

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**SOME GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL ERRORS IN THE ENGLISH
ESSAYS OF STUDENTS OF A.M.E. ZION GIRLS' SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOL, WINNEBA**

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**A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH EDUCATION,
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION,
SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA,
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE
IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION**

2015

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

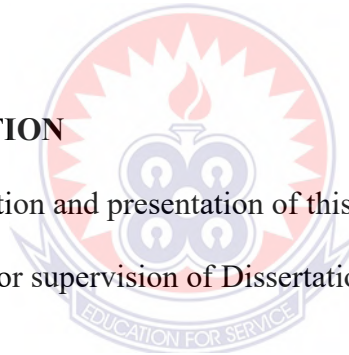
I, LYDIA KOKWE YEBOAH declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The successful completion of this work would not have been accomplished without the sacrifice, guidance, cooperation and support of some wonderful people. Though it is impossible for me to pay them back commensurably, I would like to register my profound appreciation for their contribution to this project.

My immense gratitude goes to my supervisor, Dr Christiana Hammond of the Department of Communication and Media Studies, University of Education, Winneba, for accepting to work with me on this study. Her guidance and moral support during this journey have been amazing and I owe her tons of gratitude. To Dr. Andy Ofori-Birikorang, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, I say thank you, for his words of encouragement and motivation when most needed. I am thankful to Mr. C. B. Boakye, Dr. Paul Naa Yemeh, Dr. Amma Abrafi Agyei, and Dr. Peace Chiwendu Israel all of the Department of English Education, University of Education, Winneba, for their assistance throughout this study to its successful completion.

I also express my utmost appreciation to Rev. Mrs Helena Essien, the Headmistress of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School (ZIGHISS) Winneba, and her staff for granting me access and permission to conduct this study in their institution. I am indebted to all the students who participated in the conduct of this study. I am deeply appreciative of their time and contributions.

Finally, Ru, I am very much grateful for her unmeasured support and encouragement from the start of this project to the finish. Her constant enquiries on how far I had gone

with the work and continuous reminders of the need to get this work done and over with, gave me the energy to keep working till the end. God bless you all.



DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to Kwame Odame Yeboah and Akua Amma Addobea.



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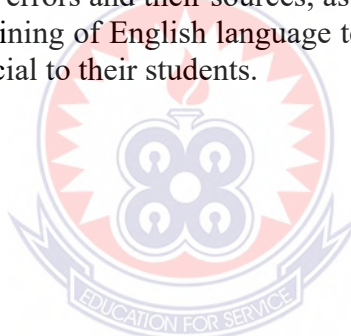
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ABSTRACT

This study sought to analyse the grammatical and lexical errors in the essays of 60 purposefully selected Form 2 students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School in Winneba. The study identified grammatical and lexical errors committed in the English essays of the students and categorised the errors with a view to gathering perspectives on how the errors could be minimised. Two English language teachers and five students out of the 60 sampled were interviewed on their perspectives on the causes of the errors and ways to minimise them. Data was gathered through qualitative content analysis (QCA) with the help of Corder's Error Analysis Model for thematic analysis. Findings from the data revealed that students commit grammatical and lexical errors such as agreement errors, article errors, vocabulary and expression errors and spelling errors among others. The errors were noted to have been committed as a result of both intralingual and interlingual interferences. The data also revealed that students' lack of adequate knowledge on the rules of the English language (L2), mainly contributed to the errors they commit. The perspectives of the participants indicated that the causes of errors were as a result of students' disinterest in the learning of the target language; students' inadequate knowledge on the rules of L2; influence of students' first language (L1) on their target language (L2) and inappropriate teaching strategies used by most English language teachers. The study recommends that error analysis studies, which involves identification of errors and their sources, as well as their treatment, should be an integral part of the training of English language teachers, such that, the knowledge acquired could be beneficial to their students.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Communication is considered one of the most distinct features of every speech community. People use language whether spoken, written or in any other form, to communicate their thoughts and to express their opinions. This means that human beings communicate and relate to others, socially, call attention, share feelings, and express opinions and information and negotiate, all other aspects their endeavours.

As a process of sending and receiving information among people, individuals communicate with one another not only through face-to-face but also by giving information through printed products such as books and newspapers. Nation (2003) postulates that the significance of communication is like the importance of breathing and indeed, communication facilitates the spread of knowledge and helps to form relationships between people. McFarland (2014), on the other hand, maintains that communication is a process of meaningful interaction among human beings. More specifically, McFarland states that communication is the process by which meaning is perceived and understanding reached among human beings. Newman and Summer (1977) simply define communication as an exchange of facts, ideas, opinions or emotions by two or more persons.

Communication being the process of passing information from one person to another facilitates the flow of information and understanding between different people and departments, through different media using written, spoken or nonverbal means such as gestures. Though not every form of communication is linguistic, Gumperz (2009),

postulates that the act of using language to communicate is the most frequently used mode of communication in every speech community.

Every language has rules governing its usage and application and users of a particular language have no option but to follow such rules to enable them to communicate effectively. When the rules of a given language are violated, errors or mistakes are committed and in turn, meaning becomes affected. For instance, when learning the English language, it is important to be conversant with the basic rules of how words are arranged in their rightful order so that meaning could be derived from whatever is being communicated.

Among the errors committed in English language likely to affect meaning and communication in general, is syntax. According to Leech (1989), the word syntax is derived from the Ancient Greek word 'syntaxis', which means to put in order. Syntax thus, forms part of the grammar of any given language. English has a sentence structure, which commonly places the subject before the verb, and the verb before the object. For example, I am typing on my keyboard. 'I' becomes the subject, 'typing' becomes the verb, ' keyboard' becomes the object of the sentence structure.

Pomeyie, (2007) posits that for all the thousands of words in the English language, there is always a grammatically proper way to arrange them to form a sentence. Therefore, syntax is less about word order and more about the significance of the way a sentence is assembled. If a writer rearranges that order, thereby altering the conventional sentence structure, there is a deviation in syntax known as syntactic error (SE). This means that when the rules of a given language are broken in sentence compositions, there is a breach of the syntax of that language.

According to Scott (1988) language, be it spoken or written follows some systematic principles, which must be accepted and used by members of any given society. Scott (1988) maintains that grammar is one of the integral parts of the English language, which needs to be given the necessary attention.

Afful, (2007) states that striving to speak or write good English is not a matter of mere pedantry. Afful explains that in composing discourses, a writer's objective must be to convince the listener or reader of his or her arguments with the greatest possible clarity. He goes on further to explain that, in achieving such an objective, one must also appeal to the audience's sympathies. It is important to elicit a favourable impression to maintain the attention and interest of the audience in what a person has to say even if he or she is reasonably clear and cogent in their composition. This means that a speaker or writer is unlikely to maintain the listeners' or readers' attention and sympathy if his or her compositions are clumsy, and deficient in syntactic rules of the language in which they are communicating or sharing their thought processes.

Hourani (2008) observes that composing ideas into written or spoken discourse is a daunting task for learners of English as second language (ESL). He says that it is indeed considered as the most difficult aspect of the language abilities and skills that learners need to acquire. This difficulty is not only limited to generating and organising ideas but it also relates to learners' inability to translate notions and ideas to legible text.

According to Hourani, a deviation in grammatical and lexical rules tends to bring out negative responses from both native and non-native speakers and hearers alike. Therefore, it is for this reason that the classroom teacher of English language needs to

be familiar with errors made by students as well as attempt to understand the reasons behind these errors. This would enable teachers as well as students to seek the appropriate strategies to minimise or eliminate the errors. Hourani maintains that, to enable students within the various academic levels especially within the second cycle level to communicate effectively in discourses within their respective disciplines, they need to gain competence in the rules governing the usage of the English language. One strategy to help students compose their thoughts meaningfully and to be devoid of grammatical errors is through the process of error analysis.

According to Afful (2007), Error Analysis (EA) is the examination of errors committed by learners of a language in both the spoken and written medium. Corder, (1975) observes that the study of learners' errors is part of the investigation which has contributed enormously to EA. He writes: "the study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning" (p. 125). In this respect, EA resembles methodologically, the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and gives us indications as to the learning process.

Corder posits that EA is useful in second language learning because it reveals to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers the problem areas of students to enable them design remedial exercises as well as focus more attention on the trouble spots identified in their compositions or everyday communications expressed through writing.

The falling standard of education in general at all levels in the country is worrying and the use of the English language in particular among students is deteriorating helplessly. Gyasi (1990) traces the falling standard of English at the various levels of

education in the country to many factors which include; lack of qualified teachers, absence of appropriate textbooks and the absence of a reading culture among students and students. Adu-Darko, Appiah and Boahen (2008) also attribute the falling standards of English language in schools to the predominant use of Pidgin English among students, especially students at the second cycle level. Moreover, Mireku-Gyimah (2014) associates the problem of the falling standard of English language to poor teaching and learning methods adopted by teachers of the English Language at the Basic School levels. Cedar (2004) also argues that most non-native speakers of the English Language have challenges because of the influence their first language otherwise known as mother tongue (L1).

According to Mireku-Gyimah, it is the prime aim of the English language syllabus for Senior High Schools in the country to improve students' communicative competence as it raises their level of proficiency in English usage and prepare them to function effectively on their own. According to him, students must be more conversant with how to put words together in the accepted order when composing discourses to achieve these goals.

Mireku-Gyimah asserts that over the years, records on the Chief Examiner's Report on (WASSCE) keep hammering on the poor performance of students in subjects like Social Studies, Science, and English Language among others. The Chief Examiners for English language of the West African Examination council (WAEC) consistently report on students' abysmal performance in English and cite several examples of errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

According to the report of the Chief Examiner for WASSCE May/June 2009 English language, the general performance of the candidates revealed that many of them have

still not grasped the rudiments of English. The report indicated that performance of most of the candidates was disappointing, in that, a good number of candidates could not write full essays. Some of the candidates mixed capital and small letters at random. There was poor construction of grammatical and lexical structures in candidates' constructions. There was also ample evidence of the wrong use of tenses, error of concord as well as the poor handling of the direct and reported speech.' (p. xii).

The Chief Examiner's Report (2013) on English language also indicated that the West African Examination Council (WAEC) is unhappy with students' performance in English. The report said that the poor performance of English is particularly worrisome because it would be impossible for any candidate to do well in examinations of the other subjects if English language as a medium of expression is not mastered. The report stated that among other weaknesses of the students such as poor orthography, wrong spelling, agreement errors.

Students especially those at the second cycle level are not performing well in all subjects because they cannot compose their ideas well enough to express themselves in spoken or written discourse although all their curriculum materials are written in English language. It is therefore necessary for students to study the rules of the language to enable communicate their ideas in coherent expressions. The picture painted in the above reports is an indication that the standard of English of Ghanaian Senior High School students has fallen below acceptable level. This is very embarrassing and therefore calls for drastic and holistic intervention to salvage the situation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Extant literature suggests that extensive research work have been undertaken in the area of error analysis. These researches have delved much into errors recurring in the written essays of second language learners of the English language. While researches in Ghana have focused on the errors made by undergraduate students, a few studies such as (Yankson, 1994; Edu-Boandoh 1996) have also examined the pattern of errors in the essays of Ghanaian students in the Senior High Schools.

For instance, Safo-Adu (2009) examined the error pattern of students in their essays. The purpose of his study is to draw attention to certain wrong expressions and grammatical errors, which feature prominently in the speech and written works of many students and public speakers. He complains that, in a country like Ghana where English permeates all aspects of our socio-linguistic life, the use of poor English is a serious social handicap. He asserts that a single grammatical error in the speech of a public speaker, even if immediately corrected, leaves an indelible stigma on his or her public image.

In spite of the efforts made by researchers by using EA to analyse grammatical errors which students' commit in their English essays, minimal studies have investigated the grammatical and lexical errors committed in the essays of students at the secondary level from the perspective of the students themselves as well as their teachers. This revelation in the existing literature is an indication of the research gap that ought to be filled and this is exactly what this current study sought to do.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives which guided the current study are;

1. To identify the grammatical and lexical errors in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba.
2. To investigate the types and categories of the grammatical and lexical errors in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba.
3. To examine the causes of the grammatical and lexical errors committed in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba from the perspectives of students themselves as well as their English teachers and how these errors could be minimised.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above objectives, these research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What grammatical and lexical errors are committed in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba?
2. What are the categories of the grammatical and lexical errors identified in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba?
3. What are the perspectives of the students and the English teachers on the causes of the grammatical and lexical errors and how could they be minimised?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Errors are natural, inevitable outcome of a second language learning process. Therefore, students in SHS make errors of one form or another in varying degrees of

frequency due to a number of factors. Wilkins (1972) postulates that no good teacher who is interested in the improvement of the students learning process will continue to ignore their errors if he or she wants to assist them to improve their standard of proficiency in English. The current study would help teachers identify the writing problems of students so as to devise remediation. It would also motivate teachers to adopt new ways of teaching English language more effectively.

The findings of this current study will help to enhance students' academic performance in all subject areas and their general life because their way of expressing their ideas would improve and which would make them good communicators. The current study is also significant because its findings could be used as a guide for the Ghana Education Service (GES) to create models for teachers to use in teaching how differences between the sentence structure of English language and that of students' first language. The GES could employ the modules for in-service training and workshops to facilitate a better understanding of the different ways to teach sentence structure.

Finally, this study is an addition to the literature on EA because findings would serve as reference material to all who are interested in learning and knowing the rules of syntax so that they could communicate effectively. It would also generate or drive other newer studies on EA from the perspective of the syllabus and texts.

1.6 Delimitation

This study is limited to analysing the grammatical and lexical errors committed in the English essays of Form 2 students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, (ZIGHISS) in Winneba.

The African Methodist Episcopal (A. M. E.) Zion Church, Ghana established the school in the late 1990s. Four academic programmes namely: General Arts, Business, Home Economics and Science are run by the school. ZIGHISS has a student population of approximately 700. Participants from four Form 2 classes were samples for this current study. The average number on roll in each of the four Form 2 classes, which formed the population for this study, is twenty-two (22). Due to time constraints, the study was confined to a sample of fifteen (15) students from each of the four selected classes. The total number of respondents was therefore, sixty (60). After the essays were collected, the researcher realised that twenty essays were incomplete. The writers of these twenty essays wrote barely half a page or less therefore the researcher decided not to include those essays in the analysis. Therefore, forty essays were analysed to identify the grammatical and lexical errors committed in the English essays of the student participants.

Students' general performance at the WASSCE in the school over the past 5 years has not been good. Students presented for the WASSCE within this period have not passed well enough to enable majority of them to pursue tertiary education. The table below shows ZIGHISS students' performance at the WASSCE for the past 5 years.

