UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH WRITING OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS: THE CASE OF OFFUMAN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN GHANA

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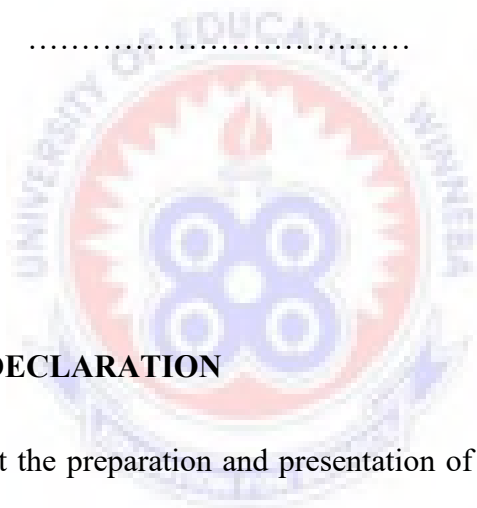
OCTOBER, 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE: …………………………….

DATE: …………………………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. KWAKU OFORI

SIGNATURE: …………………………….

DATE: …………………………….

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to God Almighty my creator, my mother and father, my wife, my children Yombu Abaraka and Yombu Bakpa, my brothers especially Yombu Kojo Emmanuel and to my late sister Yombu Agnes. I appreciate their everlasting love, patience, encouragement and support. For without them, I would not have been able to accomplish my Master dissertation.

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study that analyzed errors in the written essays of form tow students of Guakro Effah in Offuman-Techiman North the study sought to find out the types and causes of errors in the written essays of students in the senior high schools. The data used for the analysis of the errors comprised written essays of the students in form two. Form this, a total of 2128 errors were identified from two essay topics. Seven error types were identified and they include concord errors, punctuation errors, spelling errors, tense errors, article errors, and errors of preposition. Form the study, concord errors had the highest frequency with errors on punctuation being the lowest. Based on the findings of the study, causes of errors in learners' writings were identified as interlingual transformer, intralingual transfer, context of instruction as well as l1 interferences. The pedagogical implications of the errors in the students' essays have also been discussed in the study. Finally, in the study, some suggestions are made to various stakeholders to ensure effective teaching and learning of the English language in the senior high schools in Ghana.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background

The English Language is widely used by people of different socio-cultural backgrounds; as a result, it has become a unifying force and also a vehicle for instructional communication. This is because the language makes it possible for people of diverse language backgrounds to communicate and participate in economic, political and cultural activities far beyond their local areas. In Ghana English has taken a central position in our national life. According to Dakubu (1988) the country is linguistically heterogeneous as there are about forty-five (45) different indigenous languages. To break the language barrier, English has become an effective medium of communication in our multilingual setting. Therefore, acquiring a high proficiency in English in Ghana is essential. It is for this reason that Senior High School students in Ghanaian schools should be well equipped with the rules of the Language so that they can function effective and efficiently both in Ghana and the world at large.

Though students at all level of our educational system are taught English language, they still find it difficult to express themselves in writing. They often commit errors in their writings especially in essays. It's being argue that the impact of the first language of English is heavily felt whenever they write the English language (Chen & Huang, 2003; Collins & Stevens 2002). Errors are inevitable part of language learning and acquisition. This implies that we cannot do away with errors when learning a second language. The phenomenon of error has long occupied the attention of second language teachers and researchers. Errors in language learning are considered as the linguistic phenomena which deviate from the language rules and

standard usages (Owu-Ewie & Lomotey, 2016). Thisnm tells the learners' deficiency in language competence. Though errors are important in second language learning, most language teachers just correct errors that their students make but few make little effort to see the patterns of the errors or find the causes of the errors.

Most language teachers think that the learners are just ignorant of the norms of the language. Currently, instead of language errors being seen as a problem to overcome or to be eradicated by all means, it now seen as evidence of students' learning (Brown, 2002). According to Brown, errors are believed to be the evidence of the learners' stages in their target language (TL) development. It is through analyzing learner errors that errors are elevated from the status of "undesirability to that of a guide to the inner working of the language learning process".

This research work is conducted in Offuman Senior High School in Offuman in the Bono East Region of Ghana. The school is one of the largest when it comes to population in the Tuobodom District. Offuman is predominantly a Bono speaking District because majority of the inhabitance are Bono. As a result, about 70 percent of the students who are admitted into the school are mostly Bono speakers. Based on this, the commonest language spoken in the school is Bono. It is necessary to indicate that even teachers used the local language with students in school and some times during instructional hours because most of the teacher population in the school is natives of Bono or Twi speakers. To further worsen the situation is the fact that the school is located at the heart of community where the inhabitants constantly interact with the students in the local language. It is of no surprise that most of the students normally ask teachers to explain class work to them in Bono before they understand.

This prevailing situation contributes to the poor performance of students in the English language paper in both internal and external examinations. It is important to mention that teachers who didn't study English as a course at the university are allowed to teacher English as a subject in the school. This, I believe, also contributes to the poor performance of students in the English language in the school since such teachers lacks the requisite knowledge in the various aspect of the English language and may not be able to appropriately teach the students well. It is in this light that the current study seeks to find out the errors that occur in the students' English essay writing, the frequency of the errors in their writings and the implication of these errors on the students of Offuman Senior High School.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The use of English is very vital in Ghanaian society. It is the official language of communication and administration in Ghana. English is used as a medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools from primary four to the university level, but before then it is studied as a subject of study from primary one to three. In Ghana and most Anglophone counties in Africa, success in formal education generally depends on the ability to understand and use English effectively and efficiently.

For students to be admitted to any tertiary institution of their choice no matter how excellent one is specialized in a particular area, a good pass in English is a requirement. Despite this demand, attempt to improve learning of English Language in Ghana and performance of students has not been the best.

The teaching and learning of English has been a problem in Ghana because it is a second language and most teachers lack the requisite skill and knowledge to function effectively in the classroom to improve academic performance. This suggests that

their proficiency in English is highly not up to the required standard (Amua-Sekyi, 2000). The failing standard of English at the various levels of the academic ladder has been traced to a lot of factors. Gyasi (1990) relates their fallen standards to lack of qualify teachers, text-books and the absence of reading culture.

The 2019 report from the chief examiner on the West Africa Secondary School Examination indicates student's performance in English is not impressive. 147,232 (46.79%) obtained A1- C6, 99,402 (31.60%) obtained D7- E8 while 99,275 (31.58%) had F1 (Ghanaweb.2019). The   Poor performance over the last five years has not been in any way better than the statistic shown above. This therefore implies that we need to identify why students are not performing effectively in English. What makes students perform poorly is the errors they commit. Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2012 have identified that L1 interference is very prominent in the English of Senior High Students. Yin and Ung (2001), in a study of Melayu EF students with low language proficiency in English, identified that about fifty percent (50%) of the errors committed by the students have their source from their L1. Other research works in error studies have shown that L2 writers employ their L1 skills in their writings.

They adopt L1 composing strategy to compensate for possible deficiencies in their L2 proficiency and as a tool to facilitate their writing process (Karim and Nassaji). One thing that must be noted is that, is not only L1 interference but there are other causes of students' errors in the learning of L2. Again, knowing the type of errors students commit would enable the teacher to prescribe an antidote to the problem.

According to Corder (1974), systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in

teaching. It is also important for teachers to note that if the errors are not identified and remedied, they may pose a challenge to the learner in future.

It is for this reason the researcher wants to find out the errors Senior High Students of Offuman Senior High Students commit and their implications for improving the teaching of English in the school.

1.2   Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to identify some common errors Senior High School Students of Offuman Senior High commit in their writings. The study also analyzes the frequency of the errors in English of the student's writings. The study also examines the implications of these errors in the teaching of English Language writing in the Senior High School.

1.3   Objective of the study

The main objective of this study is to:

1. Identify the errors that occur in the English essay writing of students at Offuman Senior High school in Ghana.

2. Identify the frequency of the errors in the English essay writings of the students at Offuman Senior High School in Ghana.

3. Examine the implications of these errors on the teaching of English Language writing in the Senior High School.

1.4   Research Questions

This study attempts to provide answers to the following question:

1. What are the errors that occur in the English essay writing of students of Offuman Senior High School in Ghana?

2. What are the most frequently committed errors in the English essay writings of students of Offuman Senior High School in Ghana?

3. What are the implications of this situation in the teaching of English in the Senior High School?

1.5   Significance of the study

Language acquisition studies, both first and second, are much interested in how competence is developed. It is therefore imperative that at every stage of the learners' language development, we should be concern about their progress. The study is therefore relevant to the learner, syllabus designer, textbook writer and the teacher. To language teachers it is envisaged that it will expose them to the sources of learners' errors in their writing so that they can prescribe the best antidote. Besides, the study is believed to help teachers know how to teach for possible transfer by teaching the similarities and the differences that exist between the structures of the two languages (Akan and English).

This is most likely to improve their teaching of English Language. To the learner, the study will enable him/her to know his/her errors and why she/he made them. Learner's errors also provide the syllabus designer and textbook writer with an authentic and reliable input because errors give a fair picture of the problems associated with second language learning. The data compiled in the research will

assist the SHS teacher to identify areas that need reinforcement and emphasis in their teaching.

1.6   Limitations

The study is limited to only the form three students of Offuman Senior High School. It is also limited to only the General Arts classes. In all a total of three classes were used for the research work due to large numbers of the students in these classes. A total of forty students were sampled for the research work. Each of the students wrote two essays for the research work. In all a total of eighty essays were marked and the errors collated from these essays were used for the analysis.

1.7   Delimitations

This study concentrates on the error's students of form three student of Offuman Senior High School commit in their English essay writings. The study looked at the errors they commit, the frequency of the errors and the implication it has on improving the teaching and learning of students' English writing.

1.8   Organization of the study

This research work is divided in to five chapters. The first chapter, which is the Introductory chapter, looks at the background of the study, the statement of the Problem, the research design, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. It also deals with the limitations, delimitations and the significance of the study. The second chapter which talks about what researchers have written about the topic is discussed. It deals with the distinction between error and mistake, approaches to the study of error, causes of error, type of error, significance of error and related studies. Chapter three deals with the methodology employed to collect data for the study.

It begins with research design, the population, sample techniques and size. The chapter also discusses the data collection strategies used, ethical issues, data collection protocol, data analysis and presentation. The fourth chapter deals with the discussion on the findings of the study, while the last chapter deals with the conclusion, summary and recommendation.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem and purpose of the study. The chapter further discusses the objectives of the study, research questions, and significant of the study and delimitation of the study. The final element in this chapter is the limitation and organization of the study.
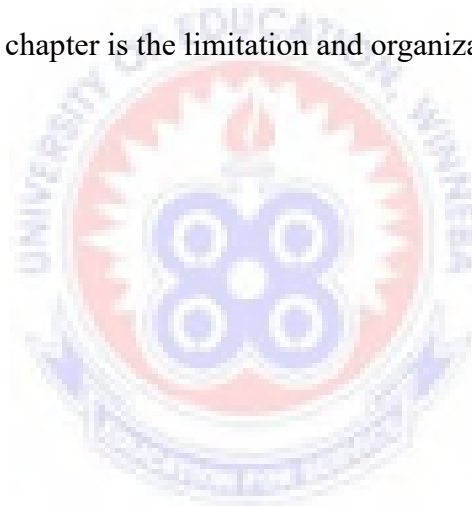
CHAPTER TWO

LITRATURE REVI EW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter takes a look at the concept of error and mistake. The chapter also discusses the importance of errors in language learning, especially in second language learning. The sources of error, error categorization and hierarchical difficulty of errors are also discussed. The chapter finally discusses approaches to analyzing errors and studies in errors in second language learning.

2.1   Conceptual Framework

The aim of the study is to investigate the primary sources of English errors in the writing of Senior High School students in Offuman. In view of this, the Error Analysis (EA) theory of second language acquisition (SLA) would be the most recommended and suitable theoretical framework that will guide this study. Error Analysis is an approach to the study of language teaching. It involves the method of collecting, identifying, classifying and explaining second language learners" errors in order to discover any inherent peculiarities operating within the language learner's language i.e. (inter-language) so that the language learner could be sufficiently or adequately helped to overcome those errors (Corder 1960, Nemser 1970 and Selinker 1972). EA holds the view that errors are natural phenomena or outcomes of SLA and therefore, students be made aware of them else they cannot learn them.

