and to make suggestions to stakeholders in addressing these errors for effective teaching and learning of the language.

1.4   Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are;

1. To find out the types of grammatical errors that SHS3 students in Methodist Senior High School, Berekum commit in their written compositions?

2. To determine the causes of the grammatical errors in their written essays?

1.5   Research questions

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of grammatical errors do SHS3 students commit in their written compositions?

2. What are the causes of the grammatical errors students commit in their written essays?

1.6   Significance of the study

The study will have a lot of benefit for the teaching and learning and of English language and for stakeholders in decision making and implementation. First, it will help the teachers of English language to help students minimize errors in their written essays, making learning of the second language easy. It will create awareness in language teachers, about the type of grammar errors students make in their essays, as well as the sources of these errors. Teachers will also be enlightened on the role error plays in the language acquisition process and the strategies to adopt in addressing them. Students would be aided to identify and correct their own errors with time. Lastly, the findings are hopeful to be a source of reference and add to knowledge on studies of errors in Language department in Ghana.

1.7   Delimitation of the study

The study focuses on the grammar errors in the written compositions of the students of Methodist Senior High/ Technical School, Berekum. It looks at why students commit such grammar errors and find out how best it could be addressed

1.8   Organization of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 focuses on literature review. This chapter discusses Corder's (1967) theory of error analysis and correction of errors is also reviewed. The research design and methodology used is also the focus of Chapter 3. It describes the research design used, population, purposive sampling technique, research site, and date collection strategies employed. Furthermore, the findings are discussed with pictorial presentation and summary of data gathered are presented in Chapter 4. Here, the categories of errors identified, causes and suggestions for correction are discussed. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn and suggestions proposed in reducing the errors identified.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter looks at analysis of errors types, and causes with the theories proposed by Corder (1967 and Selinkler (2010) are reviewed. Concentration is also focused on how error corrections can be effective. Alroe (2011) argues that for effective correction, it has to be situated within a certain theoretical context. Such framework should be in a position to assist, make and test assumptions and help develop understanding of the theory as pedagogical. For this reason, it will be necessary to investigate into the types of grammar errors, why the types are committed by SHS 3 students in their written essays and suggest how such grammar errors can be minimized from occurring in the level of the learners and teachers.

2.1   Error versus Mistake

Applied linguists drawn our attention to the distinction between errors and mistakes. Brown (2000) differentiated between an errors and mistakes as; a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a 'slip 'in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. As an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflect that competence of the learner (Brown, 2006, p. 217). Again, error is also defined as "the use of a linguistic item in a way that a influence or native speaker of the language regards it as showing faulty or incomplete learning" (Erdogan, 2005p. 263). Ellis (1997) mention two ways to distinguish between errors and mistake which are based on the consistency of learners performance as: If he sometimes uses the correct form and sometimes the wrong one, it is a mistake .However, if he always uses it correctly, it is then an error .The second way is to ask learner to try correcting his own deviant utterance. Where he is unable to, the deviations

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are errors; where he is successful, they are mistakes (Erdogan, 2005 p. 263 cited Ellis 1997). The difference is that an error is a system or repeated deviation from the notion of the language being learned but a mistake as a deviation of the notion not system.

The difference is that, an error is a systematic or repeated deviation from the norms of the language being learned while a mistake is a deviation of the norm yet not systematic. Impliedly, *mistake* can be self-corrected when ones attention is drawn to, but errors, it normally occurs because the learner does not know what is correct, hence, cannot be self-corrected .Thus, with the *error,* the learner uses a linguistic item, which is not known to the learner and cannot explain its correct usage when his or her attention is drawn to. But for *mistake*, the learner can self-correct when the attention is drawn to. This means the learner is familiar with the linguistic item. But for other reasons mistake occurs. In effect a learner can correct a mistake as it will be impossible for the learner to correct an error. Hence, the teacher must be able to understand this phenomenon in order to distinguish learner's grammar mistakes and errors in their written works and to provide appropriate responses.

2.2   Types of Errors

Learner's errors could be grouped in different ways. It could be global or local depending on the varying magnitudes of it according to Brown (2000). Also, there are two areas of errors; the domain and the extent. Domain is considered as the rank or the level of linguistic   unit i.e. from phoneme to discourse which must be taken as context so as to bring the error to the fore. The extent is also the level or rank of the linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, or reordered so as to repair a sentence .It can be mentioned that identifying and describing errors are important in the analysis of the learners errors since that will enable the researcher to know the causes of the errors and the necessary sanction to be applied to arrest the situation. This

suggests that if a teacher is able to identify and describe the grammar errors made by the SHS 3 student, the likelihood is that it will inform decision on the teaching and learning of English grammar. Brown (2006, cited Lennon (1991) and mentioned some ways of identifying and categorized errors as; addition, omission, and ordering. This idea is supported by Dulay et al (1982) by adding misformation and misordering.

2.2.1 Omission errors

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance/sentence. It usually happens in the early stages of second language acquisition. Example:

a. *Akua run for the school* instead of Akua runs for the school.

b. *She is good runner* instead of *she is a good runner*

c. *My friend name Akosua* instead of *My friend's name* is *Akosua*

d. *The boy sick* instead of *The boy is sick*.

e. *He go school everyday* instead *of He goes to school everyday*

In the above instances, some inflexional items which are required were omitted. In *a* and *e* inflexional verb marker *s & es* for the third person singular pronoun like she, he and it, is omitted. For *b*, the singular countable nouns forms must always have articles.

2.2.2 Misformation errors

Misformation errors are characterized by the use of the wrong form of a morpheme or structure. Three type of misformation errors are recognized; regularization errors, archi-forms and alternating forms. *Archi-forms* are one member of a class of forms selected by the learner to represent others in the class as that *dog, that dog*. *Alternating forms:* As the learners' vocabulary and grammar grow, the use of

archi-forms often gives way to the free alternation of various members of a class with each other as that dog, these cats

2.2.3   Regularization

Regularization errors are errors in which regular markers are used in place of irregular ones. Examples:

1. *runned* for run .

2. *growed* for of *grew.*

3. *goed for go*

4. *mans* for *men.*

In these sentences, regular markers of past tense verbs as in sentences (1) , (2) and (3) as well as regular nouns as in sentences (4) were used for irregular ones.

2.2.4   Archi–forms

Archi-forms are one member of a class of forms selected by the learner to represent others in the class. Such as the use of demonstrative adjectives *this, that, these*, and *those*,

a. *This dogs are mine* for *This dog is mine.*

b.   *That boys for That boy.*

c.   *These carton* for *these cartons.*

From the examples above*, this* and *that* are singular and should be followed by singular forms, while *these* and *those* should be followed by the plural forms hence its wrong use. As the learners' vocabulary and grammar grow, the use of archi-forms often gives way to the free alternation of various members of a class with each other as that dog, these cats.

2.2.5   Misordering errors

Misordering errors are characterized by the incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in a sentence. For example,

    a. *He beats all the time her son* instead of *He beats her son all the time.*

    b. *You are going to school?* Instead of *Are you going to school?*

2.2.6   Simple addition

This kind of error is indicated by the introduction of an unwanted item in a sentence. Linguistically, this unwanted item should not appear in a well-formed utterance. It normally occurs when the learner overuse certain grammatical rules of the target language. Simple addition errors are the "grab bug" subcategory of additions. Simple addition error is could either be a double marking or regularization. Examples:

    a. *He must to go* instead of *He must go.*

    b. *She didn't bathed well* instead of *She didn't bath well*

    b. *I wanted to swept the room* instead of *I wanted to sweep the room*.

In both sentences, two items rather than one are marked for the same feature.

2.3   Causes of Errors

According to Erdogan (ibid), errors can be grouped into two main categories in terms of its sources or causes as (i) interlingual transfer, and (ii) intralingual transfer. Erdogan (2005) submitted that errors may occur at different levels of the language; phonological, grammatical, and lexica-semantic elements of the native language into the target language .He exemplified that when Turkish student intend to produce the "th[o]"dental "fricative of thank you "the dental fricative is pronounce as the alveolar stop 't' [t]. Richards (1971) added developmental causes and interference.

2.3.1   Interlingual transfers

Brown (2006) argued that Interlingual transfer errors emerge when the learner applies his/her knowledge of the first language onto the target language resulting in an error. Ellis (1997) argued that there are some errors which are universal or reflective of the learners' effort to make the task of learning and using the target language easy. For instance, the use of the past tense morpheme [-ed] for all verbs in English will result in simplification and overgeneralization   within the target language.

2.3.2 Intralingual transfer

Intralingual transfer is an errors that occurs within the target language itself. It happens when learners begin to acquire new structures in the target language. As learners progress in the, their experiences begin to include structures in the target language. This causes negative intralingual transfer or overgeneralization. In this case learners are unable to apply the rules they have learnt in the target language correctly. Some errors caused by learning strategies include:

2.3.2.1 False analogy

The learner assumes that a new item behaves like the one already learnt. For instance, he or she has learnt that the past tense of *play* is *played* and so assumes that the same rule applies to *go*. Hence, the learner uses *goed* as the past tense of *go* which is not right.

2.3.2.2 Overgeneralization Errors

The learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language (e.g. "He can sings" where English allows "He can sing" and "He sings").

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2.3.2.3 Ignorance of rule restrictions:

This occurs as a result of the learner applying rules to context where they are not applicable. For example; *He made me to go rest"* through extension of the pattern "*He asked/wanted me to go").*

2.3.2.4 Incomplete application of rules

The learner fails to use a fully developed structure. Thus the learner tries to decrease or change the rule pattern. For instance; "You like to sing?" in place of "Do you like to sing?")

2.3.3 Context of learning

The context of learning can also be a source or cause of error, even though it overlaps with both types of transfer. Brown (2006) refers to the context as the classroom with tis teachers and its methods in the case of school learning. He asserted, it is possible for the teacher or the textbook to let the learner make faulty judgment about the target language. Again, he maintained that 'student often make errors because of a misleading explanation from the teacher or faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook or even because of a pattern that was rotely memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized" (Brown, 2006; p. 226). In short, the teacher and the teaching material or methodology could trigger grammar errors.