*Table 1***Performance of students presented for WASSCE (2012- 2016)**

| Year | No. of Candidates Presented | No. of Candidates Passed | Percentage % |
|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2016 | 136 | 77 | 56.61 |
| 2015 | 131 | 80 | 61.06 |
| 2014 | 129 | 67 | 51.93 |
| 2013 | 127 | 62 | 48.81 |
| 2012 | 123 | 68 | 55.28 |

Table 1 indicates the number of final year students who have been presented for the WASSCE examination in the past five years. The table reveals the overall performance of students in all subjects. Percentages indicate that the level of students' performance at ZIGHISS is falling over the years.

*Table 2***Students' performance in English language (2012- 2016)**

| Year | Number of Candidates Presented | Number of Candidates Passed | Percentage % |
|------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2016 | 136 | 57 | 41.91 |
| 2015 | 131 | 49 | 37.40 |
| 2014 | 129 | 47 | 36.43 |
| 2013 | 127 | 52 | 40.94 |
| 2012 | 123 | 52 | 42.27 |

Table 2 presents students' performance in English language within the same period.

The table reveals that the number of students who pass English language, that is, those who obtain A1 to D7 is not encouraging. This is an indication that students cannot compose their ideas clearly and meaningfully in English language.

Informal discussion with the Headmistress and the English language teachers of the school indicated that students of ZIGHISS are unable to put their ideas together well enough to express themselves coherently. This situation does not emanate from the fact that the students do not know what to write, but it comes about because they are not able to compose their ideas well in a meaningful and coherent manner.

1.6 Organisation of the Study

In terms of structure, this study is divided into 5 interrelated chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, which sets out the background to the study and the statement of the problem under study. The chapter also presents the objectives of the study, the research questions guiding the data collection processes and the significance of the study is also stated here.

In chapter 2, literature related to Error Analysis research are reviewed. The literature encompasses studies conducted both home and abroad on error analysis and outlines the theory of error analysis postulated by Corder (1975). Chapter 3 presents discussions on the research approach and design as well as methods of data collection for the study. It explains subsections such as, sampling and sampling size, data collection instruments and data analysis procedures. The chapter ends with a discussion on the trustworthiness of data with an assessment of some ethical issues regarding qualitative research.

Chapter 4 deals with the analysis of data and discussion of findings followed by chapter 5 which talks about the summary of findings, recommendations, suggestion for further studies and conclusion of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to identify and analyse grammatical and lexical errors in the English essays of Senior High School students. In view of this, the Error Analysis (EA) theory of second language acquisition (SLA) is the most recommended and the most suitable theoretical framework for the analysis of the data gathered for this study.

This chapter therefore reviews relevant literature in relation to the current study. The chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study, Error Analysis (EA), outlining the background to the concept of error analysis, procedure for EA, as well as some approaches to EA studies and its relevance. Contribution of EA to knowledge and criticisms against EA are also discussed here. Some studies on EA by researchers in Ghana, Africa as well as other parts of the world are reviewed in this Chapter. Lastly, the classification of errors and some possible sources of errors committed by learners of a second language are highlighted.

Corder (1975) and Selinker (1983) assert that Error Analysis (EA) is an approach to the study of language teaching and 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 learners' language. As such, the language learner could be sufficiently or adequately helped to overcome the committed errors. To add to Corder and Selinker's assertion above, Nemster (1970) posits that most EA analysis researchers are of the view that errors are natural phenomena or an outcome of second language acquisition (SLA) and therefore,

students should be made aware of them with the intention of finding lasting solution to the commitment of these errors. To Nemster, it must be noted that EA is reserved for the study of erroneous discourses produced by learners of a language to enable teachers to devise appropriate strategies for remediation.

Cumming (1990) on the other hand believes that errors are not always bad in themselves, but they are rather crucial parts and aspects in the process of learning a language. He goes on to explain that this, makes it imperative for all parties involved such as: teachers, learners and researchers to note well the significance of the error analysis to enable them appreciate ways by which error analysis is of benefit to them. Error is defined as the result of an unsuccessful part or aspect of a language. Error Analysis therefore is the process of studying the appearance, nature, causes and consequences of unsuccessful language. Cumming asserts that errors committed by second language learners at the sentence level is more common and they affect the semantic expression of discourses. He adds that it is of great help to improve the writing ability, strengthen the training of the sentence level and correct the mistakes and errors of the English sentence patterns.

Keshavars (1997) identified two branches of error analysis namely, theoretical and applied. According to Keshavars, theoretical error analysis is concerned with processes and strategies of second language learning and their similarities with first language acquisition. Applied error analysis, on the other hand, deals with organising remedial courses and devising appropriate materials and teaching strategies based on the findings of theoretical error analysis. In this study, the Theoretical Error Analysis resonates more with its focus and has therefore been employed for the analysis of data.

2.2 The Concept of Error Analysis

Researchers have attached great importance to error analysis with regard to second and foreign language learning over the years. As a result, a great deal of research has been conducted into why students, especially, commit errors in the process of acquiring a target language.

Ellis (1985) reckons that the post-second world war period through the 1960s witnessed a strong assumption by linguists that most of the difficulties that L2 learners encounter were imposed by their first language. Therefore, a procedure called Contrastive Analysis (CA) was developed in order to identify areas of difficulties. According to Ellis, this was based on the assumption or belief that it was possible to predict what problems the learner of a particular L2 would face by establishing the linguistic differences between the learners' L1 and his or her L2'. For example, it was assumed that where there were differences between the L1 and the L2, the learners' L1 knowledge would interfere with the acquisition of the L2 and where the L1 and L2 were similar, L1 would actively also aid L2 learning.

As a solution to the problem, some contrastive analysts such as Brown (1987) opined that classroom teachers should focus their teaching on the areas of difficulty created by negative transfer by adopting vigorous practice in order to overcome the challenges. In line with this, Lado (1985) posited that the teacher who has made a comparison of the foreign language with the native language of the students will know better what the real problems are and can provide remediation in teaching them. Lado maintains that EA is pedagogic therefore teachers need to show interest in learners' errors.

Dulay and Burt (1978) also raised serious doubts about negative transfer as a major factor in SLA because according to them many grammatical errors could not be traced to L1 influence. Their findings paved the way for the emergence of Error Analysis (EA). In the 1970s, a methodology for investigating the learners' language surfaced. This method known as Error Analysis was the appropriate starting point for the study of the learners' language and second language acquisition. It was also around this time that structures of child language production began to be described and analysed as grammatical systems rather than in terms of how they are deficient in comparison to adult norms.

Corder, an ardent proponent of EA through a series of articles, for example Corder (1967, 1971, and 1974) contributed greatly in the field of Error Analysis (EA) by giving it direction. By Corder's (1967) claim, a teacher's effort to analyse his/her student's errors grants him/her the opportunity to modify his/her teaching strategies to be more beneficial to the learners thereby assisting them to overcome their learning difficulties. This eventually results in the reduction of the learner errors and an improved learning. Therefore, learner errors could not be said to be completely bad but rather a necessary part of the foreign language acquisition processes.

In sum, all these researchers share in the view that errors are not bad in themselves and so analysing learners' errors leads to the crave to improvement on the parts of all stakeholders. The implication that, for learning to take place effectively, there must be errors to measure the rate of absorption and not as an opportunity to look down on the learner. In commensuration with the above assertion, Stark (2001) highlights the necessity for teachers and other educators to be interested and engage in the analysis of the errors committed by students. Thus, when all educators view learners' errors as

a necessary part of the learning process, they could understand students better and would be able to help them better in their efforts to acquire and use the target language effectively.

2.3 Procedure for Error Analysis

Corder (1974) suggests procedures for Error Analysis (EA) and avers the following stages: identification, description, explanation and evaluation stages. The identification process involves identifying errors from selected corpus. Here, Corder is of the view that there should be a distinction between systematic errors and haphazard mistakes. The second step in EA according to Corder is the description of the errors that have been identified. Corder maintains that errors are classified by their grammatical behaviour and so they could be phonological, morphological or systematic.

The stage of explanation is where an attempt is made at understanding why errors are committed. This is where a particular error is found to be interlingual because of negative transfer of interference from L1 and most importantly if the error is intralingual or caused by factors such as cross – linguistic influence. The final procedure in the analysis of second language learners' errors is that, the errors are to be evaluated. This stage is where the question of how a particular error affects whoever is being addressed, is examined. In other words, the seriousness of the error is examined and here, questions such as, does the error affect intelligibility or social acceptability; is the error serious enough to affect meaning; are addressed.

2.4 Approaches to Studying Error Analysis

Latiff & Bakar, (2007) outline four approaches to the study of errors in second language learning. These are Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), which is the traditional approach; Error Analysis (EA); the contemporary approach, Interlanguage Analysis (IA), and Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) as the modern approaches.

Error Analysis (EA) as an approach to error studies is used to demonstrate that the errors committed by L2 learners are not always due to the learners' native language but due to other complex factors. Ellis (1994), views Error Analysis as being based on emergence of Interlanguage theory, which is known to be used to explain effectively the errors committed in second language acquisition processes. The model holds the view that factors like communicative strategies and the quality of second language instruction result in L2 errors.

2.5 Relevance of Error Analysis to Language Teaching

James (1998) defines error as what arises when there are no intentions to commit one. Cumming (1990) also defines error as the systematic deviations from the norms of a language being learned. In addition, Richards (1974) defines error as systematic deviations, when a learner has learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. For Lennon (1991), an error is a linguistic form or combination of forms which in the same context and under similar conditions of production would, in all likelihood, not be produced by the speakers' native speakers' counterparts. He explains that an error is what takes place when a deviation arises because of lack of knowledge whereas the mistake comes up when learners fail to perform their competence.

Given the various definitions above, it is clear that a learner's inability to use a target language correctly or appropriately is an unconscious phenomenon. This makes it more explicit that language learning comes with its own problems, which if not well attended to, has a higher potential of affecting the learner's communication.

According to Sarfraz (2011), whether in speech or in writing, one is expected to have sufficient command over the new language and more especially writing. Whether in speech or writing, Sarfraz posits that a learner of a second language is expected to have sufficient command over the new language both in speech and in writing. He explains that

‘writing is a highly complex task and writing in a second language makes the task further complicated as it requires sufficient command over the second language to fulfil all the formalities; composing, developing logical ideas which are essential for written text to be comprehensible’ (p. 41).

In view of the definitions of error above, (Richards, 1974; Dulay and Burt, 1978) postulate that, most researchers are interested in errors committed by L2 learners because errors are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language. Adding to this, Corder (1976) observes that errors are visible proof that learning is taking place. He believes that errors, if studied carefully and systematically, can provide valuable insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. He further subscribes to the idea that studying students' errors in the usage of their language has immediate practical application for language teachers. Corder explains further that errors give a quick and reliable feedback to teachers, such that the study of errors draws teachers' attention to the effectiveness of their teaching. Throwing more light on the above, Selinker (1983)

observes that learners' errors are like red flags that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of the second language.

Corder (1976) states that:

“when learners' errors become glaringly visible and evidential, they serve as an outward sign to the teacher, which can then guide and direct the formulation of strategies to assist the learner, overcome the said difficulties and that studying the errors of second language learners affords the teacher the opportunity to strategise and adopt the most appropriate teaching methods suitable to the needs of the student”.

To buttress the previously mentioned, Vahdatinejad (2008) reiterates that error analyses can be used to ascertain what a learner still needs to be taught. This means that engaging in error analysis enables the teacher to understand his/her student better and know which areas to strengthen. According to Vahdatinejad, error analysis serves as a tramcard, which conveys the student's linguistic needs to the teacher for the appropriate redress and that furnishes the teacher with the required knowledge on what is lacking in the competence of the learner.

In conformity with the above, Candling (2001) admissibly, elucidates that for the teacher to be able to fashion out the most suitable strategy, and come out with a didactic pedagogy to aid learners overcome their challenges with regard to the errors, he/she must obviously and as a matter of necessity, do a critical study to get an in-depth understanding of the nature of errors committed. He adds that this will enable the teacher to come up with appropriate methodologies, which will serve as a corrective measure to the learner. Candling considers Error Analysis as a means of monitoring and analysing the learners' language. He however agrees to the assertion that an error is a deviation and intimates that the L2 learners' errors are potentially

important for the understanding of the processes of a second language acquisition (SLA).

Corroborating Candling's observation, Olasehinde (2002) states that learner errors are inevitable and adds that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve. Olasehinde is therefore of the opinion that proper understanding of learner errors helps the teacher to measure and monitor the progress of the learner in the process. This means that the teacher uses error analysis as a tool with which he/she measures the needs of his/her learners in the course of second language learning.

Furthermore, Mitchell and Myles (2004) posits that the study of learner errors could reveal a developing system of the students L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. According to Mitchell and Myles the analysis of learners' errors guides the teacher in defining his/her scope of teaching, it helps him /her to determine the pace at which he/she has to go in order for it to benefit the learner and by which method that the best of results could be achieved.

Stark (2001) also maintains that teachers need to view learners errors positively and should not regard them as their failure to grasp the rules and structures but view the errors as process of learning. Going forward, and sharing in Stark's view, the perception about learner errors should not be negative or learner errors should not be considered as a weakness but a way of assessment in order for the teacher to be able to help him/her better.

Still touching on the relevance of error analysis, Richards and Sampson (1974) observe that at the level of classroom experience, error analysis will continue to provide one means by which the teacher assesses learning and teaching and determine

priorities for future effort. According to Richards and Sampson, teachers who make conscious efforts to research into the specific errors their students commit, stand a better chance of developing the most appropriate support for the learner to be able to overcome their learning difficulties.

In addition, Weireesh (1991) postulate that the errors committed by learners are of particular importance since they form part of the devices used by the learners to learn. Weireesh maintains that the errors committed by learners' grant them the encouragement to learn more because the errors they commit help learners to recognise their weaknesses and strive to have them corrected which eventually culminate in an improved learning. He explains that EA is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners such that it serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. This emphasises the fact that in spite of the nature of the errors so committed by learners, when they are identified, learners are helped and teachers find it easy to do remedial work.

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, researchers have diverse perceptions on why they conduct their researches into the errors committed by learners. Sometimes, these perceptions influence and pre-empt the deductions made by the researchers. Whereas some researchers such as Weireesh (1991; Stark 2001; Sampong 2014) view errors as a better and necessary means to understand the process of second and foreign language acquisition, others on the other hand, view errors as a weakness or flaw, which must be eliminated.