2.2   The concept of errors

In language study, errors can be termed as the deviation from the norm or rules of language. Brown (1994) defines linguistic errors as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. For Burt, Duley and Krashen (1982), errors are the flawed side of

learner's speech or writing. They are those of conversation or composition that deviate from norm of natural language performance. Errors are studied in other to identify the learning process and strategies employed in learning another language (Lungu, 2003). Corder (1981) defines an error in the contest of the effectiveness of the utterances made by language users. Corder (1981) identifies what he calls "covertly idiosyncratic" and "overtly idiosyncratic" errors. The formal refers to flaws in utterances that are grammatical but do not clearly convey the speaker's intended meaning. Overtly idiosyncratic errors on the other hand, occur in sentences that appear to be ill-formed but whose meaning is transparent to the listeners.

Corder's provision of these broad error categories was preceded by that of Burt and Kiparsky (1972). They classified errors in terms of whether they were "global" or "local". Global errors can be considered synonymous with what Corder refers to as covertly idiosyncratic errors while local errors, on the other hand, are synonymous with overtly idiosyncratic ones.

As mentioned by Maicusi and Maicusi (2000), in the language process, errors have always been regarded negative, and must be avoided, as a result, they contend that teachers tend to show suppressive attitude to their students. On one hand, errors are considered as failure of teaching process and on the other hand, they are seen as natural result that can hardly be avoided, so we should deal and learn from them. Therefore, errors can be very helpful means in leaning a second language as Ellis and Bennui (2008) explain; learners' errors are significant in three way:

1. They serve as a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not mastered.

2. They serve as research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned.

3. They serve as learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discovers the rules of the target language by obtaining feedback on their errors.

2.2.1 Distinction between error and mistake

Distinction between error and mistake (in performance) refers to a performance error in that it is the leaner's failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an "error" (in competence) is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the leader. Keshavarz (2008, p. 49) also noted errors are rule governed, systematic in nature, internally principled and free from arbitrariness. They show learners underlying knowledge of the target language that is his transitional competence. In contrast to errors, mistakes are random deviations and unrelated to any system. They are related to performance of learners and might occur in the speech and writing such as slip of tongue, slip of ear, slip of pen and false. Corder (1967; cited in Karra, 2006) refers to mistakes as unsystematic errors and systematic one's as errors. Unsystematic errors occur in one's native language and are not significant to the process of language learning. Systematic ones on the other hand, occur in a second language.

Errors are the systematic deviation from the norm or set of norms. An error cannot be self-corrected but a mistake if the deviation is pointed out to the speaker can be corrected. The term "error" is more suitable for more formal contexts, while "mistake" is used more extensively in casual conversation. The frequency of deviation between error and deviation can also help to identify their distinction. The identification of error by observing, analyzing, and classifying to reveal something of the system operating within the learner leads to error analysis. A learner error is a reflection of lack of understanding of the underlying competence in the language that

he/she is learning (Mezrag, 2013) this distinction is important in the study because the researcher has to give the threshold of what becomes an error and what will be termed as a mistake.

2.2.2 Types of Errors

James (2013, p. 13) believes that there are errors that do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of utterances (local errors) and errors that interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances (global errors). Local errors involve noun and verb inflections, the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. Global errors, for example, involve wrong word order in a sentence.

2.2.2.1 Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors appertain to errors derived from the mother tongue's interference or negative transfer (Namkaew, 2015). They are reflected from the phonological, morphological, grammatical, lexical-semantic, and stylistic elements of the first language or mother tongue interference (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Namkaew, 2015), particularly, the negative transfer of the first language (Phuket & Othman, 2015).

Namkaew (2015) provided the description of first language interference as involving the terms 'cross-linguistic and language transfer' which appertain to when native language structures have an effect on the performance and development of students in their target language. Promsupa et al (2017) stated that thinking in English when writing in English is helpful because it will make students produce a piece of work through the correction of English language as it is said that students will comprehend any sentence in their native language better than English language by translating their first language directly into English language. They are very frequent

at the initial stages of L2 learning since the L1 is the only language system the learner knows and can draw on and therefore negative transfer takes place.

Erdogan (2005, p. 263) defines interlanguage errors as being the "result of language transfer which is caused by the learners' first language". By the time the child goes to school he/she has already internalized the phonological, lexical and syntactic system of the mother tongue. Therefore, the child in learning a new language system, sometimes consciously or unconsciously transfers certain features of the mother tongue (L1) systems into the target language (L2). In other words, certain L2 errors can be traced to the L1 influence.

It must be admitted that the degree of this interference depends on the learner's educational background and the stage of his/her interlanguage development. Some illustrations of L1 interference is found in the following sentences.

 (a) *We ate chicken fried*… **(We ate fried chicken).**

 (b) *I am going to come*……. **(I am going, but I will be back in a moment**).

Sentences (a) and (b) are deviations from English. These errors are reflective of the native language structures and are found in the target language acquisition. In Keshavarz's (1994, p. 102) taxonomy of the sources of errors, he observes that interlanguage errors result from the "transfer of phonological, grammatical, lexico-semantic, and stylistic elements of the learner's mother tongue to the learning of the target language". These sources of interlanguage errors by Keshavarz can be subdivided into different parts. The classification as follows gives an account of the vital sources of interlanguage errors.

2.2.2.1.1 Transfer of Phonological Elements

There are certain specific features of phonology to any individual language that may not be found in any two languages and even if they exist in a different

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language, they may take on new characteristics which make them peculiar in that language. Odlin (1990) opines that sounds produced in any two languages often possess different physical characteristics such as the manner in which the mouth is opened when producing a sound. The dental sounds in English for instance, cannot be produced by Mo speakers because they do not exist in their language.

2.2.2.1.2 Transfer of Morphological Elements

This is another type of interlanguage transfer in foreign language learning. For instance, according to Fallahi (1991, p. 125) "when semantic interpretation of some nouns is collective in one language but their semantic interpretation of their equivalents in another language is sometimes collective and sometimes (these nouns) are count plurals". For example the word 'sheep' is singular in form but plural in number in English. However, it is singular in form and singular in number in the Mo language. Therefore, a Mo speaking learner may construct an ungrammatical sentence based on his knowledge in his mother tongue. For example:

(a) *The sheeps have destroyed the farm*.

From the illustration, a Mo-speaking learner may add the plural marker '-s' to the word 'sheep' to make it plural by following the rule of adding the plural suffix to a singular noun to make it plural. He does not know that this word 'sheep' is plural by nature in English because it is a collective noun.

2.2.2.1.3 Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors pertain to errors derived from having inadequate experience of the target language knowledge regardless of the interference of the mother tongue or their first language (Juntha, 2013; Kaweera, 2013; Srinual, 2013).

"Intralingual errors reflect the operation of learning strategies that are universal [that is] evident in all learners irrespective of their L1." (Ellis &Barkhuizen,

2005, p.65).Yankson (1994, p. 2) explains intralingual errors as errors committed as a result of the learner's partial knowledge of the target language. Interferences from the students' own language is not the only reason for committing errors. Students may make mistakes in the target language since they do not know the target language very well; they have difficulties in using it.

Some errors are not mother tongue induced. For instance, the students attempt to use two tense markers at the same time in one sentence since they have not mastered the language yet. When they write "*He is comes here*", it is because the singularity of the third person requires ''is'' in present continuous, and '-s' at the end of a verb in simple present tense. Intralingual errors occur as result of learners attempt to build up concepts and hypothesis about the target language from their limited experience.

Settanan (2016) proposed that intralingual errors occur when the learners apply the wrong function of the target language rules such as overgeneralization, ignorance of rule restrictions of the target language, the formation of false hypothesis, and incomplete application of the target language rules.

In summary, types of errors found in second language learners of English can be grouped into interlingual, intralingual and developmental errors. According to Zwahreh (2012), three main errors types, interlanguage errors or interference errors, intralingual errors, and developmental errors. Interlanguage errors refer to "errors which are caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue." Intralingual errors refer to "errors which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning." It can be subdivided into three types which are: over-generalization, ignorance of rule restrictions, and incomplete application of rules. Developmental errors refer to "errors

which appear because the learners try to build up hypotheses about the English language from his or her limited experiences of it in the classroom or textbook."

2.3   Importance of error in Language learning

Some language teachers considered error committed by their learner as something unacceptable which they tried hard to prevent from occurring (Touchie, 1986). As language teachers we see errors as disease in language learning which should be prevented or as soon as they occur in the learning process should be cured. This reminds the researcher of how his English teacher will stop the class reading when we pronounce word wrongly. In few minutes he will drill us on how to pronounce that particular word. Sometime reading lesson turned into pronunciation lessons. The situation is also common in grammar lesson or oral skill development lessons. Most second language teachers think every error student commit should be corrected to make them good language students. But in recent times, second language and even first language researchers in the area of applied linguistics have identified that errors are significant in language learning.

They have noted that students' errors are evidence of what they are learning and how they are learning. It makes us aware as language teachers to know the various strategies our language students are employing in learning the second language in question. Errors should not be seen as nuisance in the classroom which should been done away with by all means but should been seen as enhancing second language learning. Selinker (1969; cited in Brown, 2002) have noted three importance of errors in language learning. These are; error make the language teacher the progress of learners in the language learning process, error also make the language researcher have insights in how language is learnt and errors help language learners get involve in hypothesis testing to know what they have learned is been used

appropriately. This means that errors language learning has important to the language learner, language researcher and the language teacher, Richards (1971) from a linguistic, psycholinguistic and pedagogic perspective sees errors as language learners to have the following importance

1. Linguistically, it helps us to discover what constitutes human intelligence

2. Psycholinguistically, errors can reveal mental processes involve in language.

3. Pedagogically, errors help language teachers identify and analyze learners' errors and design appropriate ways of dealing with these errors.

The study of error is also good to the learner, syllabus designer, textbook writer and the teacher.

To the teacher, the study will help him/her to know his/ her errors and how she /he made them.

Learners' error provides the syllabus designer and textbook writer with authentic and reliable input because error gives a fair picture of the problems associated with second language learning. The study also helps the teacher to correct the student's errors because without the knowledge of why errors are made, no teacher can adopt effective measures to eliminate them.

Other studies by Karra, (2006), Mohammed (2016) and Jabeen, Kazemian and Shahbaz (2015) have identify the following as significant of error in language teacher and learning: it helps the teacher to know a student's progress, provide feedback; they tell the teacher something about his effectiveness of his teaching materials and his teaching techniques, and tell him which part of the syllabus has been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention. Errors enable the teacher to decide whether to devote more time to the item he has been working on and provide the information for the designing a remedial or a program of re-teaching.

Additionally, errors show how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner uses and help the learner to learn from these errors.

2.4   Approaches to Error study

According to Latiff and Bakar (2007), there are four approaches can be identified to L1 interference in L2 learning. These are Contractive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) which is the traditional approach, Error Analysis (EA); the contemporary approach, Interlanguage Analysis (IA) and contrastive Rhetoric (CR) as the modern approach. For the purpose of the study, the error analysis approach is discussed in this chapter.

2.5   Error Analysis

Error analysis is one of the most influential theories of second language acquisition. It is concerned with the analysis of the errors committed by L2 learners by comparing the learners' norms with the target language norms and explaining the identified errors (Hassan & Sawalmeh, 2013). For Iamsiu (2014), error analysis in language teaching and learning is the study of the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a language, especially a foreign language.

According to a Scholar, EA refers to "the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance" (Hourani, 2008, p. 39). Definition of error analysis is given by Ridha (as cited in Hassan & Sawalmeh, 2013, p. 3), defined "Error analysis is the process to observe, analyze and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner". As Iamsiu explained, the importance of error analysis, the investigation of errors made by second language well-known and contemporary. Error analysis is the study and analysis of the errors produced by second/foreign language learners, and both at the beginning and running the various

stages of a foreign/second language teaching program can be useful. It can reveal both the success and the failure of the program, and benefits for teachers to design proper materials and appropriate teaching plans (2014, p. 12).

According to Hashim (1992), error analysis is different from error correction, and error analysis makes a scientific study of error made a group of people who share the same mother tongue when they study a second or a foreign language. Error analysis indicates all errors produced that are common to that group of people. In addition, he suggested that students' errors have positive value for teachers, student and researchers; it can give the indication for the teacher of how far the learner has come and what he still must learn. Meanwhile, in the part of student error is an instrument he uses to test out his hypothesis concerning the language he learns. According to Corder (1975), EA is reserved for the study of erroneous utterances produced by group of learners of a language. Keshavars (1997) suggest that there are two branches of error analysis; theoretical and applied. According to Keshavars, theoretical error analysis is concern with the process and strategies of second language learning and the similarities with first language question. Applied error analysis, on the other hand, deals with organizing remedial courses and devising appropriate materials and teaching strategies based on the findings of theoretical error analysis. In this study, theoretical error analysis is more relevant.