There are stages in terms of what the learner does with the errors. The stage are random errors, emergent, systematic and stabilization (Brown 2005; cited in Bondzie, 2011). Indications are that, at the random stage, the learner is "vaguely aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of item" (Brown, 2005; p.227) it continued that there is development in consistency in language production in the learner's language at the emergent stage. The learner is not able to correct error when shown to them. At third stage i.e. systematic stage the learner is able to discern the rules and

internalized certain system. Even though the rules may not be correct in the target language, the learner sees them as legimate. This is basically an on and off situation. Again, there is more consistency at the third stage. That is to say not all forms are well formed; they are however approximate to the target language.

In the third stage, the learner is able to correct errors when pointed to them. As regards to the stabilization stage, usually the learner commits relatively few errors and is able to reach near perfection or master the rules to the extent that fluency and decoding of meaning are not problematic. At this stage the learner is able to self-correct (Brown, ibid; p. 227-229). Corrections can be made without any input from the teacher. The above description of the stages of error correction appropriates the view that error correction is systematic from the point of view of the learner since at every stage there is an improvement on the previous stage. In this case, what stage do we place SHS students? Are they at the random, emergent, systematic or the stabilization stage? The reason is that our ability to place them on any of stages outlined by Brown may enable teachers to deal with grammar errors that occur in SHS graduates' written compositions appropriately.

2.3.4 Communication errors

This source is characterized by holistic strategies or approximation. It happens when learners as a result of their lack of the required form of the language item resort to use an equivalent or another near item in the target language. It takes a number of forms. The first is to use a synonym. The second is to coin a word. For instance, using *advice* in place of *advice*

2.3.5   Developmental Errors

Developmental errors (errors that are similar to L1 acquisition). These Errors result from the developmental stages of the learner. They occur when learners attempt to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experiences.

2.4   Error Analysis

Keshavass (1997) suggested that the model of error analysis can be divided into two branches ;(a) theoretical and (b) applied .Theoretically, he mentioned that the whole error analysis involves "the process and the strategies of languages learning and its similarities with the first language acquisition" (Erdogan'2005:p.263 cited Keshavas, 1997).He continued that it consist of   comparison between the errors made in the target language itself. For learners, errors are in dispensable since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses to learn. Selinker (1997) defined errors as "red flags that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the second language (Nzama, 2010; cited Selinker, 1997). Basically, what the theory of error analysis position is that learners do make errors, and the errors should be accepted, examined and categorized to show the processes that operate within the mind of the learner (Brown, 2006.).Error analysis is a means of finding out the activities that go on in the minds of the language learner. It involves making meaning out of the strategies that the leaner use. Systematically analyzing errors made by language learner makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder 1967).Mostly, errors analysis involves an examination of those errors committed by learner in both the spoken and written medium. Corder who has several publications on error analysis put it in writing as: The study of error is part of the investigation of process of the language leaning. In this respect it resembles methodological study of the acquisition

of the mother tongue. It provides us with the picture of linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process (Corder, 1971; p.125)

As regards to the applied errors analysis, it is basically about devising appropriate materials and teaching methods which are based on the results of the theoretical errors analysis. .Nzama (2010) cited Corder (1974) that when the leaner's errors are systematically analyzed. , the result of the analysis make it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching .What this means is that teachers should be able to analyze the grammar errors of their students and device some suggestions to help deal with the errors. In this case, that English language teacher should be able to discern the strategies that their students use in learning the English language in order to know why grammar errors occur and respond appropriately. Additionally, it could be seen as a science of applied linguistics, concerned with the compilation, study and analysis of errors made by second language learners aiming at investigating second language acquisition. For Brown (1980), Error analysis involves the process of observing, analysis and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learners.

2.4.1 Identification and description of errors

Corder (1971) identified a three-stage model for error analysis. The first stage is the collection of the data, and is basically about the recognition of the idiosyncratic language of the learner's .The second stage is the description which is the accounting of idiosyncratic dialect of the learners. Finally, the explanation stage is the ultimate object of the error analysis. Nzama (2010) cited Ellis et al. (1985) and mentioned how to identify and analyze learners' errors .The first step requires the selection of a corpus of language, followed by the identification of the errors. Thereafter, the errors are then

classified and analyzed grammatically. The explanation to the different types of the errors identified and classified.

2.4.2 Why Error Analysis?

Error analysis is useful in second language learning because it reveals to teachers syllabus designers and textbook writers the problem areas of the language learners. Corder (1971) stated that error is visible proof of learning taking place. He reiterated that if errors are studied systematically, it can provide significant insight into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. Again, he believed that studying learners' errors has immediate practical application for language teachers. 'A learner's error …are significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language" (Brown, ibid; p. 217 cited Corder, ibid p. 167). Moreover, language learning is not about acquiring a set of automatic habits; however it is a "process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the learning by some sorts of processing by the learners of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher" (Zhu, 2010; p. 127 cited in Bondzie, 2011). It continued that error making is one of the discovery stages and processes that learners go through. Again, learner's errors actually indicate the nature of the learners' knowledge about the language. It give the teacher of what the learners know and what is needed to be taught.

Additionally, Zhu (ibid) argued from Corder's point of view that errors are important to the learner as they are means through which the learner uses to test hypotheses concerning the language being learned. And to the teacher, error analysis show how effective the teaching materials and techniques are. Error analysis informs the teacher when to introduce a topic or to repeat a topic, and to plan or organize their

teaching procedures and materials. Several authors argued that error analysis helps to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. It assists to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and to find out how people learn a language (Nzama ibid; cited in Ancker, 2000; Weireesh, 1991; cited in Bondzie, 2011). On what to do with the grammar errors in the students' writings, the teachers can identify the challenges of the learner's and device a holistic technique to address them.

2.4.3 Criticism against Error Analysis

On the contrary, there are still some problems associated with the error analysis theory regarding the description of the learner's error. The reason has been that the learners" language may be elusive and it is also dynamic in nature. Therefore, it is difficult to examine the learners' language in a sectional or horizontal way or at a particular point in time. The position that "his language is changing all the time, that his rules are constantly undergoing revision is of course, true and rarely complicates the problem of description but does invalidate the concept of a learners' language" (Corder, 1967). This makes it difficult to actually ascertain what the features of the learner' language is at a point in time. But the question that arises out of this criticism is that can there be a way of describing learners' language within a certain stage of the learner? Probably, a description of the learner's grammar at SHS level can be done to determine why grammar errors occur in their writings and to develop appropriate proposals to deal with it.

Another argument against error analysis is that the textual data to be analyzed is inadequate. According to Corded (1981, cited in Bondzie, 2011), he identified two constraints; external and internal constraints. The reason is that textual data does not adequately give a better view of the learner's language. As regards to the external

constraints, it is posited that the textual data is not a spontaneous utterance on the language produced by the learner who is not under pressure. Therefore, it does not show any natural communicative needs of the learner. Then, regular exercises can be done in the form of oral examination in addition to the textual data to get better impressions of the learner's language. This can help in determining where the difficulties are and to respond appropriately. In effect, SHS students can be tested only on grammar in addition to the written exercises in order to ascertain their problems on grammar and address them accordingly only if the goal of learning the language is learning.

With the internal constraints, "the learner himself will place limitations upon the data that teachers work with by selecting those aspects of knowledge which he has most confidence in" (Coder, 1981; p. 60). In effect, what the learner has mastered will be presented as the learner may tend to dislodge the challenges being faced by him or her in the target language. Here, it is important that teachers ask appropriate questions in order to obtain a response which is suitable to their needs. For instance, if a teacher wants to know the level of knowledge of his or her students on subject-verb agreement, the teacher should be able to formulate a strategy to establish the fact unless the teacher has a problem.

2.5 Related Studies

According to Krashen (1982) there is a distinction between "*acquisition*" and "*learning*". In the view of Krashen, the performance of the second language operates at two independent systems; "*the acquired system*" and *"the learned system"*. The 'acquired system or 'acquisition is defined as "the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language" (Schutz, 2007; para.1 & Brown, ibid; p. 278 cited Krashen, 1982). Krashen (ibid) argued that at the acquisition level "we are generally not consciously aware of the rules

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of the language we have acquired. Instead, we have a "feel" for correctness. grammatical sentences "sound" right, or "feel" right, and errors feel wrong even if we do not consciously know what rule was violated" (p. 10). He therefore admonishes us to concentrate on the communicative act and not the form of utterances. To Krashen (ibid), learning "is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge about the language" (p. 10). He referred to learning as; conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them". In non-technical terms, learning "knows about "a language, known to most people as "grammar", or "rules". Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language, or explicit learning (Krashen, 1982 p. 10).

Brown (ibid) defined *learning* from a contemporary dictionary as "acquiring or getting of knowledge of a subject or a skill by study, experience or instruction" p. 7). He cited a definition from Kimble and Garmezy (1963, p. 133) that *"learning* is a relatively permanent change in a behavioral tendency and is the result of reinforced practices" (p.7). It implies that learning involves acquisition of (a) knowledge (b) a subject, and (c) a skill through study, experience, and instruction. Again, it also includes the tendency to change behavior through continues practices. In other words, learning is not realized if all those conditions are not met. Walter (2004) argued that effective learning include the following processes; (a) making connections about what has been learnt in different contexts, (b) reflecting on one's own learning and learning strategies, (c) exploring how the learning contexts have played a part in making the learning effective, (d) setting further learning goals, and (e) engaging with others in learning. It continued that effective learning usually requires feedback and not only repeating task. When students repeat task, it is likely that their skills will improve. In the domain of

this work, Krashen (1982) thought that conscious learning is thought to be useful to grammar error correction whiles it has little or no effect on subconscious acquisition. Again, he mentioned that the error correction by all intends and purposes assist the learner to induce or "figure out" the right form of a rule.

The Affective filter compasses the beliefs that there are certain emotional elements- affective variables- affective variables'- that assist but has no contributory role in second language acquisition. The variables are motivation; self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety tend to be better equipped for success in second language acquisition. Likewise, low motivation, low self-esteem, and debilitating anxiety have the potentials to trigger the affective filter which eventually forms a mental block. This prevents comprehensive input from being used for acquisition. Krashen (1982) opined that an effective language teacher is "someone who can provide input and help make it comprehensible in a low anxiety situation" (p. 32). The question, do SHS graduates who have high motivation, self-confidence and low anxiety produce written work with less grammar errors? Again, can teachers provide input on grammar without triggering any of the affective variables of the learners in a negative way?