However, Corder (1976) elucidate that:

“errors used to be flaws that needed to be eradicated but systematic analysis of errors made by second language learners makes it possible

to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching to ensure a proficiency in the learners' language use".

2.6 Distinction between an Error and a Mistake

It is good for a second language teacher to know exactly what errors his students commit and why they commit them. This will help him to adopt effective teaching strategies in order to handle his students' errors. Applied linguists differentiate between errors and mistakes and since English language has a set of rules or codes for generating a well-formed sentence, a violation of this set of rules may result in an error or a mistake.

According to Yankson (1996), an error is a noticeable deviation from the rules of a target system, such that, when there is a breach of the language code, an error is committed. Yankson opines, an error may occur as a result of lack of knowledge or misapplication of the rules of the second language and explains that errors are recurrent and systematic and they reveal one's level of competence in the target language. The error analyst ignores learners' mistakes and sometimes refers to them as performance phenomenon. This is because the errors do not reflect learners' competence therefore they need to be analysed and corrected to ensure proficiency of language use.

In contrast with Yankson's opinion, Sampong, (2014) asserts that a learner's error is a reflection of lack of understanding of the underlying competence in the language that he or she is learning. Sampong opines that the identification of an error by observing, analysing, and classifying to reveal something of the system operating within the learner, leads to error analysis.

To add to the above, Corder (1976) observes that learners' errors are visible proof that learning is taking place and he believes that when learners' errors are studied carefully and systematically, it can provide valuable insights into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. He further subscribes to the idea that studying students' errors in the usage of their language has immediate practical application for language teachers'. From the above, it can be concluded that errors committed by second language learners give a quick and reliable feedback to teachers and it draws their attention to the effectiveness of their teaching.

Bears (1992) distinguishes errors from mistakes by defining a mistake as a type of linguistic deviance, which may be a slip because of tiredness, emotional stress, nervousness, memory lapse or preoccupation with the subject. According to Bears, mistakes are haphazard and unsystematic and the learner can oftentimes correct his/her own mistakes. He indicates that, a mistake is an action that is quickly recognized and corrected. Bear explains that another way of identifying the difference between an error and a mistake is looking at the frequency of a deviation.

2.7 Studies in Error Analysis

Several studies have been conducted on the analysis of errors committed by English as second language (ESL) learners. Kim (2002) conducted a study to investigate errors committed by ESL students regarding their use of the verb tense. This study was conducted among Korean students who were asked to translate Korean sentences to English. Kim's study examined the sources and nature of learners' errors among Korean college freshmen who were registered for Test of English for International Communication class. Kim found that most of the learners' errors were grammatical which had to do with verb tenses. He realised that the learners' errors were committed

due to intralingual and interlingual interference. The findings of the study revealed that most of the verb tense errors were committed because the learners lack the knowledge of the rules of the target language and that even though some of the errors could be attributed to mother tongue (L1) interference but they were minimal.

Another study worth reviewing in this research is the work of Bataineh (2005). Bataineh's study identified the kinds of errors committed by Jordanian first, to fourth year students and found nine types of errors in relation to the use of the indefinite article 'a'. This is a grammatical error study. The nine types of errors identified were deletion of the indefinite article, writing a as part of the noun/adjective following it, substitution of the indefinite for the definite article, and substitution of the definite for the indefinite article. Others were substitution of 'a' for 'an', use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals, use of the indefinite article with marked plurals, use of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns, and use of the indefinite article with adjectives.

Similar intralingual grammatical errors in L2 learners' writings are found in studies by Ghadessey (1980; Sattayatham & Honsa 2007; Collins 2007; Ahmadvand 2008).

Karim & Nassaji, (2013) maintain that other research works in error studies outside Ghana indicate that L2 learners employ their L1 skills in their writing. According to Karim & Nassaji, the L2 learners adopt L1 composing strategies to compensate for possible deficiencies in their L2 proficiency and as a tool to facilitate their writing process.

For instance, Kubota (1998) in a study among Japanese ESL students found that L2 students used similar patterns from L1 in their essay writings. He found that L2

writers transfer organization and rhetorical patterns from the L1. Similarly, Kim (2002) and Maniam (2010) also conducted studies to analyse students' grammatical errors in their writings. Their findings indicated that there is frequency of occurrence of grammar transference in the L1 to the L2. In the same instance, Barto, Nicol, Witzel, & Witzel (2009) discovered in a study of Spanish students learning English that transferability of native language grammar and structure exists when acquiring a second language (English). Findings of these studies revealed that there is L1 lexical interference in L2 writing concerning collocation, plural words, general-meaning and literal word translation. Hung (2000) supported these research works in a study of Thai English as a Second Language (ESL) students. He found that written English assignments of students were influenced by their L1 grammar structures, which include subject-verb agreement, auxiliaries, noun, determiners, and clause/sentence structure.

In another development, Yin and Ung (2001), in a study of Bahasa Melayu English as a Foreign Language (EFL) 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. The study also determined how the native language or mother tongue influences the students' acquisition of English. The analysis indicated that lack of proficiency in English made the students rely heavily on their L1. The study noted that approximation, coined words and slang, language switch, medium transfer, inappropriate use of tenses, omission of articles, omission or wrong usage of articles, adjective morphology errors, prefabricated patterns, and literal translation were some of the L1 interference errors.

Within the EFL context, Listiani (2014) explored errors in students' English writing at the pre-university level. Specifically, the research had as its focus to explore the writing abilities of students by investigating the types and level of grammatical and lexical errors made by these non-native speakers of English as well as the percentage of each type of error that was noticed. By making use of descriptive research design as well as the random sampling technique, Listiani explored the English writing of 72 students.

The result confirmed that none of the students demonstrated qualities of a very good performance with respect to the application of the rules of usage of the English language in their respective essays. The findings revealed that the grammatical errors that were identified in the data included errors in tense (25.44%), errors of omission of 'to be' (18.89%), errors of addition of 'to be' (13.35%). Also, errors in composing interrogative sentences (8.81%), errors in using articles (7.05%), errors in using prepositions (6.80%), omission of subject (6.04%), errors in possessive case (4.78%). Errors of misordering in composing adjective phrase (3.02%), errors in using pronouns (2.26%), omission of main verbs (1,15%), the substitution of auxiliary (1.26%) and errors in using adverbs (0.75%).

In addition, the analysis confirmed that challenges with inappropriate use of words in specific contexts, spelling, part of speech, wrong diction, Indonesian words usage, wrong tense and inappropriate use of the plural forms of words featured in errors that were committed at the lexical level.

Hamdi (2005) in his study, analysed written grammatical errors of Tunisian learners of English in the EFL context. The study made use of 18 third year Tunisian students in the area of Business English at the ISEAH Institute of Kef in Tunisia. By making

use of 18 written essays by the 18 respondents who were all non-native speakers, Hamdi explained the kind of errors that dominated the writing of the selected students. The findings of the study revealed that the error types that dominated students writing were wrong usage of tenses, morphology, prepositions, articles, verbs, and relative pronouns. These areas, according to Hamdi, were trouble spots that impeded easy comprehension of essays written by the respondents.

In contrast with the aforementioned studies, which solely focused on errors in the writings of learners from either the ESL or EFL context, Khansir (2013) did a comparative study of written errors in English Language by EFL and ESL learners at Second Cycle level. The study also had as an additional aim of providing remedy to curb the situation by outlining and recommending measures that can be adopted to curb those errors that were identified in the students' written texts. By making use of 200 non-native speakers of English students from two main geographical settings (Indian & Iran) at the Second Cycle levels, Khansir realised that the Iranian students committed 3,045 errors in their writing while their Indian counterparts had 3,274 errors. Khansir further confirmed that, punctuation errors dominated the errors that were identified in the essays of students from the two different cultures. That is, there were 1,387 instances where students from the two cultures wrongly used punctuation marks. The number of errors made by the Indian students in the use of punctuation marks was 718 while the Iranian students committed 669 punctuation errors. The researcher further argued that wrong spelling was noted to be the least error type that was identified in the essays of students from the two cultures. The Iranian students were noted to have wrongly spelled words on 578 instances whilst the Indians on 472 instances misspelled words.

All the above studies on the analysis of ESL/ EFL learners' errors indicate that indeed learners of a given target language need to be taught the rules governing the language they are learning to help minimise the errors they commit. When learners become conversant with how words are used in a target language, they tend to commit less mistakes.

A plethora of studies have also been undertaken in the area of Error Analysis in Ghana over the years. These researches have delved much into errors recurring in the written essays of second language learners of the English language. While some Ghanaian researchers have focused on the errors made by University students, a few have examined the pattern of errors of Ghanaian students in Senior High Schools and at the Basic Schools. In most cases, findings from these studies have indicated that error analysis is a necessary tool for better proficiency in language acquisition of second language learners.

Yankson (1994) analysed errors in the use of English by students of University of Cape Coast and University of Nigeria, Nsuka campus. In this comparative study, the researcher identified common errors made by students to include concord errors and errors involving complex noun phrases. The study traces the plausible sources of these errors and categorised them as being interlingual and developmental. According to Yankson, developmental errors are those errors that are typical of all second language learners while intralingual errors are those committed as a result of the learners' partial knowledge of the systems of the target language.

Similarly, Edu-Buando (1997), provided a preliminary report on the study of error patterns in the written essays of Senior High School students in the Central Region of Ghana. The rationale behind the study was to identify the most frequent recurring

errors and possible causes. The researcher grouped the identified systematic and recurrent errors into categories of spelling, concord, preposition, vocabulary and expression, article and other errors. The study went further to examine the effects of gender, length of stay in school and the type of school on the general level of proficiency in English of students in Senior High Schools. According to Edu-Buando, the purpose of her study was to draw the attention of teachers of English, policy makers of education, and even students to the problem of poor standard and to recommend appropriate ways of attending to the problem.

Hinging on Edu-Buando's study, Anyidoho (2002) studied the writing of final year university students of the University of Ghana, Legon. According to the researcher, in order to avoid the attendant problems of relying on the results of external examinations in evaluating the proficiency level of students in English, a long-term research project involving the collection and analysis of samples of students' writing over a number of years was embarked upon. The study identified faulty sentences in the students' writing and categorized them under the following headings: concord, word choice, omission, preposition, punctuation, and spelling errors.

What was unique about this study was that the investigation went beyond identification and classification of students' errors because the students were given the opportunity to correct their own deviant sentences. The reason for asking the students to correct their own deviant sentences according to the researcher was based on the distinction that has been made between errors and mistakes.

The study assumed that if the deviant forms that emerged in the students' writing were mistakes, then the learners would be able to rectify and correct them. Conversely, if the deviant forms were because of the students' incompetence in

English, they then they should go unnoticed. This assumption by Anyidoho (2002) in a way, answers the pertinent question of what constitutes a mistake and what constitute an error.

Another study in error analysis was conducted by Agor (2003). In this study, the researcher examined the English concord problems in the writing of Ghanaian Teacher-Trainees in Teacher Training Colleges in Ghana, now referred to as Colleges of Education. The researcher used a diversified range of data collection techniques to collect data from a random population of 150 trainees. The findings of this study revealed monumental problems and that even at post-secondary level, second language learners of English have not grasped the rudiments of the English language. According to the researcher, the subjects lack both the explicit and implicit knowledge of the rules of concord in English. Agor's study projected a gloomy future for education in Ghana since the models themselves (future teachers) are deficient in terms of competence. A government white paper on the report of the Education Reform Review Committee (2004) attests to the findings of this study that "there has been almost unanimous agreement that under the latest reforms, public education in Ghana has failed to meet expectations in terms of its coverage, quality, equitableness and economic utility" (p. 91).

Dzameshie (1997), also in his study to analyse the errors in students' language use asked the crucial question of what should be the primary goal of teachers who teach English as a second language in Ghana. In this study, the researcher argued that the current approach in ESL pedagogy in Ghana that sees language as grammar rather than as a means of communication is deficient. He advocates that, a communicative, skill-oriented approach, whose ultimate goal and mission should not be merely to

equip the learner with grammatical competence but, more crucially, with adequate communicative competence in the language should be the focus.

According to Dzameshie, this will enable ESL learners to communicate in socio-culturally appropriate ways in English with both native and non-native users of English. The findings in this study indicated that teachers view language primarily as a means of communication rather than as a grammar. It is for this reason that Dzameshie suggests that because of the dominant role that English plays in Ghana, it is imperative to adopt a communicative approach in ESL in Ghana.

Pomeyie (2007) also looked at the problems of tense usage in the written English of students in Senior High Schools. To her, the Senior High Schools are the gateways to the universities and other tertiary institutions; therefore, there is the need to improve the status of English language of the SHS students. According to this researcher, tense is a very important aspect of English language. Her study confirmed that indeed students in SHS have serious problems with tenses and surprisingly many teachers are not aware of it, so to get out of this problem, she suggests that students should have a firm knowledge of the rules governing tenses.

Another revealing research in the area of error analysis outside the classroom is Nimako (2008). His book, *Mind Your Language*, analyses a number of errors identified in some articles that have been published in newspapers, magazines, bulletins and books and those heard on radio and television. The study, which is a compilation of errors for many years, to him, is to make the reader sensitive to good English. The revelations in the book illustrate the lapses in both the written and spoken English of the educated Ghanaian because some basic syntactic and semantic rules have obviously not been followed.

Nimako emphatically states that,

“we cannot deny mother tongue interference since local idioms have been developed and loan words and phrases have been introduced. These features have been described as Ghanaian because they are absent in target or Standard English” (p.xiii)

Corroborating the above study, Safo-Adu (2009), in his book, *Your English is You*, examined the error pattern of students in their essays. The purpose of his study is to draw attention to certain wrong expressions and grammatical errors which feature prominently in the speech and written works of many students and public speakers.

Safo-Adu complains that:

“in a country like Ghana where English permeates all aspects of our socio-linguistic life, the use of poor English is a serious social handicap. A single grammatical error in the speech of a public speaker, even if it is immediately corrected, leaves an indelible stigma on his or her public image” (p. 18).

Another study crucial to the current research is the work of Ghanaian researchers, Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016). The researchers looked at the interference of learners' L1 in the L2 writing of some Akan speaking Junior High School Students. Data were collected by the use of documents (students' written essays). The researchers used content analysis approach to analyse written essays of the students to find out the writing errors of students in their essays having to do with L1 interference. The study found both grammatical and lexical errors, which include transliteration, omissions, wrong word use; L1 induced spelling errors, and wrong pronoun uses. It was also identified that transliteration and omission errors were the most frequently committed L1 interference errors in the writings of Akan speakers learning English in the Junior High School. The study concluded that some of the grammatical and lexical errors in students' L2 writing emanated from their L1 use.