Error Analysis is also criticized as a model which confuses explanatory (process) and descriptive aspects (product) and also that the error categories lack precision and specificity (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982). James (1990) indicates that EA does not take into consideration the strategy of avoidance in L2 learning. Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977; cited in Owu-Ewie, 2015) identify six potential weaknesses in Error analysis. These are the analysis of errors in isolation, the

classification of identified errors, statements of error frequency and identification of points of difficulty. Others are the ascription of causes of systematic errors and the biased nature of sampling. Notwithstanding, Error Analysis has added a layer to the analysis and classification of L2 students' errors.

2.6   Interlanguage

Interlanguage is the type of language produced by second language or foreign language learners in the process of learning a target language (Latiff &Bakar, 2007). The term 'interlanguage' was first introduced by Selinker in 1972 in reference to the "interim grammars constructed by second language learners on their way to the target language" (McLaughlin, 1987, p. 60). According to McLaughlin, interlanguage can mean two things: the learner's system at a single point in time and the range of interlocking systems that characterizes the development of learners over time. In the view of James (1998), interlanguage is a system which holds a half-way position between knowing and not knowing the target language. Interlanguage can also be explained as the L2 learner's language system structured between the native language and the target language. It is an approximative system (Nemster, 1971 cited in Brown, 2006) because the learner makes successive attempts towards the target language. Interlanguage is synonymous with learner language, while Corder calls it transitional competence as an authority whose ideas have influenced Interlanguage, Selinker sees interlanguage as a separate linguistic system resulting from the learner's attempt to produce the target language norm (McLaughlin, 1988).

2.7   Identifying and Describing Errors

It is difficult to understand the linguistic systems of L2 learners and even L1 learners because the system cannot be directly observed (Brown, 2002). Such errors can be identified by way of analyzing, making predictions and comprehending data. It

becomes even more difficult in some situations because the systems are unstable (Brown, 2000). The systems are in constant fluctuation as new information are learned to cause existing systems/structures to be revised. But as language teachers, we need to make efforts to identify and describe the errors our second language learners make.

The first thing that must be done by language teachers is to transcribe and analyze utterances our learners make to know their errors and find out whether the error is overt or covert (Corder, 1971; cited in Brown, 2000). Overt errors According to Brown (2002) are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level; anybody sees or hears the sentence knows that a grammatical error has been committed. For example**, they *is eating or Kofi danced tomorrow*** is an overt error. Covert grammatically well-formed at the sentence level but are uninterpretable in the content of communication. For example, the utterance *I will eat*, *thank you* is grammatical correct at the sentence level but as a response to *Good morning* is obviously an error. A more appropriate way of identifying these two types of errors is *sentence level* and *discourse level* errors.

Lennon, (1991) also categorizes errors as follows:

1. Errors can be identified and described   as looking at them from the point of view addition, deletion, substitution or ordering.

   Examples

   a. Addition: Does he can sing? (addition of the auxiliary verb does)

   b. Omission: I went to movie (Definite article omitted)

   c. Substitution: I lost my way (a wrong word (lost) is substitution for (miss)

   d. Word order: I the to store went (instead of I went to the store)

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This categorization of error is very general. Brown (2000) identifies and categorized errors based on the language. He therefore identified error categorization as *phonological or orthographical, grammatical, lexical, and discourse*. The weakness of such categorization is that sometimes, a word with faulty pronunciation might be lexical error. But we can figure up some examples:

a. Pronunciation: an Akan (Asante) pronouncing man /mæn/ as /maɪ/

b. Orthographical: Spelling receive as receive.

c. Grammatical: He speak every day instead of He speaks every day.

d. He loss a book instead He lost a book. (wrong use of a word)

e. Discourse errors. Errors beyond the sentence level

These categorizations of errors discussed above are crucial to this study because it helped the researcher categorized the error the learner made in their writing.

2.8 What are the Sources and Causes of Errors?

A lot of causes and sources of errors have been introduced by some theorists. In the following section the primary causes of errors will be reviewed: Interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are those which are related to the native language (NL). That's to say there are interlingual errors when the learners' NL habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent them, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (SL) (Corder, 1971). Interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother tongue language (MTL) on the performance of the target language (TL) learner (Lado, 1964). Intralingual errors are those due to the language being learned, independent of the native language. According to Richards (1971) they are items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalizations based on

partial exposure to the target language. The learner, in this case, tries to "derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may develop hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Richards, 1974, p. 6). In other words, they produce deviant or ill- formed sentences by erroneously applying their knowledge of TL rules and structures to new situations. In 1974, Selinker (in Richards, 1974, p. 37) reported five sources of errors:

1. Language transfer.

2. Transfer of training.

3. Strategies of second language learning.

4. Strategies of second language communication.

5. Overgeneralization of TL linguistic material.

In 1974 Corder (in Allen & Corder, p. 130) identified three sources of errors: Language Transfer, Overgeneralization or analogy, & Methods or Materials used in the Teaching (teaching-induced error). In the paper titled "The Study of Learner English" that Richards and Simpson wrote in 1974, they displayed seven sources of errors:

1. Language transfer, to which one third of the deviant sentences from second language learners could be attributed (George, 1971).

2. Intralingual interference: In 1970, Richards exposed four types and causes for intralingual errors:

a. Overgeneralization (p. 174): it is associated with redundancy reduction. It covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure based on his experience of other structures in the target language. It may be the result of the learner reducing his linguistic burden.

b. Ignorance of rule restrictions: i.e. applying rules to contexts to which they do not apply.

c. Incomplete application of rules.

d. Semantic errors such as building false concepts/systems: i.e. faulty comprehension of distinctions in the Target language (TL).

3. Sociolinguistic situation: motivation (instrumental or integrative) and settings for language learning (compound or co-ordinate bilingualism) may affect second language learning.

4. Modality: modality of exposure to the TL and modality of production.

5. Age: learning capacities vary with age.

6. Successions of approximative systems: since the cases of language learning vary from a person to another, and so does the acquisition of new lexical, phonological, and syntactic items.

7. Universal hierarchy of difficulty: This factor has received little interest in the literature of 2nd language acquisition. It is related to the inherent difficulty for man of certain phonological, syntactic, or semantic items or structures. Some forms may be inherently difficult to learn no matter what the background of the learner is. Krashen (1982) suggested that the acquisition of grammatical structures follows a 'natural order' which is predictable. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired early while others late. This order seemed to be independent of the learners' age, L1 background, and conditions of exposure.

James (1998, p. 178) exposed three main diagnosis-based categories of error:

1. Interlingual: interference happens when "an item or structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from and some degree of similarity

with the equivalent item or structure in the learner's first language" (Jackson, 1981 p.101).

2. Intralingual:

a. Learning strategy-based errors:

i. False analogy

ii. Misanalysis

iii. Incomplete rule application

iv. Exploiting redundancy

v. Overlooking co-occurrence restrictions

vi. Hypercorrection (monitor overuse)

vii. Overgeneralization or system simplification

b. Communication strategy-based errors:

i. Holistic strategies: e.g. approximation and language switch

ii. Analytic strategies: circumlocution (expressing the concept indirectly, by allusion rather than by direct reference.

3. Induced errors: they "result more from the classroom situation than from either the student's incomplete competence in English grammar (intralingual errors) or first language interference (interlingual errors)

a. Material induced errors

b. Teacher-talk induced errors

c. Exercise-based induced errors

d. Errors induced by pedagogical priorities

e. Look-up errors

Language transfer is another important cognitive factor related to writing error. Transfer is defined as the influence resulting from similarities and differences

between the target language and any other language that has been previously acquired (Odlin, 1990). The study of transfer involves the study of errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), avoidance of target language forms, and their over-use (Ellis, 1994). Behaviorist accounts claim that transfer is the cause of errors, whereas from a cognitive perspective, transfer is seen as a resource that the learner actively draws upon in interlanguage development (Selinker, 1972).

Despite the fact that L1 transfer is no longer viewed as the only predictor or cause of error at the structural level, a writer's first language plays a complex and significant role in L2 acquisition. For example, when learners write under pressure, they may call upon systematic resources from their native language for the achievement and synthesis of meaning (Widdowson, 1990). Research has also shown that language learners sometimes use their native language when generating ideas and attending to details (Friedlander, 1990). In addition, contrastive studies, which have focused on characteristics of L1 languages and cultures, have helped us predict rhetorical error in writing. These studies have been valuable in our understanding of L2 writing development. However, many feel that these studies have also led to reductive, essentializing generalizations about ways of writing and cultural stereotypes about students from certain linguistic backgrounds (Fox, 1994; Leki, 1997; Spack, 1997). As a result, erroneous predictions about students' learning based on their L1 language and culture have occurred regardless of social factors, such as "the contexts, and purpose of their learning to write, or their age, race, class, gender, education, and prior experience" (Raimes, 1998, p. 143).

Karra (2006) based his study on the common errors in written English made by a group of Greek learners of English as a foreign language. It was found that the causes of mistakes were: 1. Ignorance of the words or constructions to express an

idea; 2. Carelessness; 3. The influence of the mother – tongue; 4. Mistakes arising from making false analogies with other elements of the foreign language.

On the other hand, Ntumngia (1974) conducted research on error analysis of Francophone Cameroonian secondary school students. The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the errors of these students with the hope that this identification and analysis would result in implications for instructional strategies used by teachers of English. The result of the study showed that the sources of errors committed by the students were due to both interlingual and intralingual factors. For instance, the writing problems experienced by Spanish speakers living in the United States may be due to a multiplicity of factors, including the effects of transfer and interference from the Spanish language, and cultural norms (Plata, 1995). First of all, learners may translate from L1, or they may try out what they assume is a legitimate structure of the target language, although hindered by insufficient knowledge of correct usage. In the learning process, they often experience native language interference from developmental stages of interlanguage or from nonstandard elements in spoken dialects (a common occurrence in students writing in their native language as well). They also tend to over-generalize the rules for stylistic features when acquiring new discourse structures. In addition, learners are often not certain of what they want to express, which would cause them to make errors in any language. Finally, writers in L2 might lack familiarity with new rhetorical structures and the organization of ideas (Carson, 2001; Connor & Kaplan, 1987; Kutz, Groden, & Zamel, 1993; Raimes, 1987). L2 writing relates closely to native-language literacy and particular instructional contexts. Students may not be acquainted with English rhetoric, which can lead to writing that appears off topic or incoherent to many learners of English as a foreign language. The studies relating to the process of

language transfer and overgeneralization received considerable attention in the literature. Swan and Smith (1995, p. ix) gave a detailed account of errors made by speakers of nineteen different L1 backgrounds in relation to their native languages.

Edu-Buandoh (1997) also conducted a study in order to show through error analysis the interference of the mother-tongue, Arabic, in the English writings of EFL students at the American University of Beirut. Okuma (1999) studied the L1 transfer in the EFL writings of Japanese students. Work on over-generalization errors, on the other hand, is reported by Richards (1974, pp. 172-188), Jain (in Richards, 1974, pp. 208-214) and Taylor (1975). Furthermore, Ferguson (1995) identified and analyzed two error patterns in written texts of upper-basic Japanese learners, in an EFL context. He focused on both transfer and overgeneralization errors. Hernandez (2001) studied common errors in the use of English prepositions in the written work of students at the end of the preparatory cycle in the Jerusalem area and found out that more errors were attributable to interference from Arabic than to other learning problems. She indicated that students always resort to literal translation before they form English patterns. In other words, they translate the English into Arabic and then the Arabic back into English, word for word (not phrase by phrase. Finally, it is clear from this brief discussion that the learner brings with him one source of error: his mother tongue. Even more importantly, the learning process itself is the source of other errors.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

The chapter deals with the methodology used in conducting the research. It begins with the research design, populating, sampling techniques and sampling size, data collection strategies, data collection procedure, data analysis and data presentation.