2.6   Types of Error Correction Techniques for Written Exercises

Studies of error correction techniques have shown that there are several techniques for error correction which teachers resort to in a classroom. Walz (1982) listed various techniques for error correction in his publication Error *Correction Techniques for the Foreign Language Classroom.* Walz (1982) cited Wingfield (1975) and mentioned five means that can be used to approach the correction of written compositions as (1) providing clues for self/correction (2) correcting the text (3) making marginal notes- comments and footnotes (4) explaining errors orally to students, and

(5) using errors as an illustration for class discussion. But in all of these, Wingfield subscribed to self-correction by students. He believed that there is virtually no difference correcting compositions and oral errors and that students' can precede teacher correction. Philips (1968) argued that it has been a dilemma if the mere provision of correct forms to students will benefit them in the long run. He continued that presumably students may find it difficult remembering the input or sometimes not even bother to read written correction (Walz, ibid; p. 27 cited Philips 1968). The types of error correction techniques have been discussed n this work under three broad heading as (a) self-correction (b) peer correction (c) teacher correction..

2.6.1 Self correction

There are two types of self-correction. Self-correction through symbols and abbreviations and reference to grammar rules.

2.6.1.1 Symbols and abbreviations

This type of technique is a situation where a symbol is written at the margin of the work where the specific error is, and either pointed out by underlying or not. The students must then be able to locate the error and correct. This is normally done to motivate students to correct their own errors of grammar. This self – correction requires that the students rewrite the work and turns it in with the original script. Hendrickson (1980) suggested a standardized set of symbols for the indirect corrections. He talked of underlying the incorrect spellings, a circle around inappropriate words, and an arrow for a missing element and a question for a confusing phrase. This meant that the teacher prepares a standardized set of symbols with its possible interpretations and hand over the symbols and the abbreviations to the students before the beginning of the class Walz (1982) cited Hendrickson (1980).

2.6.1.2 Reference to grammar rules and checklist

The reference to grammar rules is a situation whereby rules of grammar are prepared in the form of a textbook for learners to refer to. A learner can refer to the book whenever one breaks any grammar rule in a written work (Walz (ibid) cited River, 1975 & stuck, 1978). For example the *Glenco Grammar and composition hand book, middle school* can be a good source of reference to grammar rules Cohen (1975 cited in Bondzie,2011). In effect the teacher can prepare a checklist to most frequent grammar errors made by learners as a source of reference for grammar error correction.

2.6.2 Peer correction

According to Sultana (2009), peer correction is a form of self-correction is closely tied with the learners autonomy with the saying "Tell us, we forget; Show us we remember; Involve us, we learn" (p. 11). Sultana (ibid) mentioned that self-correction is a technique which makes it possible for students to correct their own errors. It continued that, peer correction is done in a classroom to enhance learner autonomy, cooperation, interaction and involvement. Peer correction can "foster the development of skills needed to regulate their own learning, and places more responsibility for learning on the students" (Sultana, 2009; pp. 11-12 cited Reif, 1990; & Harmer, 2007). Sultana (2009:11-19) posited that "the involvement of peers in the correction process makes the classroom atmosphere more supportive and friendlier" (p. 12). Undoubtedly, there are certain criticisms against the use of peer correction in the classroom even though it has cognitive, social and affective values. Sultana (2009) argued that some learners might feel reluctant to correct their friends' because correcting friends' errors might harm their relationship. Harmer (2004) put forward that students may feel inferior to their peers after getting corrected by a peer. In such cases

students prefer to be corrected by the teacher greatly. Sultana, (2009); cited Harmer, 2004).

2.6.2.1 Projection

In this case a learner's work can be projected on a screen for the whole class to correct. Hagel (1978) mentioned that there has been a successful exercise on this at the secondary school level with the use of an opaque projection. The suggestion is that two more students work are selected the day before due date for the writing of the composition, and are made to write on transparencies. In this case the learners-authors are advised to remain anonymous. Thereafter, the work will be projected on the screen for the errors to be corrected by the class. (Walz,1982); cited Hagel, 1978). It is argued that it may be a platform to provide some group of learners with grammar errors evidence to concentrate grammar errors for correction of which learning may take place. The demerit of this is that the author gets distracted as only fewer learners may dominate the class discussion. . Walz (1982; cited Witbeck (1976).

2.6.2.2 Group composition

In this situation, learners are grouped and made to write compositions. This provides an opportunity for dealing with the learners' written works. It is normally suitable for teachers who have large classes and find it difficult to grade learners frequently. The merits of this strategy are that the teacher has less work in the sense that fewer pages and fewer are expected to be dealt with. It is also an opportunity for learners to get oral practice through discussion on the written work in the target language (Walz , 1982; cited in Vallete, 1973).

2.6.2.3 Exchanging of compositions and in-class editing

Regarding exchange of composition, each student identifies a partner and swaps his/her written exercise for corrections. Here, the teacher may be of help by selecting specific types of grammar errors for learners to look for. Also the teacher may retype the work by eliminating the grammar errors and ask the learners to evaluate and improve on the written work   (Walz, 1982; cited in Witbeck, 1976). But in-class editing encompasses editing approach that involves self and peer (Walz (1982); cited Guadiana, 1981). The suggestion is that learners rewrite their compositions early in their homes and correct their grammatical errors. They then rewrite them in class as classmates while the teacher guides them. Here, the class reads the work and discusses the essays by correcting the grammatical errors and noting the elements of style and organizational strategies using the L2.

2.6.3   Teacher correction

Direct Correction: This implies when learners are not able to make meaning out of an indirect correction. The general technique is for the teacher to draw a line or underline the portion where the error is in order to draw the attention of the learner. For example, a misplaced can be bracketed and put in it right order with an arrow. Superfluous or bad words are crossed out entirely. For semantic errors it should be corrected in a direct manner as possible, by providing the exact answer (Walz, 1982; cited Hendrickson, 1980). Hendrickson (1980) defines direct correction as "when the teacher tells the student where the error is and what he correct form is" p.387 (Walz , 1982; cited Hendrickson, 1980).

2.6.3.1 Charting error

Hendrickson (ibid mentioned that many languages educators usually supply the learners with the correct form or structures of their written language; however other

teachers assert that the procedure is ineffective when assisting students to learn from their mistakes Hendrickson, (ibid) cited Corder, 1967; Gorbet, 1974,&Valdman, 1975). In the view of Hendrickson (1979), other scholars have proposed the discovery approach to error correction. The essence is to assist learners to make inferences and formulate concepts about target language. This can go a long way in helping learners to fix the problem with the information provided.

Hendrickson (1979) asserted that the several scholars recommended that teachers record their students' error on diagnostic charts in order to show the causes of the problem areas of the learners. Hendrickson (1979) opined that the grid allows errors to be categorized along two scales Sander, 1991; cited in Hendrickson, 1979; p. 363). On the horizontal scale, the categories are (1) lexicon means vocabulary, semantics, or error of meaning, 2) syntax also means grammar, including word order, verb phrases, and other elements of structure, 3) Morphology includes grammatical agreement of various kind, such subject-verb agreement, plurals, and 4) Orthography spelling, capitalization and punctuation. Also, on the scale of vertical "global" refers to errors that affect the entire organization of the sentence, for instance, missing subjects or main verbs. Sander (1991) said that Hendrickson's grid is intended to characterize the writings in the English Language.

Hendrickson (1979) the usefulness of the diagnostic chart as "developing individualized instructional materials, for building hierarchy of error correction priorities, and providing more about the process of second language acquisition" (p. 394). He concluded by indicating that teachers use various techniques in dealing with the learner's error, however, there is no evidence of a particular techniques to substantiate whether indeed it helps in reducing learner's error significantly. Once again, this makes it possible for one to posit that it may be difficult in arriving at a

particular technique for grammar error correction since each learner or group of learners may prefer certain technique(s) at some points and at other time.

2.7   Conclusion

It is hopeful that the principles and the error analysis theories discussed will provide the structures for pointing to the grammar errors in the learner's writings. The error analysis makes available the ingredients for description, identification and the sources of the grammar errors in learner's writings. Similarly, the review of the related works on second learning and error correction will also facilitate in discussing the problem of grammar errors. In effect, the linguistic principles and the error analysis theory will be used wholly in appreciating the types and causes of the learners' grammar errors, and help suggest some means of tackling the problem. The issue relating to the teaching and learning of English grammar and the correction of grammar errors in the Methodist Senior High School, Berekum SHS 3 in particular and SHS graduate in general will be useful.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology, design and the procedures that was used in obtaining the data, data collection techniques and the particular population sample strategies used. Again, the chapter will explain the specific process adopted for data presentation and analysis. The research method is based on the following research questions;

3.1   Research design

This research work used qualitative design in collecting data and for its analysis. From Donyei (2015), qualitative research design is an open study that can respond flexibly to new details. Again, Patton (2014) also wrote that qualitative research "is an effort to understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there." Such research method seeks to make meaning out of the existing situation and not necessarily attempting to foretell what might happen in the future. This helps the research to understand the nature of the issues. Donyei et al (1997), proposed eight (8) distinctive features of a qualitative research design. These are;

a)   Attention is focused on the social context of meaningful events; b) a serious effort is made to understand the social world from the stand point of the participant in it, C) the inductive approach is mainly used, d) data collection techniques largely include interviewing, observation, examination etc, e) procedures and tools for the data gathering are continually revised in the field situation; f) the concern is primarily with discovery and description although verification is also possible; g) hypothesis are usually developed during the research rather than apriori; h) analysis is presented for the most part in the narrative rather than numerical form (Bondzie,

2015 cited Cobb and Hagemaster, 1997). The research is the study that focuses on in-depth description of the situation; thus the grammatical errors committed by the SHS 3 students.

The context of this work is an investigation into the grammatical errors of the students and to understand the issues among teachers and students of SHS3 in the Berekum Methodist Senior High/Technical School. In the qualitative research or study, the concentration is not only to see the outcome but the participant were contacted properly for better examination and analysis. Chenail (1995 cited in Bateson & Harries-Jones, 1995), proposed reasons for openness in the part of the researcher; thus readers will get opportunity to ascertain the validity of the research and the target group to foresee what the data might be in the representation of the data.