In addition to these, other studies conducted in Ghanaian universities by (Dako, 1997; Gogovi, 1997; Gbeze, 1997; Awuah-Boateng, 1998; Mahama, 2012; Mireku-Gyimah, 2014) all indicated that grammatical and lexical errors do exist in students' writing. These studies noted the following as grammatical and lexical errors which are committed by university students in their L2 writings. Syntactic errors such as; concord errors, wrong register use, wrong tense use, wrong word use, wrong collocation, ambiguity, punctuation errors, and wrong idiomatic expression use among others were identified.

Still within the ESL setting, specifically within the Ghanaian context, Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) explored the causes of consistent errors that characterize the writings of students within the Ghanaian context. As a speech community that accepts pidgin as a variety of English, Ghana is seen as a place where Pidgin is spoken, especially in the Senior High Schools and tertiary institutions. These researchers in their paper sought to justify the fact that the challenges that most Ghanaian students face in applying the rules of usage of the English Language is as a result of the consistent use of pidgin by these students.

The data for the study comprised two groups of students: students that were identified as speakers of School Pidgin English and those identified as non-speakers of School Pidgin English. These two groups of students were made to go through a writing process by writing an essay on a given topic. The researchers further analysed the grammatical and spelling errors that typified the essays of the students that were analysed.

As posited by Amuzu and Asinyor, none of the errors committed by these students was solely linked to the School Pidgin English (SPE) speakers but rather to those

identified as non-speakers of School Pidgin English also made errors in their essays. This finding revealed that speaking SPE is not the sole source of errors in students' essays. However, the researchers posited that most of the errors committed by the students were highly linked to the students' mother tongues and to certain writing systems they use on electronic media platforms.

Adjei (2015) also analysed subordination errors in students writing within the context of selected Colleges of Education in Ghana. The study had as its focus to explore how students of the selected Colleges of Education handle one important aspect of subordination in their writing. The data for this study comprised written scripts and texts written by students of the selected Colleges of Education. The analysis of the data as highlighted by Adjei revealed that students of the selected Colleges of Education have challenges in the use of subordination as well as identifying the types and functions of subordinate clauses in sentences. Thus, students were not able to make use of subordinators to link their ideas together in their essays. Adjei further recommended the need for much time and space to be given to the teaching of subordination at the Colleges of Education and other levels of education in Ghana to enable students achieve coherence in their essays.

Mireku-Gyimah (2014), another Ghanaian researcher also explored the kinds of errors that featured in the English Language usage of final year students of the University of Mines and Technology. The study made use of data from anonymous comments of students on their lecturers' teaching performance as far as the Communicative Skills programme is concerned. In order to get the right information from the respondents, the researcher made the respondents write comments about their lecturers' performance at their (respondents) leisure time.

The analysis revealed that with a total number of 716 comments written by the students, 216 of these sentences were faulty and these faulty sentences constituted nine different error categories. As stressed by Mireku-Gyimah, dominant among these errors were the use of wrong register (wrong tone of language and vocabulary), misuse of words and wrong use of concord (subject-verb agreement).

The implication of the study above as argued by Mireku-Gyimah prompts the Academic Writing and Communicative Skills Centre of the Ghana Education Service (GES) Technology about the existence of challenges that final year students face in expressing themselves correctly in English. The researcher further recommended the need for students to pay more attention to their speech and writing skills as they enter the world of work. The study also recommended that the Communicative Skills programme should be expanded in order to help.

Although these studies do exist, it is crucial to look at errors among students at the first and second cycle levels of education since the foundation of second language acquisition begins from these levels. This is because studies on grammatical and lexical errors at the SHS level has implications for the laying of a solid foundation for good writing before the students are enrolled in tertiary institutions.

2.8 Contributions of Error Analysis to Knowledge

Error Analysis which supplanted Constructive Analysis, provides an appropriate methodology for investigating learners' language learning. According to Ellis (1985), EA constitutes the starting point for the study of learner language and second language acquisition. The study of errors has revealed conclusively that there is no single or prime cause of errors, a claim strongly fortified by Contrastive Analysis hypothesis. The study traced other sources such as: over generalization, chaotic system of the L2 orthography, ignorance of selection restricted rules, false hypothesis, language loyalty, perception blind spots and so on.

Furthermore, Nattama, (2002) is of the view that the study of errors has proved that the second language learners are not passive in the learning process rather, they are active participants of the learning process. Nattama, elucidates that the L2 learner adopts the same or some of the strategies by which L1 acquisition takes place and in the process hypothesis testing, takes place, which sometimes may lead to errors. Corder (1976), cited in Ellis (1985) points out that both L1 and L2 learners commit errors in order to test out certain hypothesis about the nature of the language they are learning. He explains that Error Analysis researchers make us aware that the L2 learners' language i.e. interlanguage, is a system in its own right. The L2 learners' language is different from the L1 and it lies in between the L1 and the L2. This language that is the learners' language, is stable, systematic, dynamic and permeable.

In support of the above, Leech (1989) maintains that EA has encouraged creativeness of the learners' language and has helped to give respectability to errors, to be seen not as a 'sin' but an inevitable feature of the learning process. Leech however argues that:

“though an analysis of students' errors puts the teacher in a better position to decide how teaching time is better spent, such a traditional

analysis lacked the rigorous methodology and the theoretical framework to explain the role played by errors in second language teaching and learning” (p. 39).

Leech cites another area where EA has contributed to knowledge as the distinction between error and mistake and adds that Applied Linguistics differentiates between error and mistake and this knowledge has helped teachers to focus on problem areas that pose great difficulty to learners.

2.8 Criticisms against Error Analysis

Criticisms of Error Analysis fall under two main categories namely: weakness in methodology and limitation in scope. In terms of methodology, there are practical difficulties to identify what an error or mistake is. George (1972) cited in Ellis (1994) emphatically states that, whereas learners’ errors are generally viewed as unwanted forms, children’s errors are seen as transitional forms and adult native speakers’ errors are regarded as slips of the tongue. This is the difficulty in identifying errors and also who makes an error or mistake.

Another criticism levelled against Error Analysis is that the focus is on written materials such as students’ essays, class test and other exercises and not on speech. However, research has proved that errors that learners commit can be influenced by a variety of factors. For example, errors occur in speaking but not in writing as a result of the different processing conditions involved. As far as limitation in scope as a criticism levelled against EA is concerned, it must be stated that, EA has failed to provide a complete picture of the learners’ language.

Dulay, Burt and Krashen, (1982) postulate that EA is criticised as a model which confuses explanatory and descriptive aspects and that the error categories lack

precision and specificity. Dulay et al. indicate that EA does not take into consideration the strategy of avoidance in L2 learning.

Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) identify six potential weaknesses in EA. These are: the analysis of errors in isolation, the classification of identified errors, statements of error frequency and identification of points of difficulty. The rest are; the ascription of causes of systematic errors and the biased nature of sampling. All these notwithstanding, Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977) did not dispute the fact that EA has added a layer to the analysis and classification of L2 learners' errors.

To this end, Ellis (1985), asserts that EA is only interested in what the learner does wrongly and not what he/she does correctly and explains that analysing the learners' language, it is very important to examine the totality of the learners' production and output. Ellis observes that EA is limited because most of the studies conducted are cross-sectional in nature thus providing a static view of L2 acquisition. According to Ellis, language learning is developmental and EA does not help us to understand how learners develop knowledge of the L2 over time.

2.10 Sources of Errors

A number of scholars and researchers have proposed various sources of errors made by language learners as follows. Richards (1974), for instance identifies two major sources of errors in second language learners' language namely, interlingual and intralingual interferences. Errors that are committed because of learners' lack of the knowledge of the rules of the target language are categorised as intralingual. The second errors are caused because of the interferences of the learners' first language such as wrong expression and vocabulary as well as misspelling of words.

James (1998) proposes that there are four sources of errors which are interlingual errors, intralingual errors, communication strategy-based errors, and induced errors. Based on her study, Penny (2001) concludes that there are two major sources of errors: interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Likewise, Heydari and Bagheri (2012) also state that interlingual interference and intralingual interference are the two major sources of errors committed by EFL and ESL learners.

In Thailand, a considerable number of scholars also carried out the study to explore the sources of errors. Kaweera (2013), for example, considering the findings of his study concluded that there are two main sources of errors, namely interlingual interference and intralingual interference. According to him, the first one is a negative transfer of learners' first language. The other one involves errors caused by learners' incomplete knowledge of the target language. Later, Runkati (2013; Rattanadilok Na Phuket & Othman 2015) all corroborate the two sources of errors which are interlingual interference and intralingual interference.

After studying and analysing the research about errors committed by Thai EFL learners, another Thai scholar, Hinnon (2014) came out that there are three sources of errors namely; negative transfer of the mother tongue, limited knowledge of the target language, and the difference between words and sentence structures of the mother tongue and those of the target language.

Even though most linguists believe that establishing the sources of learners' errors is a very important endeavour, they are unable to come to an agreement on how to conveniently classify them. Many researchers have tried to distinguish between different sources of errors. Richards (1995) identifies three different error sources to

include interference errors, but others make a distinction between transfer and intralingual errors. Ellis (1985) however, traces sources of errors to include, L1 interference, over-generalization, fossilisation, transfer of training, and inconsistencies in the target language. Examples of errors given under this section were those picked from the social media, interaction with friends, students and the public domain. Safo Adu (2009) and Nimako (2008) also provide useful examples such as errors of omission, ordering, selection among others.

Other sources of errors identified by Richards and Schmidt (2002) are overgeneralization errors, simplification errors, developmental errors, communication-based errors, L1 induced errors, avoidance errors and overproduction errors. Erdogan (2005) however posits that EA deals with the learners' performance in terms of cognitive processes. According to him, EA recognises the input learners receive from the target language. The basis of Error Analysis is the fact that learners' errors provide us with an understanding of the underlying processes of second language acquisition.

In summary, it could be concluded that there are two major sources leading to errors committed by EFL and ESL learners and these are interlingual interference and intralingual interference. The major sources of the errors are the negative transfer of learners' first language and their incomplete knowledge of the target language. Other sources, such as learners' carelessness cannot be overlooked. Analysing learners' errors in written English and seeking for sources of those errors have been proven helpful to EFL and ESL learners' writing improvement.

2.11 Classification of Errors

Errors are classified according to their features. Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) classified learners' errors into six different categories namely: omission of grammatical morphemes, double marking of semantic features, use of irregular rules, use of wrong word forms, alternating use of two or more forms, and wrong ordering of words.

In the late 1990s, James (1998) proposed five classifications of errors and categorised them into grammatical errors (adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, possession, pronouns, prepositions and verbs), substance errors (capitalization, punctuation and spelling), lexical errors (word formation and word selection), syntactic errors (coordination/ subordination, sentence structure and ordering), and semantic errors (ambiguous communication and miscommunication).

In a study by Hengwichitkul (2006), errors the errors committed in the writings of participants are analysed at the sentential level. All of the errors were classified as subject-verb agreement, tenses, parts of speech, participial phrases, relative clauses, passive voice, parallel structure, punctuation, run-ons and fragments. Likewise, Runkati (2013) categorized the errors found in her study into two main types. The former type dealt with errors at the sentential level, which were fragments, run-ons, subject-verb agreement, word order, tenses, capital letters and punctuation. The latter one was errors at the word level, such as articles, prepositions, word choices, nouns and numbers.

As the present study focused on the analysis of grammatical and lexical errors in the English written essays of learners, the analysis of errors found at the sentential level and the word level was adopted. The one regarding sentential level errors included

subject-verb agreement, word orders, tenses and the other concerning errors at the word level were articles, prepositions, word choices, nouns, pronouns and verbs. Other kinds of classifications for example, including errors of addition and omission were also referred to as sub-categories of the sentential level errors and the word level errors.

2.12 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has reviewed relevant literature in relation to the current study. Discussions on the theoretical framework of the study, Error Analysis (EA), outlining the concept of error analysis, procedure for EA, as well as some approaches to EA studies and its relevance were elaborated in detail. Numerous ways by which EA has contributed to L2 teaching and learning as well as criticisms against EA have been outlined in this chapter. Some studies on EA and syntactic error analysis by researchers from home and elsewhere in the world have been extensively reviewed. The sources and classification of learners' errors, as indicated by available research conducted by researchers from Ghana and other parts of the world have been reviewed as well.

The literature reviewed in this chapter show the extent to which scholars have explored errors in students writing especially within the context of Ghanaian educational sectors. This highlights the complex nature of the writing processes in English language learning especially by non-native speakers of English. However, with all the numerous studies on EA minimal studies have explored the cause of grammatical and lexical errors in the English essays of SHS students in the context of a single sex Senior High School. Also, minimal studies have examined the causes of grammatical and lexical errors committed by SHS students from the students' own

perspectives as well as that of their English teachers. It is based on the research gap above that the researcher of the current study sought to undertake this study at the A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School in Winneba.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to analyse the grammatical and lexical errors in the English essays of Senior High School students. This chapter presents a description of the methods and procedures adopted for the conduct of the study. Specifically, the chapter discusses the research approach, research design, participants of the study, sampling and sample size, data collection procedures and data analysis plan. These processes of ensuring the trustworthiness of the study as well as some ethical considerations are outlined in this chapter.

Before proceeding to the other subsections of the Chapter, it is important to restate the research questions that guided the study.

The research questions are:

1. What grammatical and lexical errors do students commit in the English essays of students in A. M. E. Zion Girls' SHS, Winneba.
2. What are the categories of the grammatical and lexical errors identified in the English essays of students?
3. What are the perspectives of the students and teachers on the causes of the grammatical and lexical errors and how could they be minimised?

3.2 Research Approach

The qualitative approach to research was adopted in the current study and the analysis was descriptive. This approach was adopted because it typically makes use of in-depth description of data instead of numerical data.

According to Afful and Tekpetey (2011), the qualitative research prioritises an in-depth analysis, description and interpretation of behaviour as against predominant use of numerical data. A qualitative or descriptive research as explained by Agyedu, Obeng and Donkoh (2007) seeks to gather information so that a description of what is going on can be made. The current study seeks to do exactly that. Since a research design is the plan that guides the conduct of an entire study. Creswell (2014), says that it is a plan, structure and strategy of an investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems’.

The field of education has seen an increase in the number of qualitative studies to collect information. Best and Kahn (2008) posit that, qualitative methods of data collection, such as interviewing, observation, and document analysis, have been included under the umbrella term of ethnographic methods. According to them, qualitative or naturalistic research is located in a natural setting. Best and Kahn observe that in qualitative studies, there is no single truth but multiple realities. In addition, they state that the qualitative approach to research is inductive because the researcher only knows things as they emerge in context. Best and Kahn postulate that the outcomes of qualitative studies must be negotiated with participants and the tentative results are best presented in a narrative analysis rather than numerical analysis. It is therefore worthwhile to say that the heart of a research is how it has been designed. In other words, the heart of a research study is its design.