3.1   Research approach and design

This is a qualitative case study involving students of Offuman Senior High School in the Bono East Region of Ghana, precisely in the Tuobodom District Assembly. Qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that, qualitative research is concerned with multi perspective. The choice of this research design is because; it produces the detailed description of participants'' feelings, opinions and experiences: and interprets the meaning of actions (Denzin, 1989). In terms of language testing, for example, Bachman (1998) shows in his study that, qualitative research results provide the relationship between information processing with performance specifically and deeply. Chahoub-Deville and Deville (2008), too argued that, qualitative approaches are employed to achieve deeper insights into issues related to designing, administering, and interpreting language assessment. Creswell (1994) described research as a master plan specifying the research methods and procedures. This study analyses the errors of students of Offuman SHS. Kothari (2004) describes research design as a plan, a roadmap and a blueprint strategy of investigation received so as to obtain answers to research questions.

In addition, Owu-Ewie (2012) confirms that research design provides the most valid and accurate answers possible to the research questions stated. In this study, the qualitative research approach was used. For Owu-Ewie (2012), a qualitative research implies a detailed vertical description of characteristics, case and setting by using interviews, observations and documents as the data collecting procedure. Hence, different data sources were employed to - identify the errors in the writing essays of the form three students of Offuman SHS. A qualitative content analysis of the students writing was conducted based on the error analysis approach.

3.2   Population and Sampling

The population for the study is all form three Senior High School students of Offuman Senior High School. The school has a total population of about nine hundred (900) students. Out of this, three hundred and four (304) students comprising hundred and twenty-six boys and one hundred and seventy-five girls make-up of the entire population of the form three students. This number is drawn from the four programs run by the school; General Arts, Home Economics, Agric Science and Business. The class distribution for the four programs include: General Acts -one class, Home Economics-two class, Agric Science-two class, and Business-one class.

The researcher sampled students from the three General Arts class because these classes have the highest number of students in terms of population. It was also suitable because, the researcher teaches in all the three General Arts classes. This helped the researcher to get the needed data for the research work. In all, fifty students were sampled randomly to take part in the essay writing. This was to allow the researcher have ample time to look carefully into each student's essay. In all, a total of one hundred essays were marked and the errors collected for the research. It means each student wrote two essays.

3.2.1   Sampling size and Sampling Technique

The process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling (Polit, Beck, & Hungler, 2001). It can be termed as a process of selecting a group of people, event or behavior with which to conduct a study. The sample size for the research consists of 50 students from form three classes which involve 35 boys and 15 girls. In sampling a portion which represents the whole population is selected (Polit, Beck & Hungler, 2001). The form three classes were selected by the researcher because these were the classes he taught.

The researcher used purposive sampling technique for the study. Parahoo (1997, p. 232) explains a purposive sampling as a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide the necessary data. According to (Freedman et al., 2007), this method, which belongs to the category of non-probability sampling techniques, sample members are selected on the basis of their knowledge, relationships and expertise regarding a research subject. The sample members who are selected have special relationship with the phenomenon under investigation.

3.3   Sources of Data

Creswell (2013) affirms that research instruments involve data collection and design to answer research questions. This study used students' written essays, forming the basic source of data to answer the research questions. Because students are the outcome of language production, written essays were given to them.

3.4   Instruments for Data Collection

A research instrument is a systematically prepared document purposely designed through compilation of questions to elicit responses from respondents with the aim of collecting data (Parahoo, 1997). He argues that a research instrument is a

systematically prepared form or document purposely designed through compilation of questions to elicit responses from respondents with the aim of collecting data. In line with these explanations, the data collection in this study was done through the assessment of an essay written by the students and interviews with students and teachers. The aim of this study is to analyze students' writing errors, hence the use of written essays as the major instrument of the study.

The written work of students was used by the researcher because it helped him to use the essays of students for the analysis of the errors. It also enable the researcher to access the data at his own convenience. To ensure confidentiality, the researcher told the students not to write their names on the essay. Instead, number codes were given to them to write their scripts. The students proposed time for the first essay to be written. The second one was written as part of end of term examination.

3.5   Ethical Issues

Ethical matters or considerations are very important for every research adventure or study. This, according to McNamara (1994) is most important for studies that involve the use of human subjects. Participants have a right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation and the fact that they have the right to decline to participate if they choose to do so.

To guarantee that, the result of this study is accepted, the researcher followed some ethical issues. First, he sought the permission for everything he did. He had the permission from the headmaster of the school, the head of the English Department, and the sampled students. The students were assured by the researcher that, their scripts would immediately be burnt after the research.

3.6   Data Analysis and Presentation

The Error Analysis (EA) approach is used to analyze errors in the essays that were collected for the study. The inductive synthesis approach is used to analyze the data. The data is reduced to meaningful units to readers by way of categorization and coding. This was done using the content analysis to get the errors. In addition, a bar chart was used to present the errors to identify their frequency. The researcher in analyzing the data, created the following error categories: spelling errors, punctuation errors, grammatical errors, lexical errors (wrong word use), and wrong abbreviation used. After the categories were created, the individual errors were coded under the respective categories. An error in this study is that, the students write a wrong word and continuous to use faulty/structure throughout. If after using the wrong structure or word, the student later writes the appropriate one it is not considered an error and was therefore not counted. It must be noted that, some errors belong to one or more categories. For example, *I has big noise* belongs to omission error, agreement error and the same time literal translation error. In that case, the error will be discussed under the error categories it appears in another instance, if a student makes the same error twice or thrice, it is counted only once but the error is counted, if it is made by another student. The data is represented using bar charts based on percentages on the errors committed.

3.7   Validity

Validity is vital in research work because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. Researchers aim to verify that their findings are consistent with the raw data they collected. They want to make sure that if some other researches were to look over the data, they will arrive at similar findings, interpretation and conclusion of the data. This is important to ensure that nothing is

missing in the research study, or that the research was not misguided in his or final report.

In this work, the research can report that, the instrument used to gather the data for the research as well as the findings arrived at are all valid. The main instrument used to gather the data for the research work was test and end of term examination where students' essays were marked and collated for the research work. It is not possible for the research to be 100 percent perfect valid. In qualitative data, the objectivity of respondents, their attitude and opinion perspectives together contribute to a degree of bias, validity, then, should be seen as a matter of degree rather than an absolute state. In this research work, the researcher can mention that, the findings arrived at are valid. This is because the researcher was personally involved in the work and the data collected for the research work. The students involve in the respondents gives confidence to the fact that the research instrument used gives a valid outcome of their responses. For instance, the tests conducted, revealed a huge lack of knowledge about some basic structures in the English Language and the fact that most students in the senior high schools cannot express themselves with minimal errors in English language. Internally, the data provided by the research can be sustained.

3.9   Reliability

Reliability refers to the degree of consistency or accuracy with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure (Polit & Hungler, 1997). Reliability is important a synonym to consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. For a research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar result would be found. A reliable instrument for a piece

of research will yield similar data from similar respondents over time. Denzin (1989) suggest that reliable as replicability in quantitative research can be addressed in several forms' stability of observations (whether the research would have made the same observation and interpretation of these if they had been observed at a different time in a different place).

Parallel forms (whether the researcher would have made the same observations and interpretation of what had seem if he had paid attention to other phenomena during the observation), inter-rater reliability (whether another observer with the same theoretical framework and observing the same phenomena would have interpreted them in the same way. Based on this, this research work can be said to be reliable. The main instrument used to gather data for the work shows consistent result administered any time under the same conditions. Test and end of term exams and interview were used to find out the category of errors. The researcher therefore believes that if the same instrument is administered on students with the same/similar learning difficulties and under the same condition, the results gathered would be the same of similar.

3.9   Conclusion

The chapter is about the method the researcher used in conducting this research. It starts with the research design used for the study. It also discusses the population, sampling technique and sample size. The data collection strategies employed to collect the data which include document and observation. The chapter further discusses the ethical issue raised and finally how the data is analyzed and presented in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0   Introduction

The chapter looks at the analysis and presentation of the data collected. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section presents a discussion and analysis of errors committed by learners in their writings. These errors include concord errors, punctuation errors, spelling errors, tense errors and article errors. The second section discusses the causes of these errors. Based on the findings of the study, many factors were realized to be the causes of errors in learners' writings on concord. The analysis proved that learners could not apply the principle of subject verb agreement as well as the pronoun and antecedent agreement and this is as a result of incomplete learning of the rules. On punctuation errors, punctuation marks were wrongly applied and even some were omitted. This is due to ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete learning of rules as well as L1 interference. Spelling errors were due to incomplete learning of rules which led learners to add incorrect elements, omitted needed elements and in other instances substituted letters in words. This situation could be attributed to context of learning problems.

On the other hand, tense error occurred due to overgeneralization where learners used verbs wrongly leading to misrepresentation of the meaning of the utterance. The situation could also be attributed to L1 interference. On article errors, learners used articles wrongly and sometimes where articles were needed, they were omitted and verse visa. Learners omitted words such as linking verbs and prepositions making their speech incomplete. The analyzed data have been represented in simple percentages and bar charts. It is further explained with examples in their various sections. After examining the data, different types of errors were identified from

students' writing essays. Based on the identification and description of the errors, the research made category of errors based on the data collected. The following error categories were identified and analyzed.

4.1   Categorization of Errors

After the data was analyzed, different types of errors were identified from students' writing essays. Based on the identification and description of the errors, the researcher made a category of errors based on the data collected. There was some little difficulty in making these categorizations of errors because sometimes some of the errors cut across the various categories. Nevertheless, the following error categories were identified and analyzed: punctuation errors, concord errors, orthographical errors, prepositional errors, verb tense errors, lexical errors, and article errors.

4.1.1   Orthographical (spelling) Errors

The way students pronounce words to some extent has influenced on how the words are spelt when writing. L1 speakers learning a second language have challenge producing certain words/sounds in the l2 especially when those sounds do not occur in their native language. For instance, American students learning Akan language (Twi) may make spelling errors like "na" instead of "nya" (to get/have) because they are likely to produce /ɲ/ (ny) as /n/. Similarly, Akan learners of English have difficulty producing the interdental sound /ɚ/ (th) because the sounds are absent in Akan (Owu-Ewie & Lomotey). Spelling errors can be made as a result of learners L1, intralingual or context of learning.

The words considered as errors did not occur once in this study. If they occur twice, they were counted as errors and counted once if made by the same students. With spelling or orthographical errors, the following sub-categories were recorded;

insertions, omission, sound change and sound inversion. The description of each of the sub-categorizations of orthographical errors with some examples from students' essays is shown below.

4.1.1.1 Letter insertion

In these examples, external letters were added to the original or correct words which made the spelling of the word wrong in the essay. It sometimes involves doubling a single letter. Though about 216 of such cases were found in students' essays, a few have been used in this work. Some examples as found in students' essays are;

1. Portable water for potable water

2. A beth game for bet game

3. Accademic for academic

4. Reccognize for recognize

5. Dinning hall for dining hall

6. Enssential for essential

4.1.1.2 Letter Omission

In this instance, students omitted or deleted some letters from the correct forms of the words making them incorrect. It involves either the omission of a vowel or a consonant from the correct form of the word. In this case about 225 errors were identified in students' essays. Some examples as found in students essays includes

1. Head -heard

2. Hol-hole

3. Sincerly-sincerely

4. Abot- about

5. Mad- made

4.1.1.3 Letter change

This type of spelling error involves the change of a letter or letters in the original or correct form of the words. The data investigated reveal about 325 of such cases in the students writing essays. Some examples captured from the students' essays include;

1. Pronuns – pronounce

2. Distroy – destroy

3. Persue – pursue

4. Colledge - college

5. Becouse – because

4.1.1.4 Sound inversion

In these instances, sounds were overturned making the original words look different from what the students have produced. When the data was collected and analyzed from students written essays, it was detected that, about 175 of such errors were committed in the essays of the students. Some examples include;

1. Acheive – achieve

2. Recieve- receive

3. Percieve- perceive

4. Interveiw- intervie

Table 1: A summary of Orthographical (spelling) Errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Letter insertion	216	20.40
letter omission	225	26.53
Letter change	325	31.51
Sound inversion	175	21.56
Total	**941**	**100**

4.1.2 Concord (agreement) Errors

Concord or Subject- verb agreement is when the subject and verb in a sentence agree in number (Aarts, 2010). That is, they both must be singular or plural. There is no singular subject with a plural verb or vice-versa. For example: *"She dances well"* and *"The parents plan for the student's future"*. In sentence (1), *"dances"* is singular and it agrees with the singular subject *"she"* while in sentence (2), the verb *"plan"* is plural and it agrees with the plural subject *"the parents".* The reciprocal placement of the two sentences would have defied the agreement rule, thus resulting in the sentences being grammatically incorrect.