Observation was basically used to on earth responses on the factors that account to the grammatical errors of the students. The examination of students' exercises and observation is to get practical answers to the research questions.

The procedure for collecting the data was from the examination of students' exercises, the teaching syllabus for English language and textbooks for SHS3. Form three (3) students were used in order to get their standard in the teaching of English Language and to help teachers address those errors identified before students finally get ready for WASSCE. The following SHS3 five (5) classes which represent the entire SHS3 year group will be examined

Selection of teachers was two (2) SHS 3 English teachers out five (5) plus the head of Department of English. The reasons for their choice is that; i) they teach the subject and believed to be qualified and hence have the knowledge of the subject matter; ii) they have been teaching the grammar and therefore have been part of the actors in correcting the grammar errors of students. The head of department who has been

teaching the subject for many years and was believed to have the in-depth knowledge about the problem identified and indeed helped in providing practical solution where the teachers failed. As the HOD, it gave him the insight into the allocation of teachers in dealing with aspect of the English language.

3.2 Population

The population for the study was the teachers and students of Methodist SHTS in Berekum East Municipal of the Bono region. The total target population for the study is five hundred and forty six (546). There are ninety-six (96) teachers and four hundred and fifty (450) students. The population for the research work was the SHS3 students comprising of eleven classes and their English teachers and that was what the researcher used.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The main purpose of sampling was to find out the individuals who can provide rich and varied details into the work under investigation, in order to maximize what is to be learnt (Donyei, 2015). Purposive sampling technique meant a situation where the selected units in the sample had an unknown probability of being selected, where some target population might not even have the chance of being in the sample. These sampling techniques are what the research made use of. The essence of the choice enabled the researcher got the participant relevant for the study. In this case a sample of participant in each class were selected proportionately. AS argue by Donyei (2015) and Patton (1990), such purpose sample helped the researcher to examine well the exercises and the document available and did proper analysis of the data.

The sample for the study was made up of one hundred and forty (140) students representing about 30% of the available population of the SHS 3 students, and three (3) English language teachers also representing 60% of the accessible population of

teachers of English for SHS 3. Gay (1987 cited in Bondzie, 2015), had argue that for a proper descriptive research like this, the minimum sample should be 10%. However, 30% was used for the purposes of better representation of the errors committed by the students. What it means is that the sample population for the research used was ten (10) students each from, 3A1, 3A2, 3A3, 3A4, 3H/E, 3Tech and 3Sci instead of the five (5) proposed. This was helpful in getting fair representation of the population to be studied. The result of their data analyzed is generalized for the entire population.

3.4   Data collection instrument and strategies

The main instrument for data collection was documents (exams scripts, exercises and syllabus) and 2) structured interview questions. Depualo (2000) posited that in a qualitative research the purpose was to reduce the chances of discovery failure as opposed to reducing estimation of errors in quantitative research. And, that was why multiple strategies were employed to obtain the needed information. Again, the use of the structured questionnaire was to help the researcher get a valid response from the population. The exam scripts of the selected students were taking from the English masters and were remarked for the identification of the errors.

In this instance, students' exercise books and exam papers were examined covering the use of the English language with specific focus on composition writing and English grammar. All grammar errors in the exercises were identified, classified, described and analyzed using the two linguistic principles and theory of error analysis. An observation or interview of teachers and students was carried out to clear all questions bothered on whether the elements identified are mistakes or errors, and whether the subjects exercises also covered how the grammar errors in the learners' written works were corrected by the teachers as well as students' attitudes toward the exercises. Additional documents like the teaching syllabus for the English language

was used with these area, the topics, the content, the objectives involved in the teaching and learning of the English Language, and how learners were evaluated on (a) knowledge and understanding, and (b) use of knowledge.

3.5   Data analysis

The analysis is made up of the respondents and results from the documents. It had been said that "the use of different methods in concert compensate for their individual limitations and exploits their respective benefits" (Shenton, 2004, p. 65). The analysis followed a pattern of the data as presented in response to the research questions. It was done in the form of description. Returns were made to the substantive, theoretical and methodological literature for the analysis. Finally, the data derived were used for creation and displays. Bazeley (2009) said "the researcher moves away from describing to explaining through a 'ladder abstraction" (p.12). Microsoft word and excel were used to design the tables and chat.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0   Introduction

The findings of each of the research questions are presented and analysed in this chapter. The chapter has three sections; these are the types of Errors, causes and suggested solutions of grammar Errors identified. The types of grammar errors identified include; agreement errors, capitalization errors, spelling errors, lexical omission and morphological additions. These grammar errors have been categorized under sub-headings and in each sub-heading data on the frequency of occurrence and examples of sentences with the grammar errors are given with the appropriate construction of what it should have been. Again, the possible causes of the grammar errors are indicated, with a date and bar chart on the responses given. Proof of students and teachers suggestion on the causes is given.

The causes of grammar errors identified include lack of knowledge and understanding of English language rules by the students topping the scores, possibly as a result of poor methodology employed by the teachers, capitalization errors as a result of students' wrong uses of upper case and lower case. Then spelling errors arising from incomplete learning of rules leading to addition or omission of certain elements unnecessarily or substitution of letters in words, the context of students also accounted to the errors made. This was as result of lack of grammatical rules and wrong methodology use by teachers, then unavailability of reading and writing materials and interference of L1 as the lowest.

4.1   Categorization of grammar errors

The errors of students identified by the researcher are grouped and rated in percentages. An interaction with the head of department and the English teachers

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confirmed the following as grammatical errors; agreement errors, spelling errors, morphological and lexical errors, capitalization errors and intralingua transfer. These errors are presented in a data form and discussed with figurative representation of responses. Top on the list is Agreement Errors.

4.1.1 Agreement

For every sentence to be complete or acceptable, it should satisfy certain basic rules. A simple subject-verb agreement implies that the subject of the sentence and the verb of the sentence must be in agreement in number. The rule is that; Subjects and verbs must agree in number. If the subject is singular, the verb must be singular too.

Example: She goes to the market.

Then if the subject is plural, the verb must also be plural.

Example: these students go to school everyday

In these two sentences, for instance example 1, the subject is *she* (singular) and its corresponding verb is *goes* (which is the 3rd person singular of go*)*. For example 2, the subject is *they* (plural) and its verb is *go* (1st person singular/plural). The plural pronoun *these* cannot by rule of grammar take *student*, because these is a plural of this, therefore the proceeding word must also be in plural form hence *students*. Sometimes, however, it seems a bit more complicated than this. When the subject of the sentence is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, a plural verb is used. Example**:** *the master's student and the committee meet every day*. If a sentence does not follow this basic rule, it makes the sentence ungrammatical. There are two varieties of agreement errors which were identified in the study; subject-verb agreement and number agreement.

4.1.1.1 Subject-verb agreement

The following are subject-verb agreement errors identified in students' writings;

1. my aunt with her husband **sing** in the church, and

2. she remembers them but they **doesn't** seem to know her

3. the number of JHS **students who was** enjoying free education

4. Our parent are **get** more money for their project

5. They do not **spent** time on their books

In the context of (i) and (ii), the heads of the subject noun phrases are ***Aunt*** and ***They*** which are the entities that are being talked about. The subject NPs [**Aunt**] and [**They**] are singular and plural form respectively. Thus, in terms of the principles of obligatoriness and grammatical categories, the forms of the verbs by the positions they occupy in the sentences should not have been ***sing*** and ***doesn't***. So, the subject noun phrases –**aunt** and **they** – do not agree with the verbs – **sing** and **doesn't** respectively. Meaning the third person agreement morpheme [-s] is omitted on the verb **sing** and erroneously marked on the verb **do.** Clearly the sentences are unquestionably ungrammatical, and therefore they are covert errors as argued by Corder (1971). Again, for *the domain* of these errors they are found at the sentence levels. Therefore, *the extents* are the verbs [***sing]*** and [***doesn't***] which have to change forms for the sentences to be grammatically correct in (i) and (ii). For the sentences in iii, iv and v, the students failed to recognized the rule of plural verbs going for plural nouns, thus students used *were* instead of *was*. Again the use of *are getting* gives an impression of a present continuous aspect but the lack of knowledge of this made the student wrote *are get.* For sentence v, the verbal phrase must agree, do is in present hence spent should also be in present.

In response to the question; which kinds of the grammar errors give rise to complaints? The subject-verb agreement error is mentioned as "the kinds that are associated with complex subjects or irregular verbs" (Bondzie, 2015). An example is

given as '*the man with his friend and their mates are coming*' (interview, January, 2019). This may suggest that the prepositional phrase (with her husband) in *i* that come immediately after the head noun is also seen as an inherent feature of the subject noun phrase by the learner. It makes the learner to see the subject noun phrase as plural forms in *i*. Thus, marking the plural feature on the verbs – *sing.* The words or group of words that come immediately after the head noun may be the problem since similar error like; 'I never goes to school' is also encountered in some of the exercises examined. In *ii*, the problem may be caused by the antecedent noun phrase that the subject noun phrase refers to. Students may think that the subject *they* refer to the third party singular form *She* and not the object noun phrase *Them* – the third person object form. This might have motivated the learners to mark the verb do with the singular morpheme [-s].

4.1.1.2 Number agreement

The following sentences also portray grammar errors that relate to number agreement;

1. bread winners in **[this strange women]** (exams script, December, 2018).
2. **[this things] has been** a situation in my school here (exercise, November, 2108).
3. the JHS certificate **is not provided** job with them (exam script)
4. One **thing make us** so pleased (exam script,)
5. My **parents was** thinking about ……. (exam scripts)

In *i* and *ii* the number inherent in the heads - **[women]** and **[things]** of the NPs in the square bracket does not agree with its corresponding determiners - **[this]** and [**this**]. The heads of the NPs are plural in nature whereas the corresponding determiners are singular in nature. From the perspectives of the principles of obligatoriness and grammatical categories, the forms of the determiners by the positions they occupy in

the phrases should not have been *this* and *this* but ***these*** and ***these.*** Consequently, the inherent feature of plurality of the head NPs is not in agreement with the determiners which are singular in form. Therefore, the situation clearly tells that at the phrasal level, the NPs are unquestionable ungrammatical, and therefore they are overt errors as argued by Coder (1971). Again, for the domains of these errors, they are found at the phrasal level; ***[this strange women]*** and ***[This thing]***.