Kothari (2004) on his part, opines that a research design is a plan, a roadmap and blueprint of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions. In support of the above, Burns and Grove (2002) are of the assertion that, a research design is a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that

may interfere with the validity of the findings. Thus, a research design is a model or action plan upon which the entire study is built. Burns and Grove further state that, research design dictates the manner in which a study is conducted providing a roadmap of the study in terms of the sample, data collection instruments and analysis procedure.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) state that committed qualitative researchers tend to apply criteria other than reliability and validity to their results. It is not clear, however, whether they take this position because intersubjective verification of their interpretations is extraordinarily difficult to accomplish and the criteria they propose are truly incompatible with the making of inferences from texts.

3.3 Research Design

Creswell (2014) describes a research design as a strategy, a plan and a structure for conducting a research work. According to Amoani, (2005) a research design involves arrangement of conditions for collecting and analysing relevant data in the most economical manner where the sample size, type of data to be gathered, procedures for gathering data, and methods of data analysis are determined by the design.

Krippendorff and Bock (2009) assert that qualitative research scholars resist being forced into a sequence of analytical steps and qualities of texts. These scholars feel justified in going back and revising earlier interpretations in light of later readings and they settle for nothing less than interpretations that do justice to a whole body of texts. They explain further that readings in qualitative research cannot easily be standardised because the process severely limits the volume of texts that a single researcher can analyse consistently and by uniform standards.

The design for the current study is qualitative content analysis where the researcher made use of the procedural error analysis model postulated by Corder (1975). This model comprises five stages to analyse errors of second language learners.

3.4 Scope of the Study

The research was conducted at African Methodist Episcopal Zion Girls Senior High School (A.M.E. Zion Girls Senior High School - ZIGHISS), situated in Winneba in the Effutu Municipality of the Central Region of Ghana. The Effutu municipality has four Senior High Schools, namely, Winneba Secondary School (WINNESEC), St. Paul Senior High School, Uncle Rich Senior High and A. M. E. Zion Girls Senior High School.

The A. M. E. Zion Girls Senior High School (ZIGHISS) was established by the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, Ghana in the early 2000s and has a population of approximately seven hundred and sixty students. The school runs four academic programmes namely, General Arts, Home Economics, Science and Business. Although the school has a boarding facility, majority of the students are non-resident. This site was purposively chosen because of the proximity of its location to the researcher.

3.4.1 Accessibility to the Research Site

A. M. E Zion Girls' SHS, (ZIGHISS) Winneba is where the researcher did her internship some years ago. Gaining access to the school was not difficult. I contacted the Headmistress on my intention and she granted me the permission to do so. I visited the school on several occasions and the Headmistress introduced me to the

participants where I briefed them on the purpose of my visit and how the exercise would be carried out.

3.5 Participants of the Study

The participants of this study were the Form 2 students in ZIGHISS and English language teachers. Based on the premise of the objectives of the study, the participants comprised only students selected from 4 different Form 2 classes of General Arts, Business, Home Economics and Science. The Form 2 class has a population of ninety-two students all of whom study English language. However, due to the qualitative nature of this research, it was impossible to include every student. As a result, fifteen participants were purposively selected from the 4 Form 2 classes to represent the whole student population. Two teachers of the English language were also sampled purposively to be interviewed. The total number of participants therefore was sixty-two. The table below is the breakdown of the participants of the current study.

Table 3: Breakdown of the participants of the study

| STUDENT PARTICIPANTS | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Programme | No. in Class | No. Sampled |
| General Arts | 23 | 15 |
| Home Economics | 24 | 15 |
| Science | 21 | 15 |
| Business | 24 | 15 |
| Total | 92 | 60 |

There were two English language teachers in the school at the time this study was conducted and both of them accepted to participate in the study.

3.6 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of the population that conforms to a designated set of specifications to be studied. According to Stake (2013), sampling involves the process of selecting the participants for a research study. Stake (2013) makes it clear that researchers adopt sampling strategies to guide their choice on what to observe or who to interview in order to make systematic contacts with a particular problem under study. Polit and Beck, (2004) also refer to sampling as a subset of a population selected to participate in a research study.

The purposive sampling strategy was adopted in the selection the Form 2 students as well as the English teachers for the current study. According to Brink (1996), purposive sampling requires selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the issue in question, because of their sheer involvement in and experience of the situation. Creswell (2013) also refers to purposive sampling as the selection of sites or participants that will best help the researcher to understand a problem and the research question. According to him, the purposive sampling technique is more suitable for the studies located within the interpretive-qualitative framework. Creswell maintains that in purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. He further explains that the standard used in choosing the participants and sites is whether they are information rich or otherwise. This suggests that participants are to be selected based on their knowledge of the problem under study and their willingness to share their knowledge and experiences with the researcher.

The purposive sampling strategy was used to select participants for the current study because the researcher wanted to focus on those classes whose students were willing to be part of the study to have an appreciable number for effective study and manageability.

Creswell (2013) argues that selecting many participants for qualitative research will result in superficial perspectives. This means that the overall ability of a researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual or site. Based on this idea, the researcher adopted a homogeneous sampling strategy to select that number of students because of their common traits. Creswell maintains that since qualitative studies are considered a small-scale study, researchers who apply this approach are interested in deep exploration in order to provide rich, detailed, holistic description. He opines that the sample size for a qualitative study depends on the qualitative design being used. In other words, qualitative researchers do not start with the establishment of a strict sampling but develop the sample as their intentions unfold and they discover new avenues and clues to further explore or investigate a phenomenon.

However, Cohen et al (2011) contend that there is no clear-cut sample for any qualitative study because the qualitative researcher is also an instrument and could decide on any sample size for his or her convenience. In other words, the suitability of a sample size is underpinned by the focus of a particular study, research questions, kind of data being sought, and the availability of material and time as well as resources. Marshall and Rossman (2011) however emphasise that whom a researcher selects for a study and where or when to gather needed data is dependent on the criteria determined by the focus or intentions of a study. The process of reading and

coding text is laborious and time-consuming that qualitative researchers with the intention of obtaining an in-depth understanding of data should use a sample size, which is relatively small and manageable (Perrin 2001).

The main aim of this study was to identify the grammatical and lexical errors in the English compositions of the SHS students therefore, the overarching criterion for the selection of participants was on the accessibility of the required data. For this reason, a participant has to be a student of ZIGHISS or a staff who teaches English language as a result, the researcher selected all sixty-two participants from this setting. In addition, the nature of the target population and the kind of information being sought guided the determination for the sample.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures or instruments are measurement tools designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from participants of a particular research. According to Ary, Jacobs & Razavie (2002), research instrumentation is a process used to solicit information. Ary et al. explain that this entire process by which primary data is collected for analysis in research investigation involves the selection and use of data collection techniques and the conditions under which such techniques are administered in a research study.

The current study focused on analysing syntactic errors in the essays of students. Therefore, the researcher employed qualitative content analysis approach and interviews to collect the needed data. The researcher analysed the content of participants' essay scripts to enable her identify syntactic errors in the sentences and categorise them using Corder's (1975s) error analysis model.

3.8 Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA)

According to Stake (2010), QCA is analysis of the manifest and latent contents of a body of communicated material as a book or film, through classification, tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect. In recent years, according to Stake, the emergence of the information in society has moved the minor details of communication, images, interfaces and, above all, information into the very centre of researchers' attempts at self-understanding. He adds that however ancient the roots of analysing symbolic and textual matter might be, today's CA is significantly different, in aim and in method, from that of the past.

Krippendorff, (2014) states that the intellectual roots of QCA can be traced far back in human history, to the beginning of the conscious use of symbols and voice, especially writing. But today, symbolic phenomena are institutionalised in art, literature, education, and the mass media, including the internet. Krippendorff observes that contemporary QCA has three distinguishing characteristics:

1. it is as an empirically grounded method
2. it is exploratory in process
3. it is predictive or inferential in intent.

In view of the above, Krippendorff sees QCA as potentially one of the most important research techniques in the social sciences. He explains that the content analyst views data not as physical events but as texts, images, and expressions that are created to be seen, read, interpreted, and acted on for their meanings, and must therefore be analysed with such uses in mind. The QCA approach was used to analyse errors having to do with grammar in the written essays of participants. Certainly, qualitative

content analysis is not the only research method that takes meanings seriously, but it is a method that has the additional qualities of being applicable to large numbers of data and being unobtrusive.

Qualitative content analysts in the opinion of Krippendorff and Bock (2009) support interpretations by weaving quotes from the analysed texts and literature about the contexts of these texts into their conclusions, by constructing parallelisms, by engaging in triangulations, and by elaborating on any metaphors they can identify.

“Such research results tend to be compelling for readers who are interested in the contexts of the analysed texts and analysts of this approach argue for the context sensitivity of their designs but they compel readers to accept their conclusions by assuring them of the careful application of their design” (p. 81).

Krippendorff (2014) opines that QCA makes sense of what is mediated between people and textual matter, symbols, messages, information, mass-media content, and technology supported social interactions without perturbing or affecting those who handle that textual matter. The current study analysed the content of written scripts of student participants to identify the syntactic errors and categorise them into themes or codes.

3.9 The Essays of Students as Data

To enable the researcher to identify syntactic errors in participants’ written compositions, the participants were given three essay topics to write on any one of them.

1. My first day at ZIGHISS
2. My family
3. A story I have read

All the sixty student participants wrote the essays under the same condition in their regular classrooms in the presence of their teachers as well as the researcher. Participants were asked to compose an essay of between five and eight paragraphs in twenty minutes. The researcher collected the scripts as data for the analysis and designed a coding scheme to help with the categorisation and thematisation of the identified errors.

Forty out essays out of the sixty were selected and analysed using Corder's (1975) model of error analysis. The other twenty essays were not sampled because they contained only one or two of the errors being sought which were noted to have been corrected in the subsequent paragraphs. Corder's error analysis model involves the stages commonly used in analysing errors committed by second language learners. These steps were adopted to suit the nature of the study after the selection of the corpus comprising the essay scripts. The stages in Corder's (1975) error analysis model include:

1. Identification of errors: The grammatical and lexical errors are identified from the selected essays.
2. Classifications of errors: The grammatical and lexical errors identified are then categorised into themes to the such as, Agreement Errors, Article Errors, Preposition Errors, Spelling Errors, Vocabulary and Expression Errors among others as per their occurrence in the essays.
3. Explanation of errors: the researcher uses interview schedules to gather data from the perspective of participants to find the causes of the syntactic grammatical and lexical errors committed learners.
4. Evaluation of errors: this is the last step where the errors identified are evaluated with the view to seeking interventions for their redress.

3.10 The Interviews

Another instrument for the collection of data for this study was interviews with the participants of the study. Being considered as the interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest interviews in a qualitative research could be in the form of a formal or an informal conversation.

Creswell (2014) states that ‘qualitative interviews are the means by which a researcher conducts face-to-face interactions with participants during a research study. According to Creswell, interview involves very few structured or unstructured open-ended questions intended to elicit views and opinions from participants on a particular subject under investigation.

Braun and Clarke (2013) postulate that the purpose of interview is to gather relevant information from someone through a professional conversation with the aim of getting him/her to talk about their experiences and perspectives as captured in their own language and concepts in relation to a determined topic. For Braun and Clarke, interviews are structured and guided by the use of interview guides, which may not rigidly follow the lines of thought of the interviewer. This according to Braun and Clarke (‘be either in terms of ‘precise wording or in terms of chronology of questioning but are very important. Gibbs (2007) however, emphasises that the sequencing of questions in an interview guide may not be the same for every participant since the chronology of questioning is dependent on the direction of responses from the interviewee.

For this study, the researcher used semi-structured interviews in order to better understand the experiences and perspectives of the participants as proposed by

Lindlof and Taylor (2002). In the view of some authors, (Burnard, Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008; Morse & Corbin, 2003), there are three fundamental types of research interviews, namely: Structured, Semi-structured and Unstructured. Each of these have a slight variation in their structure and more importantly conduct. Morse & Corbin discuss this in more detail and note that the main difference between the three approaches is the degree to which participants have control over the process and content of the interview.

The structured interview is by its very nature a very rigid instrument used to collect data in qualitative research. In the view of Gillet al, a structured interview is defined as a verbally administered questionnaire which does not use prompts and provides very little scope for follow up questions to investigate responses which warrant more depth and detail. According to Gill et al, the advantage of a structured approach of interview is that this extra structure allows the interview to be administered quickly, though it is of little use if 'depth' is required.

The opposite of the structured style of interview is the unstructured interview also referred to by Legard, Keegan and Ward (2003) as the in-depth interview. Legard et al. describe the unstructured interview as a conversation with a purpose. They explain that the unstructured interview is intended to allow researchers collect in-depth information by engaging participants in conversation to gather data in a qualitative research. This is a view also shared by Morse and Corbin (2003) who describe the unstructured interview as a shared experience in which researchers and interviewees come together to create a context of conversational intimacy in which participants feel comfortable telling their story. One of the main advantages of the in-depth interview in the view of Legard et al. is the ability to combine structure with flexibility. On the

other hand, Gill et al. view the unstructured interview in a slightly different light and argue that the unstructured interview does not reflect any preconceived theories or idea and are performed with little or no organisation. This implies that the process of the unstructured interview can be a little bit chaotic because of its lack of definite structure or planning.

The final interview approach is the semi-structured style and Gill et al. define this approach as an interview that has several key questions which help to define the areas to be explored. Gill et al. however maintain that semi-structured interviews allow researchers the flexibility to pursue an idea in a response in more detail, this is a medium between structured and unstructured interviews.

In the opinion of Legard et al. it is important to remember that the construction of knowledge is only viable when the data collection method allows the researcher to use a range of probes and other techniques to achieve depth of answer in terms of penetration, exploration and explanation. Considering the nature of the current study as well as time available, the researcher chose the unstructured style of interview, because that was what would enable her get both the students and teacher interviewees to respond freely to questions due to its conversation nature.

The unstructured style of interview was adopted as a means of data collection in this current study because it is flexible, interactive and responsive, and thus enables researchers to explore the meanings people attach to their experiences. Face-to-face unstructured interview sessions were conducted in an informal conversational manner with five out of the sixty student participants and the 2 English language teachers. The semi-structured interview questions were targeted at identifying the causes of the syntactic errors committed by participants and the possible measures to be taken form

the perspectives of teacher and student participants, to minimise the occurrence of such errors in their compositions.