Quirk Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) said each noun phrase is either singular or plural, and its number is determined in general by the head, which is typically a noun. Lorimor (2007) accepts that agreement (between the verb and subject) is a basic principle of a language. The summary could be that one does not know the language unless if one understands the rules of the subject-verb agreement and can apply them in context. Similarly, Corbett (2006) argues that in some languages, word order consistently affects agreement patterns whereas in other languages the effect of the word order on agreement appears occasionally and is speaker or situation-dependent. The following concord error types identified in the students written essays are discussed in the sections below,

4.1.2.1 Subject-verb agreement

Downing and Locke (2006, pp. 40-43) explain that subjects determine concord of number (singular or plural) and person (1st, 2nd or 3rd) with the verb. Concord is manifested only in those verb forms that show inflectional contrast. This is when a subject and a verb must agree in number. This means both need to be singular or both need to be plural. Generally, the predicate or the verb must agree with the verb in a

number and in a person. With number, we mean the subject can be singular or plural. The subject can also be first person, second person, and third person. Person can be seen as the relationship between the speaker and what he/she is speaking about. A count noun takes an -s when forming its plural. But with verbs, it is the third people's singular form in its present tense that takes an -s. The error of subject-verb agreement is therefore committed when a plural subject is used with a singular verb. In the student's essay writing about 113 of such errors were committed as shown in the examples.

1. Many of the <u>student</u> can to school.

2. In home economics, we <u>offers</u> food and nutrition which <u>involve</u> preparation of food and other practical's.

3. Most of my friends <u>offers</u> economics.

In the above sentences, the subject verb-agreement principle is not obeyed. It is noted that these are developmental errors that occur during the learning process. Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience Haydari (2012). It could also be as a result of negative intralingual transfer because the learner made faulty generalization of the rules they have learnt. The student who made this error has difficulty in identifying noun heads and their number.

4.1.2.2 Noun- pronoun agreement

Noun pronoun agreement is the correspondent of a noun with it antecedent in number (singular, plural), person (first, second, third), and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter) (Soreson, 2010). Traditionally, one of the basic principles of pronoun- noun agreement is that, a singular pronoun refers to a singular noun while a plural pronoun refers to plural noun. But it is sometimes difficult when the pronoun is

indefinite. Some of the students could not apply this rule and the result is about 120 errors committed by the students in their essay writing. Some examples include:

1. Everybody needs to bring *their* assignment to class.

2. Bawa and Moses went for the cleanup but *he* did not work

3. All the students must paddle *his or her* own canoe.

4. One of the men has *their* cutlass.

5. Kojo did not come to school because *she* was sick.

4.1.2.3 Singular – plural errors

Singular and plural phenomenon occurs in English and in many languages, In English, only count nouns usually have plural forms. Count nouns represent items that exist in separate units you can count such as tables, pens, chairs etc. The non-count nouns are items that exist in mass, such as powders and liquid (sand, water) or concepts (honesty, economics). Again, unlike a singular count-noun that must have a/an as a determiner, e.g. (that is a pen) plural count nouns can occur without determiner e.g. (you like apples). In the student's essays used for the study, most of them had the problem of using singular and plural nouns and verbs. About 150 of such errors were committed by students. The following are some examples of the errors identified from the data.

1. The way people go about politics in the country **are** bad.

2. Many effort **have been** made by the students who study English.

3. Kwame's father has a lot **sheeps** in the village.

4. The environmental protection agency **are** doing a lot to stop people from polluting the environment.

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4.1.2.4 Relative pronoun (subject) with singular verb

Attraction is applied in the principle of proximity concord when a sentence has two clauses; main clause and independent clause and the dependent is a relative clause. A relative clause is introduced by a relative pronoun; whom, who, which, whose, and that. A relative pronoun can be singular or plural depending on its antecedent. Their agreement is in respect to the number of antecedent that is the nouns which they refer to. The relative pronouns therefore take the verbs that agree with their antecedents. For example, in the sentence; *this is the girl who sings in church.* In the above sentence, the antecedent of who is a girl. Since the noun girl is singular, the relative pronoun who is also singular and therefore take a singular verb sings. This rule was not observed by the students in their essays and as a result committed about 120 errors under the relative pronoun rule as shown in some of the examples from the students' essays;

1. They saw the woman who <u>buy</u> meat.

2. The companies which my brother bought <u>was</u> confiscated.

3. The periods when the competitions <u>was</u> organized was not known.

4. we saw the guy who <u>steal</u> cloths

5. The nurse and the patients who <u>come</u> for cleaning were few.

4.1.2.5 Demonstrative pronoun (subject) verb agreement errors

Demonstrative pronouns are refers to person and things in space. They are contrasted based on number and other are two sets; *this* and *these* on one hand and that and those on the other hand. This and these are used to refer to entities that are proximal while *that* and those are used to refer to entities that are distal (further away) (Aarts, 2010). *This* and *that* are singular while *these* and t*hose* are plural. When these demonstrative pronouns are used as subject they must agree with the verb. Analysis of

the data from the students' essays discovered that they violated this rule. Some of the students could not differentiate between the singular and plural use of the pronouns as well as the use of that and those. Under this error about 100 were collated from the students' essays. This could be as a result of inadequate learning or fossilization and context of learning problems. Some examples as captured form students' essay include;

1. This <u>were</u> his children.

2. This <u>take</u> the teacher to a level.

3. These <u>is</u> the students who visited the house.

4. These <u>was</u> the politicians who storm the country.

In the example (1) the student intended using the verb **was** to agree with the demonstrative pronoun *this* but rather used were which does not agree with the rule of concord.

In sentence (2) the rule of concord if not realized because the student supposed to write **takes** to much with demonstrative this.

In sentence (3) it is clear that the rule of concord is not obeyed because the student supposed to say are to concord with demonstrative pronoun **these**.

Finally in example (4) the intention of the student is to use the verb were to agree with the demonstrative pronoun these so that, the rule of concord would be realized.

From the above examples it can be seen that students could not apply the rule of demonstrative pronouns to be in agreement with the verbs they precede resulting to nonconformity structures. The table below shows the summary of the subject-verb agreement errors.

Table 2: A Summary of concord errors

Type of error	Frequency of error	Percentage
Subject verb agreement errors	113	18.7
Noun pronoun agreement errors	120	19.9
singular plural agreement errors	150	24.9
Relative pronoun (sub) with singular verb	120	19.9
Demonstrative pronoun subject-verb errors	100	16.6
Total	**603**	**100**

4.1.2.6 Verb tense errors

Verb tense error occurs when you use the wrong verb tense. They are one of the most common grammar mistakes seen in student's work when the research was conducted. The verb tense makes the reader aware of when action expressed in the sentence is taking place - in the past, the present or the future. There must be consistent on verb tense, unless there's some reason to make a switch to a different tense.

Murthy (2003) suggests that when a verb is used to show that an action takes place at present, it is known as the present tense. In this case, verb in simple present form is influenced by pronouns. Pronouns can be singular and plural. In pronouns, especially the third person singular (he, she, and it) adds the suffix –s to the verb and the other pronouns (I, you, we, and they) do not. The general pattern of simple present tense is Subject + V1. The V1 adds –s / -es if the subject is the third person. Therefore, the verb walk adds –s becoming walks because the subject is the third person. Then, if it comes to an interrogative sentence, the auxiliary do is used for the first or second person of the subjects and if the subject is third person, the auxiliary

which is used is does. Another pattern of simple present tense is Subject + to be. There are two kinds of to be in simple present tense. They are **is** and **are**. The use of is and are is determined by the subject of the sentence. For example: (1) He is hungry 2) They are hungry (3) I am hungry as seen from the examples, the third person subjects' use the auxiliary is. Then, the subject they, we and you use are. Besides, subject I uses am. That is the rule of how to use "to be" in simple present tense according to the subjects of the sentence. The present tense of the verb is formed with simple form of a verb for first person, and third person plural subject except for third person singular; the verb ends in –s / -es, (Soemarto, 1994). The adverbs of frequency or adverbial phrases that are often used in the simple present tense are always, often, usually, every day, sometime, never, occasionally, seldom, twice a week etc.

. Under this error about 25 were collated from students' essay. The sentence below would explain the point;

1. He **walk** to school every day.

2. Bawa **teach** well in the school.

3. Ama **talk** loudly.

In example (1) the rule of subject verb agreement is missing in the sentence because using the third person pronoun **he** takes the verb **walks** instead of work.

The rule of concord is again missing in example (2) Bawa is a singular noun which supposed to take the verb **teaches**.

Again, in example (3) above the Noun Ama does not agree with the verb **talk,** syntactically the verb supposed to take the suffix (s) to agree with the subject Ama.

The students committed these errors as a result of overgeneralization of rules

4.1.2.7 The present tense

The present tense expresses an action that is currently going on or habitually performed or a state that currently or generally exists. Downing and Locke (2006, p.354) explain that present tense is the unmarked tense. Cognitively, it expresses situations which have immediate reality, that is, what is currently observed. Morphologically, it is marked only in the 3rd person singular (with the exception of be, which has three forms (am, are, and is). Semantically, it covers a wider range of temporal references than the past tense, including reference to future time (tomorrow is a market) day. From the data analyzed some of the students were not able to use the present tense correctly leading to construction of some wrong sentences. Under this, 9 of such errors were identified as shown below.

1. My dads always <u>comes</u> home late.

2. Most of the farmers <u>weeds</u> around the market.

3. All the teachers <u>cries</u> when the headteacher passed on.

4. All the students <u>celebrates</u> charismas.

   In sentence (1) the student supposed not to write **comes** but rather come because of 'my dads'

   Similarly, in sentence (2) the student supposed to "most of the farmers **weed** around the market but not **weeds**.

A critical look at the errors so far, indicates that, they are intralingua errors and transfer of context of learning problems. It can be seen that; students are overgeneralizing the rules learned. According to Kaweera (2013) gave a description of overgeneralization as the kind of errors that comes from the learner's belief that there is no limit to use of the language rules, so they overuse and underuse some rules of the target language. In most of the errors committed, it could be seen that, students

have the problem of partially learning the concept or they have not fully adopted the right rules in grammar. Again, a careful observation of the spelling errors shows that, majority of the student cannot spell basic words. This can be associated as a result of poor reading habit among Senior High students.

The challenge with noun-pronoun is because students are not able to identify headword and their conforming pronouns. Sometimes, they were able to identify the headwords but find it difficult to determine the number of headwords.

4.1.2.8 The past tense

The Past tense in English is the marked form. Cognitively, the situations conceptualised by the speaker as past have the status of known, but not immediate, reality; they are not currently observed. Morphologically, the vast majority of verbs in English have a distinctive past form, (*played, saw*) and, semantically, the past tense basically refers to a situation that is prior to the present, as in *Yesterday was fine*. They refer to a definite event or state that is prior to utterance time (Downing and Locke, 2006, p. 352-354).

Under this 16 of such errors were identified as shown below

1. The classroom teacher <u>give</u> me some book.

2. All of us <u>present</u> our work the following day.

3. The boy who <u>steal </u>the book is arrested.

4. Elizabeth and I <u>come</u> to your house.

5. From Kumasi we <u>move</u> to Techiman.

According to Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013), in language learning, knowledge of grammar, particularly tense, is considered to be the crucial part of non-native learners to master properly.

Tense is related to time, and time refers to when an action takes place. It expresses the time that an action occurs in relation to the moment of speaking (Cowan, 2008) and (Salabery & Shirai, 2002).

4.1.3 Articles Error

According to Greenberg and Joseph (2005,pp. 3-17)An article is any member of a class of dedicated words that are used with noun phrases to mark the identifiability of the referents of the noun phrases. In English, both "the" and "a" are articles, which combine with a noun to form a noun phrase. Articles typically specify grammatical definiteness of the noun this article needs additional citations for verification. Learn more phrase, but in many languages, they carry additional grammatical information such as gender, number, and case. Articles are part of a broader category called determiners, which also include demonstratives, possessive determiners, and quantifiers. In linguistic interlinear glossing, articles are abbreviated as **ART**.

Using the model of Sematle (2001), I will break the article errors in three. These are missing articles, wrong article use and redundant article errors. Below are the errors the students committed;

4.1.3.1 Wrong use of article

Among the following are the examples collected from students' essay;

1. In my hometown we have **a** churches

2. We bought **a** orange last night.

3. Shoe and sold at **a** 'central' shope but the environment was filthy.

4. We were giving **an** pillow to sleep

5. Where we attend school is **at** East of the school

4.1.3.2 Missing articles

In the following sentences, students failed to attach article to a word where necessary. They were the most frequently committed errors by students in their written essays. The following are some examples from the student's essay.