Therefore, the extents are the determiners *this* and *this* which have to be deleted and replaced with the appropriate forms for the phrases to be grammatical. For example one thing which is singular must go with a singular verb *makes*, instead of *make* and so with the last example, where students choose to use a singular verb for a plural noun.

In terms of teaching and learning of English grammar in senior high schools, students must be made to understand how concept of agreement operates in the English language. For instance, singular noun phrase subjects agree with singular verbs as determiners that denote singular sense move with singular nouns. Likewise, plural noun phrase subjects agree with plural verbs as determiners that denote plurality which also move with plural nouns. Students must be made aware of what constitute a singular noun phrase subject and a plural noun phrase subject. The belief is that when such is done it will equip students to know how the agreement rules work and apply them accordingly. These findings support the assertion made by Yankson (1994). With the two errors under this category, the subject – verb agree seems to occupy a higher column as indicated in Table 4.1.1.

Table 4.1.1. Summary of agreement errors

Error	Frequency	Percentage
Subject verb Agreement	95	63.3

Number Agreement	55	36.7
Total	150	100

The data from the Table 4.1.1 indicates that students error on subject – verb agree scores a high number of 63.3% representing 95 records as against 36.7% representing 55 score for number agreement. This is represented in Figure 4.1.1.
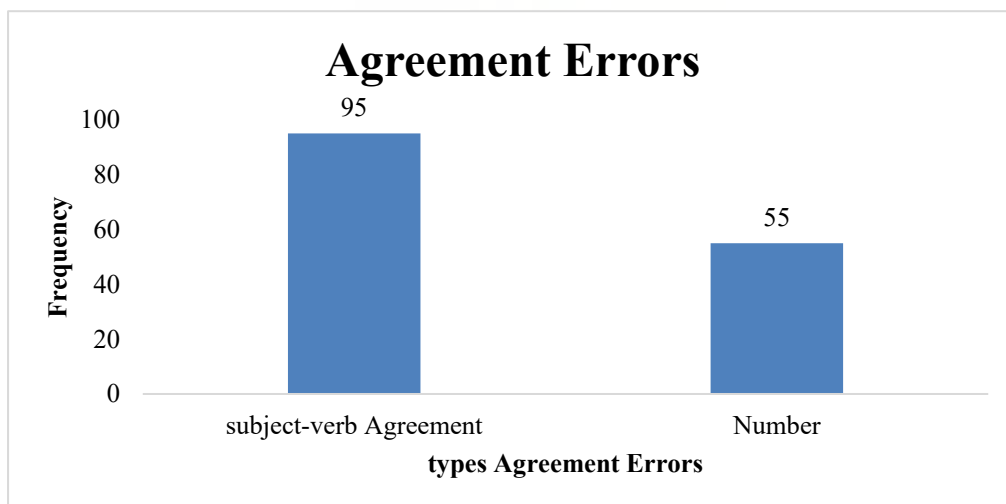
Fig. 4.1.1. Summary of agreement errors

4.1.2 Morphological and lexical omissions

This is a situation where learners omit some morphological and lexical elements in their appropriate places in a sentence thereby resulting in grammar errors. The following are some of the examples identified:

1. **He** wants to go to the **highest** [ ] of education (student class exercise, Nov. 2018)

2. These are legal and illegal. Legal is **[the]** better because it is **prescribe** [ ] by the states,

3. It **cause [ ]** harm to nervous [ ] (student class exercise, November 16, 2018).

4. the () do not spen () time on their books

Concerning (1), the word *highest* is the superlative form of the word **[high]** which is an adjective. The framework of grammatical categories makes it clear that the superlative forms of adjectives "compares one person or thing with several others. In this case, the form *highest* is not comparing anything with others. Alternatively, adjectives also modify nouns; but in this case no noun comes after the form *highest.* Again, the circle does not 'associate with' adjectives. In effect by placing the article before the adjective *highest* and omitting a noun after the adjective makes the whole sentence ungrammatical and ambiguous. So the a. sentence should have read **"...he want to go to the highest [level] of education".**

In (2) and (3), the form [the] - a definite article does not associate with adjectives, but nouns. Once the article "the" has been associated with the adjective better, it causes grammar error of addition. Likewise, the stems [prescribe] and [cause] by the positions they occupy in the sentence should have been suffixed with the particle marker [-ed] and the third person singular maker [-s] respectively derive grammatical sentence in both cases, but they are omitted resulting in grammar errors of morphological omissions. Again, in (3), syntax requires that the form [nervous], an adjective should have been [nerves], a noun. Or a noun should have been placed after the form [nervous] to qualify it. Thus, the noun has been omitted as there is no need to suffix the stem [nerve] with the derivational morpheme **[-ous].** For example 4 , the learner omitted **y** in **they** and **d** in **spend** making the sentence meaningless. In effect, the sentences should have read;

1. It causes harm to **[the nerves or nervous system**]

2. These are legal and illegal. Legal is better because it is prescribed by the states.

3. It **causes** harm to the nerves (student class exercise, November 16, 2018).

4. the**y** do not s**pend** time on their books

4.1.3 Capitalization errors

The correct use of capitalization is a basic requirement for every written sentence. The uppercase letters are used to begin sentences and proper nouns such as names of *persons, places or towns* etc. From the study, learners were found carelessly misusing the role of capital letters. In some cases, students used the upper case where lowercase letters are to be used (e.g. **koforidua** instead of **Koforidua**) and vice versa (e.g. plays **Volleyball** instead of **volleyball**). The analysis shows that 205 errors were made on capitalization, involving omission of capital letters where necessary and the use of capital letters when not required.

4.1.3.1 Omission of capital letters

The study revealed that most students begin sentences with small letters, instead of using capital letters. For some, proper names did not begin with capital letters. These are some examples of such errors:

1. *sunyani is the capital of Bono Region.* (Sunyani)

2. *due* to free education in Ghana *(Due)*

3. *parents* are now free from paying fees. (Parents)

4. *lastly* i entreat you to give my compliment. (Lastly)

5. *because* we all know that .... (Because)

From the examples above, *due, lastly and because* in sentences (2), (4) and (5) respectively, begin the sentences and should start with capital letters but students were found replacing that with lower case letters. This made the sentences wrong, because a

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basic sentence must begin with a capital letter. Also, *sunyani* as in sentence (1), *parents* in sentence (3) and are proper nouns, therefore they should start with uppercase letters instead of the lowercase letters used. This problem is due to ignorance of rules and incomplete knowledge of rules which resulted in the learners' inability to distinguish between proper and common nouns and when to begin a word with upper case letter or lower case letters.

4.1.3.2 Incorrect use of capital letters

From the research, it was revealed that an average student uses the capital letters incorrectly. Some of the examples of such uses are;

1. In addition, *This* free senior High School........ (This)

2. Due to *Free* education. (free)

3. His P*arents* were in the house. (parents)

4. This policy has brought great *Opportunity* for us all (opportunity)

5. Furthermore, *The* free Senior High School will.......... (The)

The sentences stated above are clear indication of the incorrect use of capital letters on such words as *This, Free, Parents, Opportunity and The.* These words are neither proper nouns nor names of place and as such do not qualify to start with upper case. The words also do not begin a sentence hence beginning with capital letters make it grammatically wrong. This is due to the ignorance of rule restrictions as well as carelessness on the parts of students. The table below presents the sub-categorization of capitalization errors in terms of omission and incorrect use of capital letters.

Table 4.1.3. Summary of capitalization errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage

Omission of capital letters	108	54
Incorrect use capital letters	92	46
Total	**200**	**100**

Table 4.1.3 shows the frequency of the errors by students. From the table, errors in terms of incorrect use of omission of capital letters are the highest recorded in this category. It recorded 108 out of 200 occurrences representing 54% of the total number while errors in incorrect use of capital letters recorded the lowest with 92 instances representing 46% out of the total number of errors found in the data.
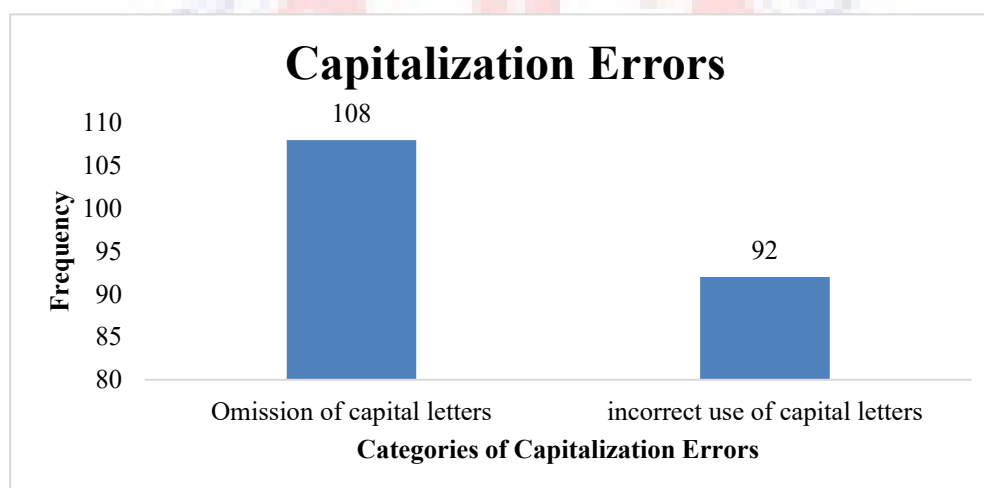

Figure 4.1.3. Summary of capitalization errors

Concerning capitalization errors, a study conducted by Hazarika and Mohammed (2016) on difficulties of learning English revealed that students always struggle with capitalization. This is also confirmed by WAEC Chief Examiners Report (2012, 2016, and 2017). It shows that students are not even aware of the fact that they commit mistakes in capitalization. Interview with the head of Department of English for the school also confirmed this as an error. They unconsciously make mistakes while writing a paragraph. For them, 'realizing one's mistake is the first step on its correction'. Hence,

students need to develop awareness regarding the use of capitalization. In their conclusion, they suggested that teachers must explain the rules of capitalization and make students practice them in the classroom. For instance, exercises on identification of upper and lower case letters as well as rewriting proper names with capital letters can help limit the capitalization errors of the students. The researcher thus suggests that capitalization must be given the needed attention in order to reduce such errors.