The interview sessions with each of the five student participants who were purposefully sampled from the sample size lasted ten minutes. Fifteen minutes was spent with each of the two teachers. To commence the interviews, the researcher established a rapport between herself and the participants and the researcher assured them of confidentiality of their responses.

3.11 Methods of Data Analysis

The thematic qualitative data analysis method was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2013) is method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns or themes within data by describing the data in rich detail. Simon (2011), also asserts that qualitative data could be analysed using perspective codes that reflect the participants' shared ways of thinking and their points of view on a particular problem being studied.

The analysis began with data from the documents (the written compositions of the participants) followed by the interviews with students and the teachers. In answering the entire research questions, the analysis began with reading through the data gathered to obtain a general idea from the varied perspectives of the participants. A coding book was created into which the various syntactic errors identified in the script of the participants were entered. The identified errors were put into categories and those that did not seem to fit well into particular codes or themes were deleted or bracketed, as chunk. Through thematic analysis, aspects of the analysis involved interpretations of the themes that had been generated from the data. In some instances,

direct quotations from the data were used to support the analysis and discussions to help theorise the findings.

3.12 Trustworthiness of Data

For quantitative studies, trustworthiness is referred to as validity and reliability of data. However, in qualitative studies, this concept is more obscure because it is put in different terms. According to Gibbs, (2007), the validity and reliability of any Social Science research can be ascertained from the data collection procedures. In qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (2000) however, argue that ensuring the internal validity of any research is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness.

Bowen (2009) asserts that since qualitative researchers do not use instruments with established metrics about validity and reliability, it is pertinent to address how qualitative researchers establish that, findings of a particular research study are credible, transferable, confirmable, and dependable.

Bowen postulates that trustworthiness is all about establishing the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of data in a qualitative research. Bowen observes that credibility is how confident the qualitative researcher is in the truth of the findings of the study he or she is undertaking. This boils down to the question of, how a researcher knows that his or her findings are true and accurate. He explains transferability as how the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the research findings are applicable to other contexts. In this case, other contexts can mean similar situations, similar populations, and similar phenomena and qualitative researchers can use thick description to show that their findings can be applicable to other contexts, circumstances, and situations.

Confirmability is the degree of neutrality in the research findings. This means that the findings should be based on the participants' responses and not any potential bias or personal motivations of the researcher. Bowen explains further that confirmability involves making sure that researcher bias does not skew the interpretation of what the research participants said to fit a certain narrative.

Finally, Bowen describes dependability as the extent to which other researchers could repeat the study and arrive at findings which would be consistent. He explains thus, if a person wanted to replicate your study, they should have enough information from your research report to do so and obtain similar findings as your study did. In other words, qualitative researcher can use inquiry audit in order to establish dependability, which requires an outside person to review and examine the research process and the data analysis in order to ensure that the findings are consistent and could be repeated.

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be increased by maintaining high credibility and objectivity. In order to maintain high trustworthiness in a qualitative study, Krefting (1991) suggested four criteria to ensure valid interpretation of data: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. In the qualitative approach, truth value is measured by credibility: having an adequate engagement in the research setting so recurrent patterns in data can be properly identified and verified. Applicability is established with transferability: allowing readers to be able to apply the findings of the study to their own situations.

Krefting postulates that since a qualitative researcher's perspective is naturally biased due to his or her close association with the data, sources, and methods, various audit

strategies can be used to confirm findings. Therefore, trustworthiness of interpretations and findings are dependent on being able to demonstrate how they were reached.

3.13 Ethical Issues

Bowen (2009) opines that ethical issues in research concerns personal disclosure, authenticity, and credibility of a research report by demonstrating a high level of objectivity and sensitivity in the protection of research participants. In agreement with Bowen's assertion above, Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) also state that confidentiality and anonymity are closely linked to the rights of generosity and respect for dignity and fidelity of participants.

In effect, participants of a qualitative research have a right to their identity and information to be protected. Since this study was on the performance and perspectives of the participants, it was expedient that some ethical considerations in relation to the participants' informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality were adhered to. Creswell (2014) opines that every researcher needs to anticipate some ethical issues that could arise during a study and then seek to actively address them. He adds that 'since research involves collecting data from people or about people, there is the need to protect the research participants.

Seeking the consent of the participants, the researcher of the current study explained to participants the purpose of the study and their expected roles during the introduction between the researcher and the participants. The researcher assured participants of their privacy, protection of the anonymity and identity of participants,

the confidentiality of information provided and the use information provided solely for the purpose for which it was elicited.

According to Creswell, to ensure that participants have the right to take certain decisions during the interview, the researcher must inform them of their right to withdraw from the study if they so desired. They should also be reminded of their right not to answer any question during the interviews anytime they felt the questions bordered on their privacy. With respect to confidentiality, the real names of the participants were not used to be able to ensure that none of the transcripts could be linked to the identity of any of the participants. In view of this, the written scripts were marked with Roman Numerals and coded with pseudo-names.

3.14 Summary of Chapter

The importance of research methods and methodology is very immense in any study. The Chapter has provided information on the methodological procedures of the current study. These include the research approach and design, participants of the study as well as the sampling procedures and sampling size. All the procedures used in collecting data for the study and data analysis methods to ensure the credibility of the outcome of the study have also been discussed in this chapter. The Chapter ends with discussions on how to guarantee the trustworthiness of data and some ethical issues concerning the anonymity and the confidentiality of the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The data for this study is analysed in this chapter. The identified errors collected as data comprised the pattern of errors, categories of errors and the sources of the errors from the perspectives of students and teachers. All activities on data gathering were guided by the research objectives, research questions as well as the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

The Error Analysis theory of second language acquisition (SLA) is the analytical framework of the study. Forty essays out of sixty were selected for the analysis, through qualitative content analysis. According to Krippendorff (2013), qualitative content analysis entails a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessary from an author's or user's perspective but from the view of the reader. The data was carefully read and then coded and put into categorised from which thematic themes were generated.

Additionally, some data was gathered through interviews from two English language teachers and five students for their views on why syntactic errors identified in the compositions were committed. The following are the discussions and analysis of data as guided by each of the research questions.

4.2 Research Question (RQ) 1: What grammatical and lexical errors are committed in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba?

This question was targeted at identifying the grammatical and lexical errors committed by student participants in their English essays. Based on the identification and description of errors, the errors were categorised into themes. In order to make the analysis simple and easy to understand, the focus was on phrases and sentences containing syntactic errors such as agreement errors, proposition errors, article errors, spelling errors, vocabulary and expression errors. All the errors identified were coded and further categorised. Each of the identified errors are discussed accordingly in turns. Participants were to write on any one of these essay topics:

1. My first day at school
2. My family
3. A story I have read

4.2.1 Agreement Errors (subject-verb and noun-pronoun agreement)

Leech (1989) defines concord as the matching relationship between the subject and verb' in a sentence. He maintains that the main rule of concord is simple. This is because singular subjects go with singular verb phrases while plural subjects go with plural verb phrases. Corroborating Leech's definition, Bock and Miller, (1991) also define concord as the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have the feature. In line with these definitions, Yankson (1994) posits that the subject-verb agreement (concord) is very basic in an English sentence and it is therefore very necessary to be taught at the early stages of formal education. Therefore, for this type of error to persist in the interlanguage of Senior High School students, is an issue of great concern and should be investigated.

The concord errors identified from the data are sub-grouped with their examples as excerpts from the data as shown. The underlined words in each of the sentences indicate the concord errors that were committed by the students. The words in parenthesis at the end of each structure is the correct verb which should have been used by the students.

Singular Subject with Plural Verb

1. The school canteen, which have many workers.... (had)
2. Most of our teachers stays outside the school... (stay)
3. If the student are in class learning, the seniors (is)

Plural Subject with Singular Verb

1. Some of the classrooms has broken tables and chairs. (have)
2. New things has to come (have)
3. We all likes our Headmistress...(like)
4. We was given several punishments (were)
5. The man and his wife was working ... (were)
6. The rules and regulations in this school is not working. (are)
7. The seniors always makes us over work after class. (make)

All these were instances identified in the data where participants committed noun – pronoun agreement errors. Sorenson, (2010) asserts that noun-pronoun agreement, is the correspondence of a pronoun with its antecedent in number (singular, plural), person (first, second, third), and gender (masculine, feminine, neuter). Sorenson explains that one basic principle of pronoun agreement is that a singular pronoun refers to a singular noun while a plural pronoun refers to a plural noun. He however cautions that it is sometimes complicated when the pronoun is indefinite and adds that

sometimes their proper use is violated. Errors in this category were identified, in seventeen essays out of the forty and ten have been shown in this write up as extracts to support the analysis of the data.

Tense agreement error

This was another type of agreement error identified from the data collected. This is where the respondents used tenses wrongly. According to Presada and Badea (2014), the term tense refers to the correspondence between the finite verb form and any of the three divisions of time (past time, present time and future time). It follows that there are only two tenses, in other words, only two correspondences between the finite verb forms and time are possible in the English language. These are the present tense and past tense. Errors regarding wrong use of tenses were recorded in eighteen essays out of the forty analysed. Some examples of tense agreement errors where respondents used the simple present and the simple past tenses wrongly are listed as follows.

1. We reach Accra safely. (reached)
2. We were warmly welcome. (welcomed)
3. I did not realised that my father was there. (realise)
4. They didn't believed my story. (believe)
5. I am having a new phone. (have)
6. They have build a new dormitory. (built)
7. The old woman insult them (insulted)
8. He step into the river. (stepped)
9. All late comers are punish ... (punished)

It was revealed from the data that the agreement errors involving the wrong use of tense dominated those of singular subjects with plural verbs and plural subjects with singular verbs. In all, thirty-five out of the forty essays analysed had Agreement/Concord Error. This constitutes a percentage of 14% of the forty scripts analysed. The finding from the data therefore corroborates the findings of Agor (2003) that students commit agreement/concord errors in their spoken as well as written compositions. It is also in line with the fact that noun-pronoun and tense agreement/concord errors form the majority of the syntactic errors committed by students as posited by Agor.

4.2.2 Preposition Errors

Preposition errors were also identified in the essays of the student participants. According to Sackeyfio (1999), prepositions perform the important job of showing the relationship of a noun or pronoun to some other words within a sentence. Prepositions enable a speaker or writer to show the relationships between separate things and these relationships may involve such things as location, direction, cause or possession and she further explains that a preposition is a word that relates to the noun or pronoun following it to another word in the sentence. Most of the preposition errors committed by the student participants were due to wrong selection and sometimes-unnecessary addition of a particular preposition. This error type is also known as selection and addition errors. Some examples identified in the essays gathered as data are listed below with the appropriate prepositions in parenthesis at the end of each sentence. The following sentences are extracts that were selected from the sampled essays as data.

Use of wrong prepositions

1. My father died *in* a tender age. (at)
2. I visited them *at* the first time. (for)
3. The thief was stoned *till* death. (to)
4. We broke *out* in tears. (down)
5. *At* arrival the seniors asked her to kneel down. (On)
6. Two of the players are admitted *to* the Trauma Hospital. (at)
7. The lights are always *off* after prep time. (out)
8. The school was built *in* cement blocks. (with)

Use of redundant prepositions

These errors are committed when a writer uses prepositions at places where there is no need for the use of a preposition in a sentence. The following examples were identified in the essays of the participants. The redundant prepositions in the examples are highlighted in each of the sentences below.

1. She does not respect **for** her seniors.
2. We were discussing **about** the class test.
3. She was ready **up** for action.
4. This happened **from** ever since she started school.
5. When we reached **into** the house, nobody was there.
6. Where is your house **at**?
7. The school bus was approaching **to** the gate
8. The driver was **over** speeding.
9. I will never forget meeting her **on** that day.
10. They usually gossip **about** their mates.

In all, the total preposition errors identified in the forty essays analysed was twenty-two and it represented a percentage of 8.8% of the entire data. This analysis indicated that the participants had little or no knowledge in the use of preposition when composing ideas into a written piece. Prepositions of time, direction, place among others were used without direction and this affected the communicative meaning of utterances as well as written sentences.

The findings are in line with Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) that the inability of students to use prepositions correctly in their language usage is a source of great worry and there is the need to look at how best to find remediation. Amuzu and Asinyor (2016) recommended that material developers of the Ghana Education Service should develop curriculum materials to take care of English grammar in a more interactive way.

4.2.3 Vocabulary and Expression Error

One other type of syntactic error identified in the participants' essays is the use of wrong vocabulary and expression. Sackeyfio (1999) asserts that every language has a repertoire of vocabulary and expressions available to its users for effective communication. She elucidates that, it is very necessary that users of the language draw adequately and accurately from this stock. The incorrect use of words and expressions in this study also recorded a significant density of errors. In the study, students committed such errors as the use of wrong choice of vocabulary and expressions. Examples from the participants' essays.

The wrong vocabularies and expressions found in the collected data are italicised in each of the sentence with their and the correct words written in parenthesis after each structure.

1. My *junior* sister is in Accra. (younger)
2. Her bag is *costive*. (costly)
3. I prefer chicken *than* fish (to)
4. The doctor *tested* him for malaria. (diagnosed)
5. We go to the park to *give our team fans*. (to cheer our fans)
6. He said my friends are *lying*. (telling lies)
7. We *met his absent*. (He was absent)
8. His only *living* relative was very old (surviving)
9. It was a *two days* excursion (two-day)
10. I wanted *to go to church* with them. (come with you)
11. I thanked the sports master for *letting* me run the race. (allowing)
12. The driver was not able to *spark* his car. (start)
13. ... we will be sacked from the school (dismissed)

These sentences indicate that, the participants have vocabulary and expression issues. It could be deduced that most of the vocabulary and expressions in the sentences are used in the speech of people in the community therefore the participants have been hearing it all the time and have become used to such vocabulary. Errors of this nature are referred to as fossilised errors.

Ellis (1994) define fossilised errors as those errors, which are so deeply ingrained in learners of a second language so much so that, the correct language sounds wrong to them. Ellis explains that because certain errors have been committed repeatedly in a

manner that appears unable to be corrected no matter how hard one tries to help learners use the correct forms, they become deeply rooted among learners and the errors become part of their natural speech. This is known as fossilisation.

According to Ellis, in many cases, the learners may well know that they are committing such errors but their efforts to use the correct forms are to no avail hence they continue to commit the fossilised errors. These fossilised errors are often due to L1 interference, which is one of the two major sources of the errors committed in the writings of the student participants. In total, errors of wrong vocabulary and expressions were identified in twenty-one out of the forty scripts analysed representing 8.4% of the errors in the essays analysed.