1. ∧ people we represent in parliament are not capable

2. In our house we have ∧ big space where our cars are kept.

3. I am not ∧ English so if I cannot use ∧ language…….

4. We identify ∧ goat and sheep in ∧ yard

5. Our English master is ∧ best I have ever met.

4.1.3.3 Article Use Redundant

In this category of the error, the students' used articles when it is not necessary. This means articles were not to be used. The following are some of the examples of the use of redundant use of errors captured in students' essays;

1. **The** Accra is the capital of Ghana

2. **The** human beings by nature is difficult to stay with.

3. **The** most of the people in the village are not happy.

4. We have many minerals in Ghana. For **an** example………

5. Many people drink because of **the** anxiety

The sample essays of students containing the use of redundant articles can be seen in Appendix A

Table 3: **A summary of Articles Errors**

Types of article Errors	Frequency of Errors	Percentage
Missing article	19	42.22
Wrong use of articles	16	35.56
Redundant use of article	10	22.22
Total	**45**	**100**

Most of the students misuse or omitted articles in sentences where articles were needed, this resulted to loss of meaning in those sentences. As Raehan, Chodorow and Leacock (2006) observe that mastering the English articles is one of the most difficult tasks facing the non-native speakers, especially when the L1 does not have articles. In twi, there are articles but the rule governing their use is different from that of English. In twi, nouns are not preceded by an article but this is not the case in English Language where nouns are preceded by articles. It was realized in students' essays that, most of them did not know where to use the articles and where not to use the articles.

4.1.4   Prepositional Errors

Huddleston   and   Pullum   (2002,   p.   602)   explain   that Prepositions and postpositions, together called adpositions (or broadly, in English, simply prepositions), are a <u>class of words</u> used to express spatial or temporal relations (*in*, *under*, *towards*, *before*) or mark various <u>semantic roles</u>.

A preposition or postposition typically combines with a <u>noun</u> or <u>pronoun</u>, or more generally a <u>noun phrase</u>, this being called its <u>complement</u>, or sometimes <u>object</u>. A preposition comes before its complement; a postposition comes after its

complement. English generally has prepositions rather than postpositions – words such as *in*, *under* and *of* precede their objects, such as *in England*, *under the table*, *of Jane* – although there are a few exceptions including "ago" and "notwithstanding", as in "three days ago" and "financial limitations notwithstanding". Some languages that use a different word order have postpositions instead, or have both types. The <u>phrase</u> formed by a preposition or postposition together with its complement is called a <u>prepositional phrase</u> (or postpositional phrase, adpositional phrase, etc.) – such phrases usually play an <u>adverbial</u> role in a sentence.

A less common type of adposition is the circumposition, which consists of two parts that appear on each side of the complement. <u>Other terms</u> sometimes used for particular types of adposition include *ambiposition*, *inposition* and *interposition*. Some linguists use the word *preposition* in place of *adposition* regardless of the applicable word order.

To follow Samalt's (2001) model, I will discuss this error under missing preposition, redundant preposition and wrong use of preposition.

4.1.4.1 Missing preposition

In this category, the students failed to use preposition when in actual sense it was necessary. About 13 preposition errors came from missing preposition. The following are examples from the data;

1. My grandfather narrated ∧ us the whole story.

2. The president praised him ∧ being good.

3. The children didn't listen ∧ advice.

4. One advantage ∧ going to games make u release stress.

5. The pastor thanked him ∧ leading the congregation.

4.1.4.2 Wrong use of prepositions

In this category, students used preposition in their essays but the wrong prepositions were used. This shows that most of the students did not understand the concept of preposition. About 6 of these were collected from the essays of students. The following are the examples;

1. The education minister was concerned **on** the students performance.

2. The community members were advised to move away **of** the coast.

3. From Kumasi to Accra, Ama sat **besides** John.

4. We had the church service **during** 7am and 9am.

5. The car is different **than** the other one.

4.1.4.3 Redundant use of preposition

This implies that a preposition was used when it was not supposed. Many of the students could not tell when a preposition was not required. This rendered most of their sentences ungrammatical. About 6 of such cases were identified from some essays of the students. Some examples from the students' essays are illustrated below;

1. The drug I took has benefited **to** me.

2. Each of the trainees were made to sign **on** the check as a sign of commitment.

3. The public has always been cautioned not to violate **against** the rule of law.

4. The pastor said he would inform **to** the congregation……….

5. The president ordered **for** the minister's removal because…….

Table 4: A summary of prepositional errors

Type of prepositional Error	Frequency of Error	Percentage
Missing preposition	13	52.00
Wrong use of preposition	6	24.00
Redundant use of preposition	6	24.00
Total	**25**	**100**

Prepositions are grammatical morphemes which connect nouns or pronouns with other words within a sentence. They can also be described as words which are used to 'show a relationship or connection between a noun or pronoun and other words in a sentence' (Quagie, 2010). Prepositions, therefore, have a relational function and they often refer to location (in the room), direction (to the north), or time (at night). They can also be used to convey other relationships; agency (by); possession (of); purpose (for); source (from, out of). A sentence doesn't show such relations when prepositions are omitted or misused within a sentence. A total of 25 prepositional errors were identified in students written essays. This error could be as a result of context of learning.

4.1.5 Lexical errors

Lexical errors are errors at word level and they include; choosing the wrong word from the meaning the writer wants to express (Hermandez, 2011). For example, *I made my homework. Instead of I did my homework. When inappropriate lexical choices are made (lexical errors) this can lead directly to misunderstanding of the message, or at least an increase in the burden of interpreting the context. In the analysis there was the problem of whether some of the errors were as a result of spelling errors or because the students did not know the meaning of the word and how

to use them appropriately. In this study, I will concentrate on the semantic aspect category because spelling errors have been treated already. From the students' essays I observed that, some of the student's errors are as a result of homophones problems. I will therefore break the lexical errors into two. Those that are caused by homophone problems and those that are caused by inappropriate use of words. In all, a total of 350 of these errors were identified and analyzed. The 350 errors were analyzed under the two sub headings as lexical errors due to homophone problem and semantic lexical errors.

4.1.5.1 Lexical errors due to homophone problem

These are words that have different spellings but have the same pronunciation. These errors might have come as a result of poor pronunciation. Students cannot pronounce such words to bring about the subtle difference. It is possible most of the students did not know when and where to use such words. Out of the 350 errors under lexical category, 230 came from lexical errors due to homophone problem. Examples from students written essays are as follows;

1. As a person I have the **rite** to live.

2. We won a **price** for the inter-school competition.

3. The headmaster and **order** staff members went for a workshop.

4. The pastor admonished the congregation to live in **piece** with everyone.

5. The **hole** village turned into **morning** when the news broke up that the chief was dead.

4.1.5.2 Semantic lexical errors

This category of lexical errors occurs as a result of confusion in the mind of the student on the appropriate lexical item (word) to use. In this case, the words are not homophones; they have different pronunciation and different meaning. About 120

of such cases were identified and analyzed. The following are some examples from the data;

1. Our school has **grown** well in five weeks.

2. We went to another village which is very **long** from the church.

3. My brother **has got** 12 years after the accident.

4. During the farming activity, one boy **loss** his hoe.

5. Our English teacher is **greatly** educated.

Table 5: A summary of Lexical errors

Type of lexical error	Frequency of error	Percentage
Lexical error due to homophone problem	230	65.71
Semantic lexical error	120	34.29
Total	**350**	**100**

From the discussion on the lexical errors, it can be realized that most of the students had problems differentiating between homophones and choosing the right lexical items in a particular situation. In a related study, Owu- Ewie and Williams (2017) observed that the lexical errors committed frequently were homophone induced followed by semantic lexical errors. Students can overcome such error challenge, but before this can be achieved, both teachers and students have a major role to play in improving the students' writing skills in relation to grammatical and lexical errors

4.1.6 Punctuations error

Punctuation, according to Richard and Schmidt (2010) it is used for graphic marks such as commas, full stops, semi -colons and dash to clarify meaning in written sentences or to present spoken sentences in writing, according to Sekyi Baidoo (2013)

punctuation constitute a set of symbols and marks which are used to clarify meaning in text by separating strings of words in clauses, phrases and sentences in constructed and should be read.

Punctuation errors occur when any of these marks is omitted (McCuen &Winkler, 2000. Punctuation error analysis in this study involves the wrong use of full stop and problem with commas. There are about 139 of such cases in some of the essays of the students. This number is gotten from the two sub headings; wrong use of full stop and problem with the use of commas.

4.1.6.1 Wrong use and absence of period/ full stop

1. Kwame asked me why I am going to Kumasi instead of Tamale?

2. After school, I visited my uncle at the beach

3. The outbreak grew more and more serious all the students, including even the English teacher were affected

4. The time came at last, all the men were to account for their deeds

4.1.6.2 Wrong use / Absence Comma (,)

Awad (2012) supports the claim that the most common errors the learners of English make relate to comma. They are probably the most frequently used punctuation mark, therefore, come up as the most frequently misapplied in student's write-up. They are usually used wrongly in place of semi-colon or vice versa

The comma functions as a tool to indicate to readers a certain separation of words, phrases, or ideas in other to prevent misleading the writer's intended meaning. About 89 of such errors were collated from students' essay.

The following are wrong use of commas or their absence or use of other punctuation marks instead of commas as captured in the data.

1. You have already seen the teacher ∧ haven't you?

2. Unlike Yaw∧ Ama is good in academic.

3. Surprisingly ∧ no one objected to the school prefect's request.

4. Again. One problem the community faces is potable water.

5. The clean-up exercise in my town was scheduled; Monday June 6∧ 2020

4.1.6.3 Omission of Punctuations

Table 6**: A summary of punctuation Errors**

Types of Punctuation	Frequency	Percentage
Wrong use of full stop	50	35.97
Wrong use of commas	89	64.03
Total	**139**	**100**

In a related study, Avomah and Apam (2014) examined the level of punctuation errors among students in Ghanaian Polytechnics. Data was collected using test results on an unpunctuated passage and a written speech. The result of the study shows that students of the polytechnics have great challenges in identifying punctuation marks in written text. Awad (2012) also investigated the most common errors which the English and the TEFL students at An-Najh National University make in their writing. He founds that the students used punctuation marks inappropriate, using commas in a place of full stop. These findings show that students actually have the difficulty in the use of punctuation as seen in the current study. To help reduce errors in punctuation marks, the researcher agrees with Stenson (1974) that students should be encouraged to use punctuation since it is very necessary in language production. Most of the students do not know how to place the right mark at the right place. Teachers should provide their students with unpunctuated short essays to help them apply punctuations marks correctly.

4.1.7 Errors in students' writings

This section looks at which errors were frequently committed by the students under the study. As a reminded, the errors collected from the data are orthographical errors, subject- verb agreement errors, lexical errors and punctuation errors. In all 2,128 errors were identified and collated from fifty (50) students on two different essay questions as part of their end of term examinations. It can be inferred from the total number of errors collated that, averagely, there are 20.32 in each essay from different categories identified. From the data, it was revealed that, a total of 941 spelling errors collected from the 100 essays written by the students. the number of concord errors was 603. Under the lexical error's category, a total of 350 were collated from the hundred essays. Under the punctuation errors, a total of 139 errors were collated from the essays used for the study. Computing the figures into percentages, the following have been observed; the 941 spelling or orthographical errors translated to 44%, the 603 concord errors translated to 28% and the 139 punctuation errors translated to 7%. The 350 lexical errors translated to 16%. From the analysis above, it can be revealed that, the most frequently committed errors are spelling errors, followed by concord errors, lexical errors and punctuation errors, article errors 2% and the least preposition and tense which summed to 3%.