4.1.4 Spelling errors

Spelling is the art of forming words from letters. It has to do with the process of writing words by using the letters which are conventionally accepted for their formation. In writing, spelling is very essential because a wrongly spelt word may change the meaning of the message a writer intends to convey. Spelling errors are the most common type of mistakes in the written work of English learners. This assertion is confirmed by the researcher on the study conducted. A total of 305 instances were recorded. The common spelling errors identified in the data collected are spelling errors due to addition of letters (e.g. pregnante instead of **pregnant**), omission of letters (e.g. **brough** instead of **brought** and substitution of letters (e.g. **eqility** instead of **equality**).

4.1.4.1 Spelling errors due to addition of letters

This category has to do with the inappropriate addition of letters to words which resulted in the words being misspelt. Here, the analysis revealed that learners added extra letters that were not required. This can be seen in the following sentences:

1. It was very *nicer*. (nice')

2. I got your *meassage* from your sister. (message)

3. Your girlfriend is now *pregnante* with another. (pregnant)

4. After *complexion* of JHS is costly to continue. *(completion)*

5. I want to *breake* the silence between us. (break)

The examples above show clear instances of students making spelling errors of addition of unfamiliar letter to the words highlighted. This is a clear evidence of lack of vocabulary, stemming from their inability to read wide.

4.1.4.2 Spelling errors due to omission of letters

In this category, the learners spelt words omitting some of the letters that make up the words. Examples are found in the following sentences:

1. Extend my *greeting* to your parent. (greetings)

2. Such criminal act like *arm* robbery. (armed)

3. I am happy to write you this *amazin* letter (amazing)

4. I am taking *his* opportunity to express my view. (this)

5. Because of free education, people get the *chace* to go to SHS (chance)

The examples above (1) to (5) are an indication of spelling errors where certain letters were omitted from certain words leading to those words being misspelt. The error can be attributed to the fact that the learners lack of knowledge about vowel and consonant sounds and its production. This error was the second highest among the spelling errors identified in the students' essay. This is a worrying trend at this stage of their education hence the need for serious attention.

4.1.4.3 Spelling due to substitution of letters

The study revealed that spelling errors as a result of substitution occurred when certain letters were replaced by other similar ones or misarranged. Examples of sentences to illustrate this are as follows:

1. The country is now *going*. (growing)

2. I want to talk about *indiciplain*. (indiscipline)

3. It was very nice *expecially* the shirt. (especially)

4. Which contains *varables* (variables)

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5. The government provides a lot of books and *order* things. (other)

The research revealed that students made the spelling errors because they of substitution of certain letters due to the fact that learners write the words just as they pronounce them or hear them being pronounced. The examples show that students lack knowledge of vocabulary. A summary of the spelling errors found in the data are presented in Table 4.1.4.

Table 4.1.4. Summary of spelling errors

Type of spelling errors	Frequency	Percentage
Spelling due to addition	61	20
Spelling due to omission	96	31.20
Spelling due to	148	48.60
Total	**305**	**100**

Table 3 represents the categories of spelling errors found in the study. The information in Table 3 is illustrated in Figure 3. Figure 3 reveals that spelling errors due to substitution recorded the highest in this category with 148 out of 305 occurrences representing 48.6% of the total number. Spelling errors due to omission recorded 96 instances representing 31.20%. The lowest in this category was spelling errors due to addition with 61 instances representing 20% of the total number of errors found in the data. Scholars argue that learners' way of pronouncing words in English language to a great extent influences how such words are written (Hassan, 2014). This in a way affects comprehension. For this reason, there is a considerable effect of pronunciation on writing and it's because English Language does not contain a single instance of one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters (Norman, 2000). It is clear that errors

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found in the study are very worrying and need much attention. The graphical presentation of the responses is illustrated in Figure 4.1.4.
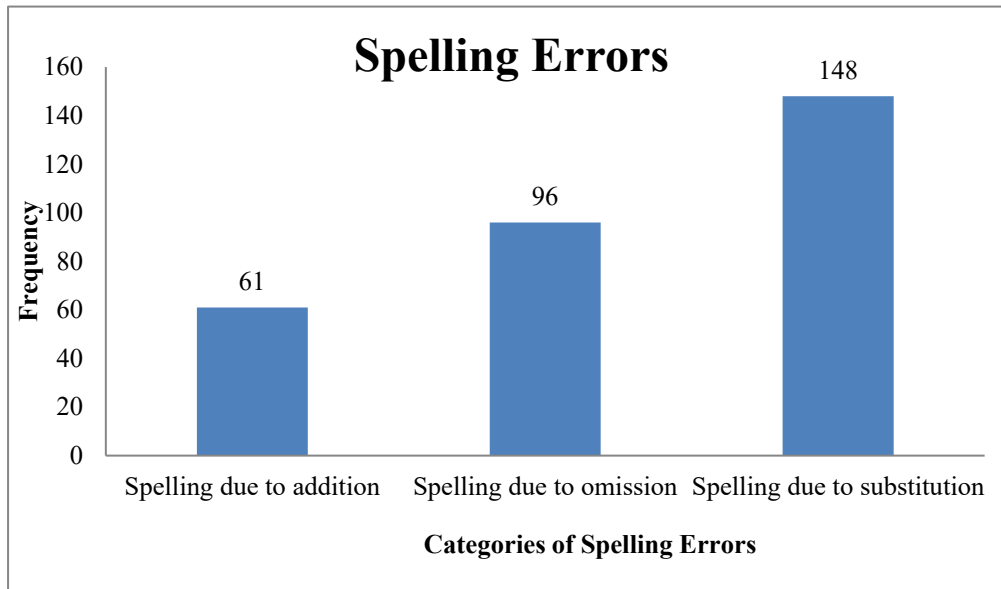

Figure 4.1.4. Summary of spelling errors

4.1.5   Morphological additions

These grammar errors result from overgeneralization of grammar rules or from the faulty learning of target language. It also occurs as a result of the learner trying to build up concepts and testing the hypotheses formed about the target language with the data available to the learner (Erodogan, 2005; p. 266). The following sentences indicate some of the examples of wrong use of derivational errors;

1. At time people take in drugs and behave **unnormally**, (student class exercise,)

2. she will use a summarizm of the report (exams script, December, 2018)

3. Please give a brief **summarization** (summarize) of what you have just read

4. parents and Teachers must organized (*conganize*) classes for the students

5. Because of that, during (*duling)* examination time students engage in malpractices

In (i), the word unormally does not exist in the English language. However, looking at its morphology, it can be divided into three as [-un], [normal], and [-ly]. The morpheme [-un] marks negatives, [-normal] is the stem, and [-ly] is a derivational morpheme. From the data, there has been overgeneralization or simplification of derivational negative morpheme (-un). Brown [ibid] explained that overgeneralization happen when a second language learner applies a grammatical rule across all members of a grammatical class without making the appropriate exception. Here, the learner prefixed the derivational negative morpheme [-un] to the form normally to derive 'a supposed good form'. The errors of overgeneralization and simplification manifest in the sense that learners do not know that derivational morphemes are not 'productive'.

In (ii) and (iii), the derivational suffix morpheme [zm and -ation] is suffixed to the stem – summarize- to derive a noun form. Likewise, the learners are not aware that the morpheme cannot be inflected on the said stem to derive the noun form. The positive aspect of this error is that, it clearly demonstrates that students are applying some morphological rules in the target language. It affirms the assertion by Brown (2000) cited in Bondzie, 2015) that the learner's language is a 'creative construction of a system' and the learners are testing assumptions consciously on the target language from various numbers of possible sources of knowledge. These are perfect examples of intralingua transfer errors. In the area of teaching and learning of English grammar, it is essential that students are made aware that not all derivational morphemes can be attached to all stems. Also, students should understand that derivational morphemes are not productive. Moreover, certain derivational morphemes can be inflected on certain stems.

4.2.   Causes of grammar errors

The study reveals that there are some variables that trigger grammar errors in SHS graduate's writings. The causes of grammar errors identified in this study are lack of knowledge and understanding, teachers' attitudes toward the teaching of teaching of the language, lack of extensive reading materials and unavailability of reading materials, lack of writing skills among learners, context of learning and interference of L1. Among the causes, it was revealed that students' lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language and teachers of English attitudes towards the teaching of English language top the scores, with 42 and 35 out 140 responses respectively. The table below illustrates the distribution of these responses on the causes of grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings.

Table 4.2.1 Distribution of Responses on the causes of Grammar Errors

Causes of Grammar errors	No. of Responses	Percentage %
Lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language	42	30
Teachers attitudes toward the teaching of English language	35	25
Lack of extensive reading and unavailability of reading materials	21	15
Lack of writing skills among learners	21	15
Context of learning	14	10
Interference of L1	7	5
Total	**140**	**100**

Respondents hold diverse views on the causes of grammar errors in SHS students' writings. It appeared that lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language receives the uppermost response of 30% of the total respondents. Teachers' attitude and knowledge about the subject matter comes second with 25%. Lack of extensive reading and reading materials, and lack of writing skills among learners receive 15% each of the total responses. The context of learning obtains the fourth highest response 10% of the total responses. Interference of learners' first language attracts the least response of 5% of the total responses. Nonetheless, the diagram below illustrates the stances of both respondents on the causes of grammar errors as mentioned above. This has been done for audience to appreciate the positions of both respondents on the issue, and to assist in the analysis of this part of the work also. However, the study also shows that certain circumstance may give way to the display of grammar errors in SHS students' writings. The circumstances are:

1. Stress because of limited time or too much work, lack of practice and lack of knowledge (ignorance) and,

2. If they don't understand the principles governing the use of the language, and when they have no way of knowing such principles or do not have enough to read books. And, when teachers fail to use the right models in teaching.

This is an indication that SHS graduates commit grammar errors because at the high school level they did not understand the principles of English grammar rules. Also, students did not have enough time to practice and understand the rules of English grammar. Additionally, students who may be affected by the circumstances mentioned are;

i. Students who are mostly day students, and sometimes the 'reserved' or introverted ones, truant, scanty readers of materials in English language, and

ii. Casual readers - they do not analyze the sentence in paragraphs read to learn whatever grammar available (Interview, March, 2019).