This analysis is consistent with Mireku-Gyimah (2014) where wrong word use and incorrect expressions were identified as prominent in both the utterances and essays of students. One suggestion from Mireku-Gyimah was that teachers of the English language must be up and doing in their teaching to give the needed attention to teaching the rules of English language to enable learners to express their ideas appropriately both in spoken and written communication.

4.2.4 Article Error

Article errors were also identified among the syntactic errors identified in the compositions of the student participants. In English, there are two articles grouped as definite 'the' and indefinite 'a' articles. According to Sackeyfio (1999), articles in English precede the noun phrase as determiners. The phonetic environment and the semantic nature of the noun phrase also however, determine the article that should

precede it. Excerpts from some of the sentences containing article errors are indicated as follows.

1. They have a new shoes (the indefinite article 'a' was not necessary)
2. My friend was eating an oranges (the article 'an' was not necessary)
3. My school has the computer laboratory (a)
4. This is the one of the problems (first article used – 'the', was not necessary)
5. The school has the population of over five hundred students. (a)
6. There are a very beautiful tall buildings in the school. (the article 'a' was not necessary)
7. The accident happened a first day I reported to school. (the)
8. My mother and I went to ----- bookshop (the)
9. The school has ---- school bus and ----- mower. (a)
10. His parents have cultivated----- large cocoa farm. (a)
11. The rest of ----- students ran away. (the)
12. Everybody was carrying ---- bucket of water (a)
13. ----- Senior prefect called me. (The)
14. The hunter was chased by..... elephant in the forest. (an)

In these examples, it was realised that student got confused with the use of a, an, the, and zero article. Based on the above two sentences, it can be explained that the writers might wrongly apply the rule of the target language. This can be the results of the interlingual interference where learners of an L2 confuse the rules of their L1 with that of their L2.

Errors on the wrong use of articles were identified in fifteen essays out of the forty sampled for the analysis, which is equivalent to 6%. This is indicative of the fact that participants do not know the application rule of using the definite and the indefinite articles in the English language.

4.2.5 Spelling errors

Another error type identified in the analysed data is wrong spelling. Data collected revealed wrong spelling of words in the essays of the participants. Afful (1999) observes that English Language owes its richness to the vast number of words it has borrowed from other languages. He explains that the cost of this richness, however, 'is a wide variety in spelling. Words that sound alike are, all too often, not spelled alike and the English language is known for its irregularity. As a result of this, both native and second language users make mistakes in spelling English words' (p. 44).

Cook (1999) states that spelling is the learner's ability to write a word correctly. According to Cook, writing accurate spelling adds to the quality of the overall writing of texts. He maintains that unlike native speakers, learners of a second language may not know its actual system and will appear to use the wrong spelling. It is evident that the following wrong spelling of words identified in the essays of the student participants could be due to the sources enumerated below with examples identified from the data collected. The misspelled words are marked with asterisk. (*) as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Spelling errors due to incorrect pronunciation

| Wrongly spelt word | Correct spelling word |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| *sow | sew |
| *bang | bank |
| *anser | answer |
| *price | prize |
| *acadamic | academic |
| *mob | mop |

It could be deduced that student participants misspelt these words because of how they pronounce or hear others pronounce them. This may be attributed to interlanguage issues where the learners' L2 learning is influenced by their L1 usage. Owu-Ewie and Williams' (2014) study indicated the above findings. Their research study and findings are among the reviewed literature in chapter 2 of the current study. Students committed a lot of spelling errors due to the influence of their L1 interference.

Table 5: Spelling errors due to confusion of homophones

| Wrongly spelt word | Correct spelling |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| *share | sheer |
| *bear | bare |
| *saw | sore |
| *price | prize |
| *other | Order |
| * son | Sun |
| *rush | rash |

These words have the same sound but are spelt differently so they are called homophones. According to Julian (2016), a homophone is a word which is pronounced the same as another word but differs in meaning. Julian explains that homophones may also differ in spelling or they may be spelled the same, such as rose (flower) and rose (past tense of rise). Adding to Julian's definition, Martin (2015) posits that homophones may also apply to units longer or shorter than words, such as phrases, letters, or groups of letters, which are pronounced the same as another phrase, letter, or group of letters. Martin explains further that homophones that are spelled the same are also both homographs and homonyms and homophones that are spelled differently are also called heterographs.

From the data, it could be deduced that students cannot make the distinction between words, which sound similar but have different meanings. They therefore tend to misspell them in their sentences by using one in place of the other making their context wrong. Excerpts from the data are shown in table 6.

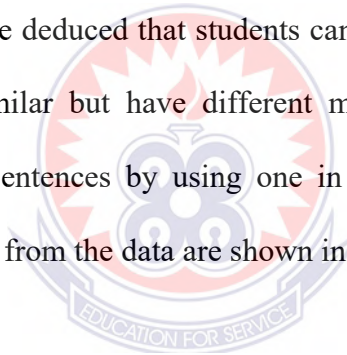


Table 6: Spelling errors due to carelessness

| Wrongly spelt word | Correct spelling |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| *abroad | aboard |
| *allways | always |
| *arived | arrived |
| *ofen | Often |
| *dout | doubt |
| * rich | reach |
| *cent | scent |
| *of | off |
| *life | live |
| *bass | base |
| *creat | create |

The classification and data analysis of spelling errors in this study agrees with Cook's (1999) findings where the participants of his study committed errors from deletion of certain letters of words to the substitutions or replacement of one letter with another, to insertions where extra letters were added and reversing the position of letters (transpositions).

The data on wrong spelling summed up to twenty-four representing 9.6% of the total number of scripts analysed. This echoes the findings of a study undertaken by Muslim, (2014) which concluded that spelling words correctly in compositions is really a big challenge for both native and non-native students. He however states that the problem is much bigger with learners of English as a second language. Other errors were also identified but they did not occur as frequently as those already mentioned

hence they have been categorised as other errors. These errors include wrong use of the apostrophe (‘) and wrong capitalisation.

4.2.6 Apostrophe (’) Error

The apostrophe, which is represented by the mark (’), is one of the punctuations used in written English. Heather (2012) observes that punctuation marks are a convention of written language that help readers and writers more easily read and understand writing. She asserts that apostrophes like all punctuations marks ensure the clarity of writing for readers. They function to clarify the function of nouns by indicating possession and showing omissions.

According to Heather, apostrophes perform three basic functions. First, they are used to form possessive nouns in written language. ‘Add an apostrophe and an (s) with the apostrophe before the (s) for singular nouns including compound nouns that end in any letter except (s). This means that an apostrophe is supposed to follow the last letter of a singular noun before an ‘s’ to indicate that one person or thing owns or is a member of something. For example: Lizzy’s music class, Daddy’s car, Jones’s room, Jones’ room etc.

Another way to show possession using apostrophes is by adding an apostrophe after the finals for singular nouns that end in ‘s’. As in: James' family, Jesus' apostles. Also an apostrophe must follow the ‘s’ plural marker for plural nouns that end in the letter ‘s’. As in: students' essays, brothers' friends, Girls’ school etc. Again, an apostrophe and an ‘s’ with the apostrophe before the ‘s’ is must be used for plural nouns that end in any letter except an ‘s’. For example; alumni’s gift, mice's cage, children's toys, etc.

Second, apostrophes are also used in English to form contractions and omissions. Sakeyfio (1999) defines contractions as words in which two words combine into a single word through the omission or combination of sounds and letters. The use of contractions in written and spoken English is acceptable in all but the most formal writing settings. For example: aren't (are not), can't (cannot), It's (it is), don't (do not), etc. Also apostrophes are used to indicate other omissions of letters and sounds. For example: I was born in '85. (1985), the '60s were a time of great social change. (1960s)

Third, apostrophes are used to pluralise lowercase letters, as well as to pluralise letters used as words. For example: You ought to mind your p's and q's, please colour all a's red and all the b's blue, etc. It is worthy of note that apostrophe is not used to pluralise capital letters, numbers, symbols, and acronyms. As in: P's and Q's, in the 2000's, ZIGHISS's.

According to Amoakohene (2012), the most common apostrophe error committed by ESL learners is the addition of an apostrophe where one is not needed and omission of an apostrophe where it is needed. The data collected revealed that participants used apostrophes wrongly in their essays. The following are some of the most frequently made apostrophe errors identified in the data.

1. The man who's son died...
2. They said the my family is like is their's
3. The dog was still shaking it's tail
4. They are my fathers friends
5. Those who were not around were asked to go for their's.

In the examples above, the participants mistook 'who's for the possessive 'whose' in 1, there was an addition of apostrophe in 2 and 3 above therefore 'our's' was used for 'ours', 'your's' for 'yours' and 'her's' for 'hers' respectively. In 4, the participant omitted the apostrophe which is an indication that there was confusion of 'it is' (it's) and 'its' which indicates possession. This means that 'Its' is a possessive pronoun, while 'it's' is a contraction of 'it is'. Example 5 above revealed that the participant did not know the difference between 'Your' (the possessive) and 'You're' (the contraction of 'you are').

The researcher did not dwell much on these other errors because they were very few found in the data.

4.2.7 Capitalisation Error

Capital letters are used with particular types of nouns, in certain positions in sentences, and with some adjectives. Amoakohene (2012) maintains that capital letters must always be used at the beginning of a sentence, as in: Do you have money on you? All of us are here etc., Capital letter is to be used for the first person personal pronoun 'I' in sentences, as in: Today, I must see him, where am I now? Etc. Also, names and titles of people are started with capital letters. As in: We have to see the Headmistress, Nenyi Ghartey.

Examples of instances in the data for the current study where participants used capital letters wrongly or failed to use them at all where necessary are listed below:

1. The kakum national park ... (The Kakum National Park...)
2. My father is a bus Driver... (bus driver)
3. My Class Mates are ... (My class mates are ...)

The analysis of the errors identified in the student participants' essays has been represented in a table 7.

Table 7: Frequency and Percentage of Error Categories

| Error type | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Agreement/Concord | 35 | 14% |
| Article | 15 | 6% |
| Preposition | 22 | 8.8% |
| Wrong use of vocabulary/expression | 21 | 8.4% |
| Spelling | 24 | 9.6% |
| Other Errors (wrong use of the apostrophe / wrong capitalisation) | 8 | 3.2% |

The representation of the errors identified in the writings of the student participants reveal that agreement/concord errors were identified in most of the essays analysed. This is followed by spelling errors, then preposition errors, followed by vocabulary and expression errors. Article errors comes before apostrophe and capitalisation errors, which constitute the least number of errors committed by the participants.

It could be deduced from the data that the participants had challenges with how the rules of the L2 works in full. They tended to apply some principles of their L1 in their sentence construction. This finding concurs with that of Listiani (2014) who explored the writing of pre-university students to identify the errors they commit. He identified many errors of agreement and concord in his data, which was indicative of the fact that most learners of a second/target language (L2) lack the knowledge of agreement rules in English. Just as the analysis of data of the current study indicates, the findings

of Listiani's study also revealed that learners of L2 misspell words quite carelessly when they are putting their ideas down in writing.

4.3 RQ 2: What are the categories of the grammatical and lexical errors identified in the English essays of students of A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School, Winneba?

To answer this question, the researcher analysed the various errors identified and based on the Theory of error analysis propounded by Corder's (1976), came out with two main sources of the grammatical and lexical errors. Brown, (2000,) asserts that to analyse students' errors, it is necessary to determine the sources of errors.

After the grammatical and lexical errors have been identified from the data, it was observed that, some of the errors were committed due to the influence of the participants' L1 while others were committed because the participants have no firm grip of the rules governing the use of the L2. The errors were therefore categorised into two, namely, interlingual and intralingual interference or influence.

4.3.1 Intralingual errors

Intralingual errors come about as a result of the influence that the learners' first language (L1) have on their second or target language (L2) acquisition. This influence led to errors such as wrong spelling of words and vocabulary and expression errors. Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) observe that most people in Ghana speak one local language or the other, and that Akan is undoubtedly one of the popular L1s of Ghana, which is spoken or understood by majority of Ghanaians. Owu-Ewie and Lomotey's study found that most participants constructed sentences, which were direct translations of their L1 even though the sentence structure of the L1 differs from that

of the L2. They elucidate that the sentence in Akan is different from that of English language but most learners of the English language tend to transfer this structure into their learning leading to the commitment of many errors in the L2. Examples of errors committed because of intralingual influence found in the data were vocabulary and expression errors, some spelling errors, article errors and preposition errors.

4.3.2 Interlingual errors

This category of errors from the data analysed were committed due to the confusion of application of the rules of the L2 in the learners' use of the L2. This is sometimes referred to as developmental interference by some researchers. According to Corder (1976), this type of error is committed when there is confusion in the use of the rules of a target language. Corder asserts that the learners' knowledge of the target language is incomplete or inadequate, so they combine the knowledge of the rules of their various L1s with that of the L2 and this brings about errors.

Studies show that students' confusion of the target language elements and how these elements are applied leads to error termed interlingual errors being committed by L2 learners. Erdogan (2005) postulates that the outcome of forming concepts by L2 learners who have obtained limited knowledge of the second language is the occurrence of intralingual errors. He explains that L2 learners fail to complete written tasks as required because of inadequate competence of the target language's lexical and syntactic elements. Such inadequacy in the opinion of Erdogan occasionally, leads to some degrees of confusion regarding the new language that is supposed to be mastered. To corroborate the assertion of Erdogan, Fang and Xue-mei, (2007) state that the speech of second language learners suffers from common intralingual errors, though the errors can be analysed by instructors in order to identify the strategies

employed by the learner. Instances identified in the data where participants committed errors due to intralingual influence were, agreement errors, article errors, apostrophe and capitalisation errors.

Studies such as Ellis (2008) and Corder (1976) indicate that interlingual and intralingual interferences are the two main sources of errors found in L2 learners' language use. The analysis of data of this study also tow the same line. The present study, in addition, would like to draw attention to other sources that may lead to serious errors. Limited vocabulary as well as learners' carelessness are other errors committed by the participants of the current study that cannot be underestimated. ESL learners' awareness of these two mentioned sources should be raised in order to reduce further unexpected errors. The categories of the syntactic errors identified in the participants essays are represented in the Table 8.

Table 8 Categories of the syntactic errors identified

| Category | Syntactic Errors |
|---------------------|--|
| Interlingual errors | Vocabulary and Expression errors, (fossilised errors), Spelling errors |
| Intralingual errors | Errors of agreement, preposition, articles, capitalisation, apostrophe |

The data reveal that the intralingual errors outnumbered the interlingual errors. The total number of errors identified in the forty essays analysed was one hundred and twenty-five. The intralingual errors were eighty while the interlingual errors summed

up to 45. This outcome implies that adequate attention should be given to the teaching of the rules governing the use of the English language.