The following is a Table representing the frequency of the types of the errors committed

Table 7: Types of the errors committed

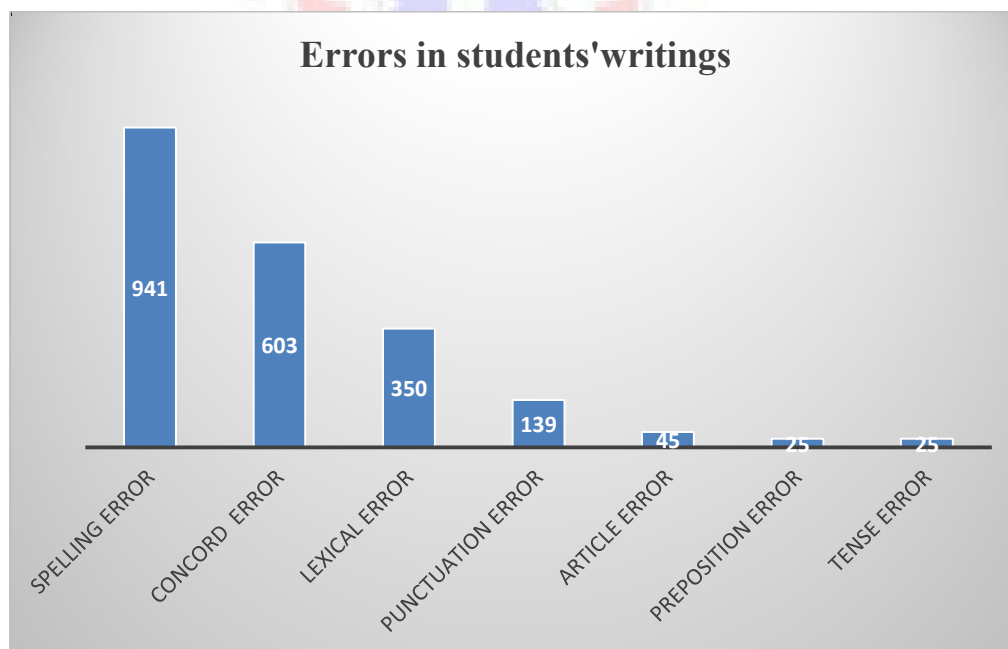| Types of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Spelling Error	941	44%
Concord Error	603	28%
Lexical Error	350	16%
Punctuation Error	139	7%
Article Error	45	2%
Preposition Error	25	1.5
Tense Error	25	1.5
Total	**2128**	**100**

Figure 1. Errors in the Data

From the data above it is revealed that Orthographical (spelling) errors constitute the highest error that could be found in the students' essays. This has a

percentage of 46.8 with 941 frequency of occurrence in the study. It can be said that most of the orthographical errors may be attributed to influence of technology and learning problem. Students' spelling such as *dis* instead of **this** and *dat* instead **that** may be as a result of their frequent use of such short forms to spell word to their friends when sending SMNs and WhatsApp messages. Again, the language of the media, that is, the radio, the television and newspaper to a large extent, may have an influence on learner's written and spoken English. A learner who always sees in the print media or hears from his teachers or pastors and lecturers some deviant utterances such as: „*'Is somebody hearing me?*""" "*Should in case*", "*It will tantamount to''* and so on, will be drawn by the communal pull to use such deviant structures thinking that they are accepted forms, unless corrected.

Concord errors constitute 29.6% occurrence with a total of 603 errors. This may be as a result of overgeneration of rules. The next category of error with a high occurrence is the lexical error with a total of 350 errors with a percentage of 17.2. The lexical errors due to homophone problem could be attributed to context of learning problem where teachers may not have paid much attention to the pronunciation and the contextual meaning of lexical items taught in the classroom. Punctuation errors with 139 frequency of occurrence which represents 6.83 percent of the total number of errors recorded under the study is the least. Though punctuation errors were the least recorded, there is still the need for teacher of English to pay attention to the use of punctuations in their teaching and learning in the classroom to reduce it to minimum if not eliminated completely by students. To identify learning deficiencies in English writing, Nganbam (2016) examined 60 native Arabic speaking students. In all, 15 categories of errors were classified to find out the cause of syntactic errors, which type of errors are more frequent, areas of weaknesses and the problems that

tend to occur in writing compositions. The findings show that errors made by the learners were due to mother – tongue interference, misuse of sentence fragments, and lack of grammatical knowledge, formation and development errors.

In relation to this, the findings of the present study have revealed that form two students of Offuman Senior High have difficulties in the use of articles, concord, punctuations and vocabulary register. Others were wrong organization of ideas, orthographic and semantic errors. These errors as said earlier, hinder the meaning of ideas in pupils' essays, however their identification, through Errors Analysis helped the researcher to realize the causes of such errors and helped to rectify the problem through constant practice in class.

4.2   Causes of the Errors

From the various errors identified in the study, it can be seen that, the causes of the errors are multiple in nature. Interlingual error (L1 interference), intralingual errors, context of learning and communication strategies were causes of the errors as proposed by Brown (2000).

Causes of the Errors

Causes of errors are multi-faceted: Interlingual error (L1 interference), intralingual errors, context of learning and communication strategies were causes of the errors as proposed by Brown (2000).

4.2.1   Interlingual transfer

"Interlingual errors are those which are related to the native language" (Hongyi, Jia & Fengjie, 2016, p. 28). That is to say there are interlingual errors when the learners' native language habits interfere or prevent them, to some degree, from acquiring the patterns and rules of second language (Hourani, 2008, p.11). He asserts

that interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother tongue language (MTL) on the performance of the target language learner.

Learner tries to formulate hypothesis in the target language based on the rules of L1. The learner therefore uses the interlingual transfer strategy to make do for the limited vocabulary in the target language. Some examples of this as captured in the data are:

   i.   *This* **[help]** to protect the hospital properties.

  ii.   ***We collected*** a lot of insults from the head teacher.

 iii.   The *reason* why English language is important Ghanaian schools **[are]** highly…

 iv.   My mother said her salary ***has not come***.

In the sentences, the students erred in subject verb agreement. This can be described as interlingual, Erdogan (2005). This occurs when an element from one language, (L1) is used when speaking a second language. The research site was dominated by Bono speakers. Most of the structures in Bono do not have English equivalents. In their attempt communicate in target language, results to ungrammatical constructions.

4.2.2   Intralingual transfer

According to Richard (as cited in Hourani, 2008), intralingual errors are those due to the language being learned, independent of the native language, they are items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generalization based on partial exposure to the target language. The learner tries to "derive the rules behind the data to which he/she has been exposed, and may developed hypotheses that correspond neither to the mother tongue nor to the target language" (Kamran, Majoka & Jamil, 2016, p. 53).

According to Hourani (2008), there are five sources of errors:

1. Language transfer.

2. Transfer of training.

3. Strategies of second language learning.

4. Strategies of second language communication.

5. Overgeneralization of TL linguistic material.

As learners progress in the target language, their previous experiences begin to interfere in the target language. This causes negative intralingual transfer or overgeneralization and developmental errors. It is only count nouns that take an -s in English to form the plural. When a verb takes -s it tells you is in the third person singular in the present tense. The fact that plural nouns take -s does not mean when a verb take -s is also in the plural form.

   i.…the driver **mistaken** drove Silver home. …

  ii.….3: 30 am, they would **now** stop and went home…

  iii.I am **writting** this letter to talk about…. (**writing**)

  iv.…and whole famile should listen. …. (**family**)

  v.The school has **dane** for the students. (**done**)

In these sentences, the students' acquisition of the concept of adverb is faulty as captured in sentences (i) and (ii). In sentences (iv) and (v), students basically transfer pronunciation of 'done' and 'family' to writing. It can also be inferred that in sentence (iii); the learner was confused in selecting between 'writing' and 'written', hence wrote (**writing)**.

4.2.3   The context of learning

The method used in teaching and material used in the class room can also be a cause of errors. Faulty presentation of structures or words in class textbooks, improper understanding of patterns and teachers' ignorance may lead to errors. According to

Richards (2015), teachers attempt to communicate in the target language without completely acquiring the grammatical form can cause errors. Teachers automatically transfer these errors into their teaching when the correct concept is not acquired. This may be true in the study because about three teachers who studied Gonja at the university teach English at Offuman Senior High.

4.3   Conclusion

The chapter discusses the analysis of data on students' errors in their essays. The results indicate that students commit different categories of errors in their essays. Notably among these errors are concord errors, orthographical errors, punctuation errors, lexical errors, prepositional errors and article errors. The study reveals that students' errors could be traced interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer and context of learning. In conclusion it is important for English teachers to let their students identify the sort of error they constantly make and anonymously share this faulty structure with their mates in the class. The whole class analyzing these faulty structures raises awareness of their mistakes. Teachers should assist students to systematically correct their grammatical and lexical errors while the teacher provides appropriate and reassuring feedback. The pattern of errors and their density has shown the low level of proficiency of Senior High students as far as the English language is concerned. It is therefore important for teachers of English to identify students' errors in other to work in unison toward achieving a high level of proficiency among students. there must be a collective and concerted approach at all levels of education geared toward improving the standard of English, especially, at the basic levels since they form the foundation for the Senior High School education.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, conclusion and suggestions. The purpose of the study was to identify the common errors learners commit in their Writings. This study is a qualitative analysis conducted in Guakro Effah Senior High school in Offuman. It revealed errors which students commit in their essays and categorized them under spelling errors, tense errors, article errors, concord errors, prepositional errors and punctuation errors. Under the concord errors, students commit various kinds, some of which include pronoun and antecedent errors, relative pronoun errors and subject verb agreement errors. The chapter also discusses the role of errors in students writing. The chapter finally discusses the pedagogical implications of errors and also proposes some suggestions for future research.

5.1   Summary of findings

After careful analysis of the data collected, it came to light that grammatical (concord) errors were the most frequent errors committed by the students in their essays, about 941 errors were committed in this category with a percent rate of 44. From the data it was clear that the students had problems with basic concepts under concord. It also came to light that Wrong spelling was the second most frequent errors committed by students in their writing. From the corpus, evidence gathered showed that students could not spell simple mono and disyllabic Words such as "incur" "occasion" "received" "discipline" "disappoint" and such errors greatly affected mechanical accuracy in their essays. About 603 of such cases were recorded from the essays.

The next category of errors with a high frequency is the lexical errors with a frequency of occurrence of 350, representing 16 percent. This is indicated in table 5. From the data it was realized that most the students had difficulties in differentiating between homophones. Most of them misplaced Words in some sentences resulting in errors in some cases. The next category of errors is those related to the use of punctuation marks, specifically the use of full stop and commas. This category of error has a frequency of occurrence of 139 representing 7%. It was realized that most of the students either failed to use either a full stop or comma or they misused these punctuation marks. From the study it was observed that most of the students had a problem with grammatical rules and their applications. The level of written expression of our students clearly indicates a lack of formal understanding of grammatical instructions. Tenses break down frequently thereby affecting reading and comprehension. In addition, the study revealed a low level of proficiency in English language based on the Written essays of Senior High School students. It was observed that many of the students could not write a single error-free sentence, let alone writing an error free essay.

5.2   The Role of Errors in English language Teaching and Learning

The findings of the study have shown that learners' errors help teachers identify the problems learners face in the language class. Frequent exercises on the investigations of learners' errors and the frequency with which they occur will enable the teachers devise appropriate alternative strategies to organize remedial lessons on those errors to help reduce them. This is necessary because, errors provide adequate feedback that informs the teacher on the effectiveness of teaching techniques. For, Presada and Badea (2014) analyzed the errors made by students in their transition classes and asserted that this method could help them sort out the real problem. They

confirmed that Error Analysis (EA) could lessen the number of errors in students' Work. Kerr (1970), Mohammed (2013) and Jabeen, Kazemian and Shahbaz (2015) have also identified the following as the importance of errors in language teaching and learning: They help the teacher to know a student's progress, provide feedback; they make the researcher aware of the effectiveness of one's teaching techniques, and show one what parts of the syllabus has been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention.

Errors enable the teacher to decide whether he must devote more time to the item he has been teaching and provide information for designing a remedial syllabus or a programme of re- teaching. Lastly, errors show how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner uses and help the learner to learn from these errors. According to Richards (2002), errors enable the teacher to discover, identify and analyze learners' mistakes as well as designing the appropriate methods for solving them. Again, errors are very important to the learner. This to Richards (2002) serves as a tool through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language which could not be understood earlier and with time, these learners will be able to identify and correct their errors. Furthermore, Ellis and Bennui (2008) suggest three significance of learner errors.

1. They serve a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not mastered;

2. They serve a research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned

3. They serve a learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language by obtaining feedback on their errors.

The implication to the above scenario is that students may not be able to do well in other subjects since English is an enabling subject to study other subjects Geography, Government, Economics, History and so on since all these subjects are written in English Language. The students need to understand what is written in English Language before they can answer any questions on these subjects. The ability of the students to communicate effectively in English language is also hampered. Further implication of the findings is that, many students in Senior High Schools will not be able to communicate effectively with other users of English either intra or internationally because of poor grasp of the English language and this can also hinder their interaction with other Anglophone students and friends.