In effect, they may be some groups of SHS graduates who commit grammar errors in their writings. It may be that SHS graduates who were 'scanty readers' or casual 'casual readers' in their high school days will show grammar errors in their writings.

4.2.1 Lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language

The syllabus (2013) advises on issues relating to the causes of grammar errors. As regards to the understanding of English grammar rules, the syllabus indicates that when students are "able to explain, summarize give examples etc. means that the student has understood the lesson taught" (p.xii). It continues that "it must be borne in mind that grammar is taught to be applied in speech and in writing" (p.xviii). The syllabus also makes it clear that at the SHS level of education in Ghana, students begin to study the essential rules of the language use. This means that teaching is done for students to 'understand' the English grammar rules before applying them in speech and writing. It also implied that at the SHS level, learners are expected to be knowledgeable of the rules of English grammar. It suggests that the framers of the syllabus believe that at the SHS level, students 'understand' the language. Therefore, students should be able to study the rules of English grammar. The results depict that students commit grammar errors in their writings because they do not "understand" the English language or the grammar rules. This assertion is supported by the following responses;

i. Lack of understanding the question

ii. The understanding of the question and some words in the sentence,

iii. Understanding of the underline words, some underlining words are also difficult, and

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iv. When they have little or no idea about the requirements of what they are writing about (Interview, March, 2019).

These findings reiterate the point made by Krashen (1982 cited in Bondzie, 2015) that it is necessary for the acquirer to understand the message before the forms of the messages. Clearly, the notion of the syllabus is at variance with Krashen's position on second language learning. The position of Krashen is against that of the syllabus on second language learning as the results obtained on lack of knowledge and understanding of the English language confirms this.

- *For Krashen*, learners should be made to understand the message before the acquisition of the forms of the message
- But for *the syllabus*; teachers must teach learners to understand the rules of the language and apply them in speech.
- *Respondents*: learners lack the knowledge and understanding of the English language.

This implied that when these methods are applied learners will understand the English language rules and apply them.

It is clear that SHS graduates commit grammar errors in their writing because they do not understand the rules of English grammar during their high school days. This was evident clearly in the exercises and exam scripts of the students studied. Impliedly, SHS graduates will not commit grammar errors if they had understood the rules of the English language during their high school days. These findings suggest that the position of the syllabus on the methods of teaching and learning of the English language and grammar rules is inadequate. Therefore, how do learners understand the grammar rules of the English language? Should it be the combination of both ingredients proposed by

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Krashen and the syllabus? Or are there other means to the teaching and learning of the English language and the grammar rules?

4.2.2 Lack of extensive reading and reading materials

It is recognized that lack of extensive reading and reading materials also make it possible for SHS graduates to commit grammar errors in their writings. This result corroborates the findings of Edu-Buandoh (1997) cited in Bondzie, 2015) that the abysmal performance of students in the English language may be as a result of lack of reading among students. The results show that students commit grammar errors mainly because they do not read extensively or fail to read or students have no reading materials to refer to. Theses following responses explain this theme:

1. Inability of the students to read through the script for errors to be corrected,

2. Not reading the question well before answering them,

3. Poor or lack of extensive reading and lack of reading materials,

4. Other times, there are no adequate or 'good' textbooks for students to study about grammar at the library

5. And if students fail or refuse to read or do not have enough or 'good' Readers to reference from, it is hard for them to know the correct forms from the incorrect. The more they read, the more they meet same or different grammatical forms and can adapt them.

In effect, the display of grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings can be attributed to the fact that students do not read to know the correct forms and use them accordingly. What the syllabus says on reading will not be part of the suggestions that can be used to address grammar errors.

4.2.3   Lack of writing skills among students

Lack of writing skills among students causes grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings. The syllabus talks about writing in relation to grammar as "writing lessons must therefore feature relevant issues of grammar" (p. xviii). It means that there should be lessons on writing and that grammar rules must work. In this study, it is demonstrated that SHS graduates commit grammar errors in their writing because they lack writings skills. It is revealed that most students write as if they are speaking as students do not know how to sequence tenses. The arguments are:

   i. The way we speak the language, that is how we write sentences in past tense instead of present tense continuous;

   ii. May be the sentence was in the past and I answered it in the present, and

   iii. Because the head is fast than the mind and also rushing in written

This clearly suggests that students do not monitor or edit what they write. Learners do not make good use of their learned system as postulated by Krashen (1982). To Krashen (1982), the acquisition system initiates utterances as the learning system monitors it. The learning system involves in planning, editing and correcting functions. He believed that learning should assist the learner to make changes to the forms of speech or the written text after it has been uttered by the acquired system. Probably, students are under users of their learned systems. The category of lack of writing skills among students as a cause of grammar errors suggest that there are no effective and efficient lessons on teaching and learning of writing where English grammar rules are expected to feature appropriately.

4.2.4   Context of learning

The context of learning is also another factor that contributes to grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings. A response from a teacher posited that grammar errors result from the context of learning.

The justifications provided by the teacher are that:

1. Students say or explain the possible causes of their errors. They do not often know the grammatical names let alone the functions of parts of speech

2. Most student are not aware of the grammatical functions.

The syllabus also mentions that; "T/L activities that will ensure maximum student participation in the lessons are presented in column 4. Try to avoid route learning and drill-oriented methods, rather emphasize on participatory teaching and learning." (p.xi). though the syllabus gives other alternative methods for teaching and learning of the English language and grammar, the responses depicts otherwise

1. The traditional way of teaching and learning grammar whereby students do not know the real names of words or group of words (e.g. mode verbs),

2. Our English grammar needs to teach us very well and needs to help or collect we the students when we do wrong thing, and

3. through attending library for the meaning of words (interview, March, 2019

This is affirmed by Brown (ibid) that the context of learning can also be a source or cause of error, even though it overlaps with both types of transfer. He maintained that "students often make error because of a misleading explanation from the teacher or faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook or even because of a pattern that was route memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized" (Brown 2006:226). An argument can be made that the context of learning can contribute largely to the

grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings. The diagram below tells the position of teachers and learners on the context of learning as a cause of grammar errors.

4.2.5   Interference of L1

There is a view that grammar errors in SHS graduates' writings may well be caused by the interference of the first language. The response that argues for this is;

The way we translate our language into making sentences are sometimes the

problem

This validates the view that some errors in the learners' language are as a result of Interlingua transfer. It is said that Interlingua transfer errors emerge when the learners apply their knowledge of the first language onto the target language resulting in an error (Brown, 2000). It means some learners believe that grammar errors emerge in their writings as a result of the translation of the L1 into the L2. This suggests that the thought of the learner is organized in the L1 before it is translated into the L2. Ultimately, the probability that grammar errors may emerge in the L2 is high because the morpho-syntatic rules of the language of the learner - L1 may be different from L2.

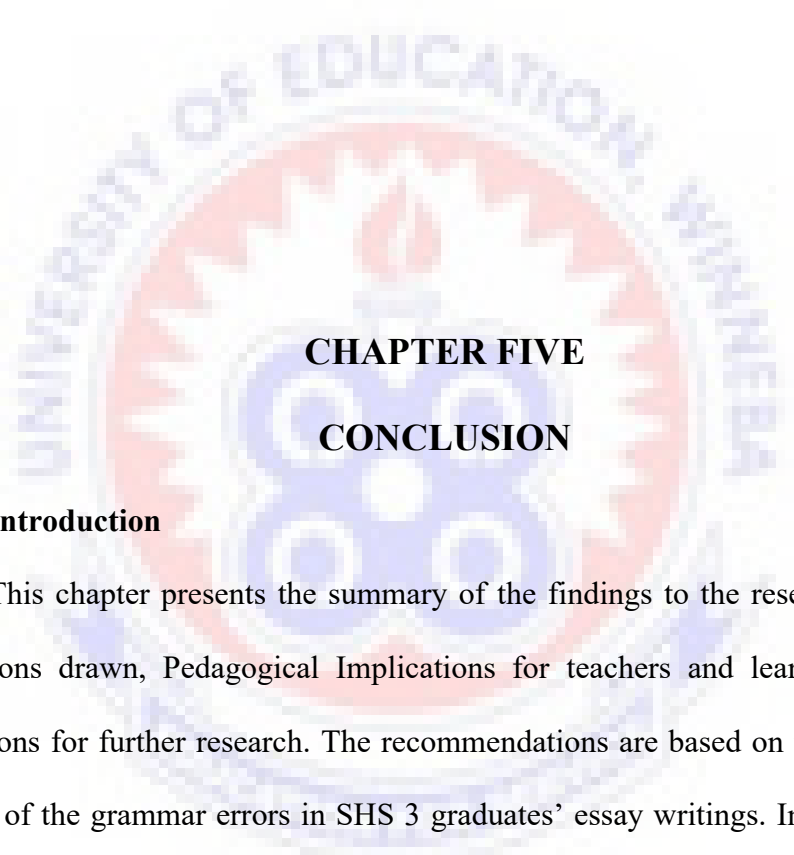### 4.2.6   Attitudes of teachers and students toward exercises

It is also recognized in the study of students' exercises that attitudes of students toward class work also contribute to display of grammar errors in SHS students' writings. It is clear during the study of students' exercises that some students do not take part in some class exercises as some goes to the extent of misplacing their exercise books. It is also serious for teachers to allow students to do exercises on sheets of paper. The reason is that students may misplace the papers. This confirms the assertion of Edu-Buandoh (1997) that the abysmal performance of students in the English language may be as a result of lack of proper attitude of teachers in handling grammar. To confirm this, the study realized that most teachers fail to mark students exercise or even correct

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the errors found. In some instances, students' exercises were found unmarked and lying at the staff common room. In effect, SHS graduates become deficient in the use of the English grammar rules because in their high school days they did not demonstrate the

4.3.   Conclusion

The study shows that learners and teachers agree with Coder's (1976) view that errors are always bound to occur regardless of the effort one put inn. Hence the effort should be channeled through the ways of dealing with such errors as and when they occur. It was realized that some teachers knowledge about error identification is limited and hence do not take the pain to help students correct such errors. This does not help self-learning and therefore limit the potential learners to know more. It is worth noting that second language researchers should test the existing techniques and methods suggested by Hendrickson (1979), Corder (1967) and others to help ascertain the effectiveness of it and help learners and teachers address the grammar errors well, as and when they occur.

From the study, it is clear that grammar errors may emanate from; lack of understanding, inability to read extensively, lack of reading materials and supplement materials for grammar, spelling, and context of learning and attitudes of both teachers and learners' towards grammar work. It's obvious from the findings that learners become worried knowing they committed such errors and desire that they corrected. Therefore, it appropriate for teachers of English language in teaching grammar to use available techniques to identify and help students corrects such errors. This will help self-learning and minimize grammar errors in SHS graduates writing essays.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings to the research questions, conclusions drawn, Pedagogical Implications for teachers and learners and some suggestions for further research. The recommendations are based on the researchers' analysis of the grammar errors in SHS 3 graduates' essay writings. In all, five errors were identified from students writings; agreement errors, capitalization, spelling and omissions. All these results from overgeneralizations, interference of the L1, absenteeism, and teachers attitudes toward the teaching of the language. The research was conducted from a sample of 142 participants out of a total population of 456 of SHS 3 students and their teachers in the school.

5.1   Summary of findings

From the analysis of the research question on "what types of grammar errors do SHS graduates commit in their writings? The following are the summary of findings on the kind of grammar errors students commit:

a) There is misapplication of grammar rules on the subject-verb agreement. Most students were found of adding or omitting the third singular morpheme (s) unnecessarily. Apart from the third person, students also commit grammar errors of number where determiners with inherent feature of single number modify nouns with inherent feature of plurality and vice versa.

b) The idea of word classes is not well taught and hence students could not apply them appropriately, especially the use of closed word morphemes in sentence constructions. This creates a lot of grammar errors in the writings of students.

c) Students also commit grammar errors of morphological, lexical additions and lexical omissions in their essay writings. Such as the addition or omission of auxiliary verbs and definite articles unnecessarily. Additionally, the misuse of lexical items in their essay writings with no apparent reason.

d) Another grammar errors identified was the misrepresentations of forms and spellings. This is seen from students' writings where other forms are used to represent forms that might have been acquired unconsciously. A student could use (**for the moment as for the month**), this might have arisen from their lack of knowledge on sound of vowels and consonant and its representations.

The research on the causes of grammar errors SHS graduates commit in their essay writings reveals the following:

a) Lack of knowledge and understanding of the rules governing English language grammar. It is recognized that, SHS graduates commit grammar errors because

they have insufficient knowledge of the rules of grammar. For this reason, there is the misuse of the rules of morpho-syntax in their writings

b) Most of the students' distance from school and the background to their upbringing make it difficult for them to get time adequate enough for reading. Absenteeism on the part of many students accounted to the numerous grammar errors students commits. This is because consistency and regularity of concept is lacking.

c) Some English Language masters were found by observation and interview not showing mastery over the English language. Therefore, they are not able to fluently use the language to teach well. In this case, they don't serve as a good role model with the uses of the English language in speech, which eventually is evidenced in the students' writings.

d) Teachers do not take pains in identifying students' errors and fail to use appropriate methods to help students to deal with. There is no encouragement to students in discussion of the grammar errors by themselves. This is a worrying trend in the teaching of the English language.

e) Educators, policy makers and teachers do not seem to concentrate much on the elements that will assist students to understand the principles of the English grammar. The syllabus is silent on supplementary materials or resource materials and teachers too do not encourage students to have student peer consultation in addressing the grammar errors they commit in their writings.

5.2   The Role of Errors in English Language Teaching and Learning

The study reveals that learners' grammar errors help teachers in identification of the challenges and difficulties learners of second language encounter in language class. Frequency of error occurrence in students' exercises will be a guide for teachers

in devising appropriate strategies to organize remedial lessons on those errors to help reduce them. It is necessary because, grammar errors in learners' exercises provide feedback that will inform the teacher on how effective his teaching methods have been. Corder believed that studying learners' errors has immediate practical application for language teachers. 'A learner's error …are significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language" (Brown, 2002, p. 217 cited Corder, p. 167). One importance of errors in language teaching is that the teacher is enabled to know learners' progress, and provide feedback; researchers become aware of the effectiveness of one's teaching method or techniques.

These errors in students' writings guide teachers of language in the choice of strategies to be used in helping the learner to learn from these errors. For Richards (2015), errors play the role of enabling the teacher to discover, identify and analyze learners' mistakes as well as designing the appropriate methods for solving them. These error identification in learners exercise has pedagogical effect by showing teachers of language what learners have learned and what they have not mastered and also serve as a research avenue for researchers in the field of language. And the academia/stakeholders would also be provided with what is to go into the designing of the syllabus for language.

5.3 Pedagogical implications

The research came out with the following ways in addressing or reducing the grammar errors in the SHS graduates essay writings as its pedagogical implication:

a) The practice of the speaking of the language should be emphasized. This will translate into writing and hence help reduce the rate of grammar errors committed by students in their essay compositions

b) Teachers must take interest in identifying grammar errors in students' essays and help them to correct them. Teacher correction as well as peer correction among students should be encouraged. For effective collaboration there should a conducive learning atmosphere for a language class which will motivate even the weak student to learn.

c) English language teachers should use appropriate teaching methods in teaching grammar, as well as using right techniques to help students understand the topics well. Such methods include, simulation, drama, conversation, role play etc. Using correct assessment method will help teachers to know whether students have understood a particular method or not. In the course of the research, some teachers were found of not marking students' exercises giving for weeks and this will not help students to update themselves on the lessons taught. This is a worrying trend which has great negative impact on teaching and learning. Similarly, organizing exercises to reflect on the demand of the syllabus will help reduce grammar errors in SHS graduates.

d) For understanding and gaining knowledge of the English Language and the concept of grammar lessons should be well planned and taught. This will go a long way to reduce grammar errors committed by the students of SHS. Especially using vocabulary drill and encouraging student to read and learn more vocabulary from the library will be helpful.

e) Teachers of the English Language should show mastery over the subject and use appropriate methodology to the teaching of grammar. Teachers serving as models in the use of the English Language will encourage student to use the language taught in class.

5.4   Suggestion for future research

Grammar, as an aspect in the English language occupies a major part in the topics of SHS English language syllabus. Meanwhile, many teachers and students are not conscious of the extents of effect the grammar errors have on SHS graduates. This study was conducted in a village or Grade B school among four other schools in the Municipality; I suggest this research could be repeated in different school or setting probably in more deprive area and or the grade A schools. The reason being that, factors causing grammar errors may differ in different environmental settings. Again, a research into the link between an oral English or use of grammar outside the classroom and what is learnt in class in addressing SHS graduate grammar errors may be helpful.

5.5   Conclusion

From the result obtained from the research, the following conclusions could be made: Graduates' knowledge of the grammar rules is inadequate, partly because of the continuous absenteeism on the part of students and their limited knowledge in the English language as well as lack of consistency on the teaching and learning of English grammar. They must therefore stay away from absenteeism and teachers of English Language should be consistent in teaching grammar. Apart from students committing grammar errors in their essays and teachers not interested in correcting of their errors well, in some cases, error correction by teachers is not done at all. This has negative implication in the teaching and learning of the English language. Therefore, there should be more emphasis on the acquisition of sound and pronunciation of vowels and consonant letters. The form of examination used by WAEC, with little emphasis laid on orals is a contributing factor to the problem of students committing grammar errors. Teachers who are implementers also do not relate the oral English to written English hence many students missing the learning process. Effort should be made by teachers

and examining body to make students aware of the grammar errors and the forms of message. Meaning, the grammar errors are caused by lack of understanding of grammar rules, absenteeism and inadequate knowledge of how English grammar operate, low emphasis placed on developing students' writing skills and correction of their errors by teachers. The issues raised above concerning SHS graduates' written exercise/essay are a shared task for teachers and policy makers, as well as students. Attention should be laid on students' participation and increase knowledge about English language grammar. This in effect will help students develop proper skills in writing and the use of grammar rules guiding the study of the language. It is clear from the research then that in addressing students' grammar errors, particular attention should be paid to reading and writing, speaking of the English language, identification and correction of errors by teachers and students, context of learning, and regularity of students in class participation.
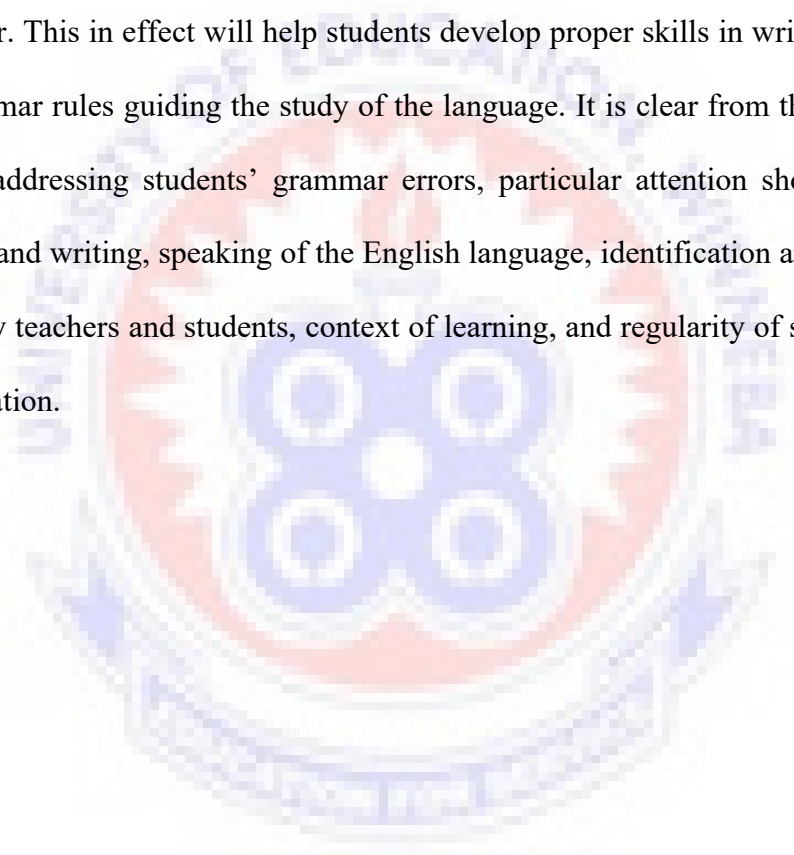
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