5.3   Pedagogical Implications

This study has pedagogical implications for the teaching and learning of English Language. When students are assisted to correct their errors, they become more accurate in using the L2. Brown (2006) suggests that error correction can be very helpful in L2 learning, since consistent practice leads to perfection, teachers should learn tasks that encourage practice of forms and structures learnt. This can be done through role-play, drama, conversation, and peer-teaching. Teachers should also provide pupils with reading materials about things in their immediate environment to help them to read both at home and in school. The content of the reading material should communicate relevantly to the learners at their level. This will enable them enjoy the reading and as they read a lot, writing becomes easier and enjoyable because they will have enough vocabulary to express themselves, Teachers should also create opportunities for students to practice orally in the target language to make them efficient in the language. This can be done through self-talk and simulated conversation with peers. Their spelling of words can also be improved by encouraging

them to practice pronunciation by drilling them on words and sounds, as well as listening using dictation. With this, their phonological awareness will be improved to help limit the spelling errors.

A conducive language learning environment if created will enable even the timid child in the class to use the language freely. The researcher believes that with consistent practice through dramatization and peer interaction, the students will master the rules of the language to help curb the error occurrences in their writing. Again, language lessons should be learner-centered so that the learners will be actively involved in the learning process. Teachers should facilitate the learning process with all activities centered on the learners' interest. The learning process should be made fun and interesting. To achieve this, the teacher should be innovative in order to devise effective learning activities for learners to practice. Most importantly, the teacher must be abreast with knowledge of the subject matter as well as the techniques to make him/her proficient and a good model of the target language since learners so that he/she will be able to teach the learners the phonological, morphological, syntactic and the semantic rules pertaining to the language. Also, through in-service training, language teachers will learn new ideas and teaching strategies from one another.

Moreover, teachers should have an in-depth understanding of the L1 structure of their learners to be able to identify the source of their errors in order to provide the needed assistance to these learners where necessary. This way, they will help minimize such errors. Furthermore, the English Language syllabus only spells out topics but does not suggest how these topics can be effectively taught. Though there are handbooks, they do not provide enough information for effective teaching. The researcher suggests that the syllabus should include a variety of child-centered

approaches to guide the teacher to teach learners based on their learning abilities. The syllabus should be designed with its corresponding textbooks to enable teachers get appropriate materials for learners. Information in the text books should also match the topics in the syllabus. Finally, there should be a cordial relationship between parents and teachers to enable them work hand-in-hand towards their wards learning development.

5.4   Suggestions for Future Research

This study looked at the errors form two students of Ghana Senior High School make in their writing. Researchers may also look at other categories of errors other than those found in this study. Future research may focus on the effect of phonological deficiency on pupils' reading. Again, researchers may investigate how errors in the writing of L2 learners are corrected by both teachers and learners in the classroom. The researcher also suggests that this study be extended to other schools in the Northern Region with an increase in the number of participants.

5.5   Conclusion

This study has given us a picture of the error patterns in the written essays of Senior High School Students. The density of errors and their percentages of occurrence confirmed the general perception that the standard of English in the country has indeed fallen considerably. From the study, it has been observed that the percentage of errors in the written essays of SHS students has shown a tilt towards concord errors, wrong spelling and wrong use of words and expressions in the essays of students. It is for these reasons that, majority of the students perform abysmally poor, usually scoring zero mark under mechanical accuracy in their essays, either internal or external examinations. The study has also traced the causes of errors in the writings of SHS students to interlingual, intralingual and context of learning. The

researcher has recommended some suggestions which when fully implemented would considerably improve the teaching and learning of English in our schools.

In spite of all these laudable recommendations, it must be stated categorically that no educational policy will achieve the desire objectives, if the human factor, in this case the teacher, who is behind the implementation is dissatisfied. It is for this reason that I share the view strongly expressed by Owusu-Mensah (2013, p. 7) that, "no educational reform will succeed in the hands of teachers, the final implementers, who are not enthusiastic about their work as a result of either low motivation for the teacher or lack of interest in the profession by teachers". I therefore suggest that teachers should be well motivated to deliver the desired outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

P. O. Box H5
Nkwanta
24/08/2020

Dear Friend,

I wish you a very greatful day to write a you this letter. And hope your [illegible] no estate is very good for you.

Dear friend, I am help your your house plans after leaving Senior secondary School and I [illegible] to inform you about my plans after leaving Senior Secondary School.

If [illegible] I find it difficult to plan with my classmat because [illegible] ... [illegible] my father going me School. So all [illegible] my [illegible] completed and [illegible] ... [illegible] learning [illegible] will [illegible] outside [illegible] day I am now completing School.

Secondly, I am send [illegible] my [illegible] ... [illegible] ... solution is not good for my my learning. So I want you to take letter be side for me. It will get opportunit to come and to [illegible] my learning Standard before my [illegible] will come I will get something to to continue my School.

Question Number: 1   6

the good rest to go furthfuly in my school
in the education and I am also come to
work with my family to also get money
to lock me. Will also ~~to have~~ to have help
them in the house work.

Addation, Holle marry after leaving
is Senior High School I plant to go to the
University of ~~let~~ have my dictice. want to
go University to Study hard also that I
come Same in future I dony not plant
to Stop my education is Senior High School
I plant to go furthfuly more in my education
also that Either leaving you will be in
or not be. Cause so I want my family also
benfity from me I want my sisters and my
borther benfy from me also she to we can
be the right is the country I also have the
plant for my education more my Plant is that
will go to University to leaving Skill and
I like to end my letter yooors
                    Thank you

                    C - 4
                    c - 4   your fritfully
                    E - 8   Senior
                    M/H - 0   Senjo Linda

Index Number _____

3601

Nkwanta Senior High School
Post Office Box 45
Nkwanta ⊕ Oti Region
26th August 2020

Dear marcy,

I am very happy to recieving your letter on the 20 August 2020. How is the family are hope their fine and doing well. How's the School are hope you are take your Study well. How the Examination are the examine is go on we you take the Study well and learning very well for me. After are leaving Senior Second School. I will look for the business to do and will help family to work. I Should also get my own business in case that came also money get money to Continuation my education.

To begin with, after are leaving in the Senior high School will find a business do and get money for my future as that it can help me and my family and my plant is that will go to Accra to look for the world to case work to get came for my own good and go furfully in the School, and plant is that want to have

Turn over

84

Index Number: 0010301291 5   Question Number: 1

Nkwanta Senior High School
Post Office Box 45
Nkwanta ⓑ Oti Region
26th August 2020

Dear mummy,

I am very happy to recieving your letter on the 21 August 2020. How is the family are hope their fine and doing well. How the School are hope you are take your Study well. How the Examination are those examines is go on we you take the study well and learning very well for me. After are leaving Senior Second School I will making look for the business to do and will hepl family to work I should also get my own business to be do also that come also money get money to Confession my education.

To begin with, after are leaving in the Senior high School will find a business do and get money too my future also that it can help me and my family and my plant is that will go to Accra to look for the world to also work to get come for my own good and go furtully in edtose School and plant is that want to have

Turn over

Question Number: 1   6

The good rest to go furthfully in my school in the education and I also want to work with my family to also get money to lock me will also want to have help them in the house work.

Addetion Holle marry after leaving is Senior High School I Plant to go to the University of let have my distce want to go University to Study want also that I came same in future I doing not Plant to stop my education is Senior hight School I Plant to go furtfully more in my education also that after leaving year will be in not be Cause so I want my family also benfity from me I want my Sisters and my brother benfty from me also we to we can be the right is the Country I also have the Plant for my education my Plant is that will go to University to leaving Skill and I like to end my letter years

                                            Thank you

                    C — 4   your faithfully
                    O — 4   Scae
                    E — 8   Sanja Linda
                    M.H — 0

P. O Box H5
NKWANTA
24/05/2020

Dear Friend,

I wish you a very greatful Day to write to you this letter. And hope your Living in outside is very good for you.

Dear friend I one help your your have plans after leaving Senior Secondary School and I wish to inform you about my Plans after leaving Senior Secondary School.

First that I find it Dificaulo to Place with my element because I was staying befoe by my father Saw me School is all is my (doosb) compltd out some the Berlich Some tett and leauy outside country by I was now Completing School.

Secondly financial Problem my finet was poor I so the Scloter is not good for my my Leaving. So I want you to take loctive for ide for me it I will get apprubent to come and to viewlive my tea living Stenbons, befor my assrluca will come I will get something to ho Conthaoviya my fichout.

Index Number

Heading

Mr Chairperson, The headmistress, the president of old student association, the members of old student association, teaching and non-teaching staff, Fellow Student, ladies and gentlemen I deem it a great honour to be given this opportunity to speak on this august occasion. I will like to welcome the old student association back to this noble institution The old student association has really help in the improvement of this noble institution, Labone Senior High Mr chairman I would like to take this opportunity to talk on some areas that the school need some assistance from the old student association

First and foremost, the school is in great need of infrastructure development most building of the school is either in a bad shape or is too small for the capacity of the school the library for instance is too small to accommodate a class and has limited resource in terms of books for research work This in end, affect the academic performance of the student And also, The school computer lab is in a very bad shape the windows has removed leading to theft from the people living around near the school How the school

can only boast of two workable computers. The old student should help the school in this area.

Furthermore, provision of scholarship to needy but brilliant student. Thanks to the government of Ghana, now senior high school is free, with the present provision of free text tution education which includes some text book, uniform and feeding. But some of the student in this school find it difficult to come to school because the school is too far from home and the boarding house facility is not enough to accomodate all the student in the school. This result in some student missing school most of the days in a week, and later droping out of the school. Some student also can not afford to buy text books, thus elective subject. This result in the deteriotion of their performance in school which in a long run will affect the school's performance nationally. When this is done it will help student from all background to excell greatly in school. This will help rise the image of the school.

To end with, as old student of this noble institution the school need you to come to the school from time to time to encourage the

punishing junior students unnecessarily. Sometimes, they stay up all night making sure junior students carry out unnecessary punishment for no good reason. The time at which they could have used to study would have bee is wasted as they also waste the time of those bullied.

Furthermore, bullying leads to further bullying. In the older days when bullying was more severe, junior students bullied students when they gained higher positions bullied other new junior students and it continued from generation to generation. Even though bullying has reduced in this generation, it doesn't doesn not guarantee the ceasation of bullying. The tradition of bullying in senior high schools especially, will pass on from generation to generation if measures are not taken to curb it. The

The kind of leaders that will be produced tomorrow depends on the be management of the behaviour of students today. Bullying cannot be accepted as a tradition because it causes nothing but harm. School authorities should therefore, put measures in place to stop this Hammond Claudia menace. Students caught in the act of 3 Science 6 bullying must be severly punished to deter others from repeating the act.

C - 7

O - 6

E - 13

MD - 00   26

Hammond Claudia,

3 Science 6.

Turn over

Question Number 8

BULLYING AMONG STUDENTS AND ITS
EFFECTS

Lions are thought to be the kings of the jungle owing to their magnificent stature and enormous strenght. However, when a hungry lion sees another having a meal, he paces towards his friend or sibling or whoever it may be and scares it away, leaving the meal for himself. This act as seen in these animals is termed bullying. Thus, using one's influence, strenght or position to cause pain or to cheat another person. Suprisingly, this is not seen only among animals but also human beings with the ability to think rationally also do this. Nowadays, bullying can be witnessed everywhere. From our homes, to our neighbourhoods, to social media, and even in schools. Students who are older or bigger in the school are often seen bullying the younger ones and no one has anything to say about this. Bullying has many negative effects on the student and some of these are given in the subsequent paragraphs.

Students who are often bullied

Index Number 7 Question Number: 4

Student on their studies, receiving encourage from someyou know has pass through thesame Stage you are in now and the person has made ite will give we the student A sense of motivation to be like you and better. these are the greas the School needs assistance from you we know and hope it will be granted.

Thank You,

Zubaida Abdul Kame

C - 6

O - 4

E - 10.

MA - 0

20

Write on both sides of the paper

Evans Tatyi

Dictation

1. ugly ✓

2. Recieve ✗

3. Distroy ✗

4. accomodate ✗

6. Comporsary ✗

7. Colledge ✗

8. Communite ✗

9. Consult ✓

10. portion ✓

$\frac{3}{10}$