4.4 RQ 3: What are the perspectives of the students and the English teachers on the causes of the grammatical and lexical errors and how could they be minimised?

This question was targeted at gathering data on the perspectives of both students and teachers on the causes of the syntactic errors identified in the data. The researcher interacted with participants on their perspectives on what causes students to commit errors in their writings, which result in their poor performance in English language. The responses were recorded and then transcribed after which it was coded. For the coding, the researcher familiarised herself with the data by reading through the notes several times to identify ideas which suggested respondents perspectives on some of the causes of students' errors. These ideas were then underlined as codes to be categorised into themes later.

The themes generated from the data on RQ3 included disinterest, poor reading culture among students, confusion of the rules on sentence structure in L2, interference of L1. Others were lack of motivation, inappropriate teaching strategies for L2. It could be deduced from the data that, most of the syntactic errors identified in the student participants' essays are as a result of intralingual and interlingual influences.

4.4.1 Disinterest in Learning L2

The excerpts in italics from the responses given by the participants reveal that most of the student participants lack the interest to study target language. For purposes of anonymity of the informants, the codes SR and TR have been used in the analysis of data.

TR I: The students *do not show any interest* in learning the rules of the English language. They make mistakes in their speech and writings and their performance is not good enough. They speak and write bad English but their spoken language is comparatively better than their writing. TR I continued, I see *students' unwillingness to learn English because they have no interest in it.*

In effect, the informant TR1 attributed students' poor performance in English to their lack of interest in studying the English just as they do study the other subjects. As result of students' lack of interest to study the English language, they are always unwilling to take corrections seriously when their errors are corrected.

TR II: This informant told the researcher that,

“the students' spelling as well as their pronunciation is good because they have limited vocabulary since *they do not like reading*. Teachers try their best to teach students the rules of the language but unfortunately, students *do not seem to have the interest to put in their best*. They keep on committing grammatical errors in their essays all the time.”

To sum up what TR II, factors such as, unavailability of reading materials, students' laziness, no motivation from home, among others, affect students' reading interests. TR II added that solutions to improve students' reading interests should be figured out to help students develop interests to read more books so that fewer errors would be identified in their essays.

It could be deduced from these responses that students commit syntactic errors in their compositions because there is little or no interest in them to study the L2 so that they would master the rules governing its usage. It is imperative on teachers as well as

parents to help students by making interesting reading books available for students use. This will motivate students gradually to develop the interest in reading and subsequently improve their language usage and minimise the errors they commit in their essays.

4.4.2 Inadequate Knowledge of the Rules of L2

Another theme generated from the data was the lack of adequate knowledge on the rules of L2. The responses suggested that students were unable to apply the rules of the L2 because of their inadequate knowledge on the rules of L2. The following extract from the data points to the fact that students' inadequate knowledge on how the rules governing L2 operates is one cause of the errors in their essays.

TR II:

“Students do not take the study of the rules of the English seriously. Most of them confuse the grammatical rules of the English language resulting in errors when they form sentences. For example, most students know that the letter ‘s’ is the plural marker of nouns but they fail to study further to learn that there are exceptions to this rule. Students become used to this rule and tend to add an ‘s’ to all plural nouns although not every plural noun end with an ‘s’. That is why they say words like equipments, furnitures and write same in their essays”.

TR I:

“Some students are aware of how to form tenses but along the line, they forget the rules and get confused as to how to write in the correct tense forms. Most students mix up their use of tenses when they speak or write which shows that they lack the full knowledge how the rules of the English language operate”.

Data from the interviews revealed that, most students do not find it important to study the grammar of the L2. They take the syntactic rules of the English language for granted and this results in most students over generalising some grammatical rules regarding subject/verb agreement, the use of plural marker, use of prepositions, use of articles, use of apostrophe among others. Another finding from the interview data indicated that students committed syntactic errors in their essays mostly because there is little or no motivation to encourage them study how the rules governing L2 operates and to frequently use the L2 to improve their compositions.

These findings corroborate Kim (2002) on students' syntactic errors in English with reference to the verb tense. Kim's was on Korean English as Foreign Language (EFL) for students who translated Korean sentences into English. The study examined sources and nature of learners' errors as more grammatical with verb tenses. He indicated that the errors were committed due to learners' confusion of the application of the rules of the target language. This phenomenon he described as intralingual interference.

4.4.3 Influence of First Language (L1)

Another theme generated from the data of the interviews is the influence of students' L1 on their learning of the L2. Most of the spelling errors identified in the data were committed because of the influence that the participants' L1 have on their learning of the L2. There were also a number of wrong usage of words and expressions found in the data, which revealed that the participants' knowledge of the L2 is influenced by their L1. The following excerpts from the interviews indicate that some of the syntactic errors were as a result of L1 influence.

TR I:

“I think most students are not motivated at home to read storybooks. They shy away from reading to enable them learn more vocabulary and improve on their spelling. Most of the students pronounce English words wrongly because that is how such words are pronounced in the local communities. Students therefore tend to write those words as pronounced. In addition, students tend to use certain English expressions wrongly because that is how members of the local communities use them”.

This means that students have become used to the wrong pronunciation and wrong expressions so much so that students have taken such errors as the right usage. Students find it very difficult to learn the correct spellings and expression. They continue to commit errors in their spoken and written expressions.

SR I:

“Sometimes, our teachers our we form English sentences as if we are speaking our local language. But that is how everybody in my area

pronounces the words. The teachers want us to speak and write good English but anytime you make the attempt, speaking, they say, you are speaking local or Ghanaian English”.

It was revealed from the data that most spelling errors and wrong use of expressions committed by students were as a result of the influence of their L1. This outcome concurs with Kubota (1998) who in a study among Japanese English as a Second Language (ESL) students found that L2 students used similar patterns from L1 in their essay writings. Kubota found that L2 writers transfer organization and rhetorical patterns from the L1. Similarly, Kim (2002) and Maniam (2010) also conducted studies to analyse students’ syntactic errors in their writings. Their findings indicated that there is frequency of occurrence of grammar transference in the L1 to the L2. In agreement with the aforementioned studies, Hung (2000) study of Thai English as a Second Language (ESL) students revealed that written English assignments of students were influenced by their L1 grammar structures, which include subject-verb agreement, auxiliaries, noun, determiners, and clause/sentence structure.

4.4.4 Inappropriate Teaching Strategies for L2

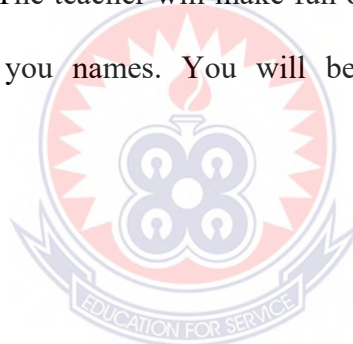
Another theme, which was generated from the data was modification of teaching strategies of the L2. There were responses from the participants such as, teachers not giving enough time for class exercises, students not understanding how the rules of the L2 operate, inadequate time allocated for teaching English language on the school’s time table among others. Excerpts from responses are discussed below.

SR II:

“Most of the time the English period ends before we finish the lesson. We tend to rush with our exercises to get ready for the next class. We have only 45 minutes for English and the teachers are always rushing us through many things. We are not able to finish our exercises during English periods therefore we cannot learn a lot of things and it becomes difficult for us to continue that work after class because there are other things to do”.

SR IV:

“Sometimes the teacher shout at you if you say or spell a word wrongly. The teacher will make fun of you and sometimes your mates will call you names. You will become afraid and shy to speak English”.



TR II:

“It would help if The Ghana Education Service (GES) should design textbooks for teachers of English. This would help teachers improve on their lesson delivery and modify their teaching skills to help give off their best. I believe that when textbooks for teaching methods of English are available, teachers can enforce a strict approach to students learning of English language”.

The findings from the data suggested that teachers of the English language employed certain approaches to their teaching, which are not the best. This is because as one of the participants put it “if you spell a word wrongly, the teacher will shout at you...”. It was clear that such teaching methods discourage students from getting themselves

fully involved in learning the L2. When this goes on, the students see nothing to motivate them in learning the L2 hence they lose interest entirely in studying the language. Helping students understand better in the classroom is one of the primary concerns of every teacher. Teachers need to motivate students how to learn. In developing students' understanding to learn important concepts and rules in English, the teacher may use a variety of teaching strategies that would work best for his or her students. This finding is constituent with Wlodkowski, and Ginsberg (1995), that no teaching there is no strategy that will consistently engage all learners of a second language. Wlodkowski & Ginsberg maintain that it is key to help students relate lesson content to their own backgrounds and this would include students' prior knowledge in understanding new concepts relating to the target language.

Teachers should vary their teaching styles and techniques so as not to cause boredom to the students in the classroom. Seeking greater insight into how children learn from the way teachers discuss and handle the lesson in the classroom and teach students the life skills they need, could be one of the greatest achievements in the teaching process.

Lucas (1990), also asserts that several styles could be employed by the teacher to encourage students to become self-motivated and independent learners. Lucas posits that it is important for language teachers to take into consideration their students' needs and interests so as to focus instruction that is applicable to different groups of students with different levels. From the perspective of the interviewees, the syntactic errors were committed due to students' lack of interest to learn the L2, Students, lack of knowledge in how the rules of L2 operates in sentence formation, influence of students' L1, bad teaching methods among others.

4.5 Summary of Chapter

Using the Error Analysis theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and Corder's (1974) steps of analysing learners' errors, the researcher identified the syntactic errors in the essays of the student participants. These errors were put into two categories and analysed. The analysis of data revealed that the syntactic errors committed by students are from interlingual as well as intralingual sources. This means that most of the types of errors committed by the student participants were committed as a result of interference of their L1 (intralingual), while some of the errors committed were due to incomplete instruction or imperfect mastery of the L2. (Interlingual). This is in line with findings of other studies reviewed earlier in this study in chapter two. It is reasonable therefore to say that if the learners of a second language make use of L1 syntactic properties and relate them to L2 structures, they will commit errors in some contexts and lead to the gap between L1 and L2 linguistic structures.

The results of this study, which in many ways are similar to the findings of previous studies, also showed that the learners were not aware of rules of other aspects of writing in English such as apostrophe, capitalisation etc. It was found that in general there exist systematic errors in learners' target language. This indicate that learners need to get familiar with L2 structures through effective instruction in order to avoid errors. The pattern of errors and their frequency indicate the low level of proficiency in English language. It is therefore essential for teachers of English to identify students' errors in order to work towards providing remediation measures so that an improved level of proficiency of English language usage among students would be achieved.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings of the current study. It also highlights some implications and recommendations of the findings and draws conclusions on the findings followed by suggestions for further research in this area of study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The study sought to identify the syntactic grammatical and lexical errors that occur in the compositions of Form Two students of the A. M. E. Zion Girls' Senior High School in Winneba.

The researcher identified grammatical and lexical errors including agreement/concord, article, preposition, spelling, vocabulary and expression, among others as prominent in students' essays. The analyses indicated that syntactic errors committed by student were as a result of interlingual influence and that included wrong spelling as well as wrong vocabulary and expression use. Words such as *mob* was misspelt for mop, *bang* was misspelt for bank. The students committed such errors because of several reasons such as how those words and expressions are pronounced and used in the localities where students live.

The perspectives of the participants indicated that the causes of errors committed are lack of reading materials, lack of interest, lack of adequate knowledge on the rules of L2, influence of L1 and poor teaching methods.

5.3 Main Findings

Research question 1 (RQ1) was targeted at looking out for grammatical and lexical errors committed by students in their essays. In total, the grammatical and lexical errors identified in the forty essay scripts, which form the data for the current study, were one hundred and twenty-five (125). As shown in table 7 of the previous chapter, it is evident that the frequency of errors committed due to intralingual influence were more than those errors committed because of interlingual influence. The errors due to intralingual influence summed up to eighty (80) representing a percentage of 32% of the total essays analysed, while the errors committed as a result of interlingual totalled forty-five (45) a percentage of 18% of all the total frequency of errors identified in the participants' essays. The frequency of the errors follows this ascending order: agreement/concord errors (35 scripts), spelling errors (24 scripts), preposition errors (22 scripts), vocabulary and expression errors (21scripts), article errors (15 scripts), and other errors (comprising capitalisation and apostrophe errors) (8 scripts). The findings of the study also revealed that intralingual errors were not as many as those of the interlingual errors. The intralingual errors identified include, spelling errors, use of wrong vocabularies and expression as well as preposition errors. The interlingual errors identified include, agreement errors, article errors, apostrophe errors, and capitalisation errors.

This revelation is in contrast with the findings of the study undertaken by Owu-Ewie and Williams (2016) where participants' grammatical and lexical errors were analysed. Owu-Ewie and Williams' study identified intralingual and interlingual influences as the two categories of errors committed by the participants. However, unlike the current study, Owu-Ewie and Williams (2016) found that the L1 induced errors committed by students were more than those of the L2 induced errors.

According to their findings, both students and teachers have major roles to play in improving the students' writing skills in relation to the commitment of errors in their use of the English language.

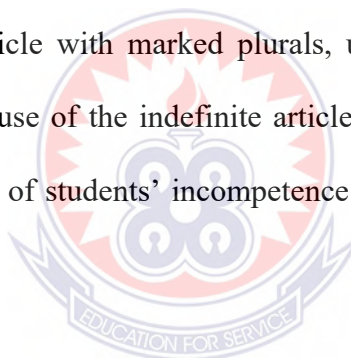
Research Question 2 (RQ2) sought to investigate the types of grammatical and lexical errors identified in the essays and to categorise them. In all, seven types of errors were identified and categorised. These were errors of agreement in terms of subject/verb, singular/plural, noun/pronoun, errors of prepositions, errors involving the wrong use of the definite and indefinite articles, errors of wrong vocabulary and expression use, errors of spelling, as well as capitalisation and apostrophe errors.

It was revealed that most of the errors were committed because the participants lacked the adequate knowledge of the rules of the English language. The students therefore tend to be confused as to which rule to be applied and at what time. Errors, which were committed because of this phenomenon, were categorised as interlingual Errors. The other types of errors were found to have been committed due to the influence of participants L1. These were spelling errors due to incorrect pronunciation of certain words in the local communities. Some of the words and expressions were spelt and used wrongly because of homophones and others were due to mere carelessness on the part of students.

The data revealed that the errors were of Interlingual and Intralingual sources therefore they were categorised as errors of intralingual influence and errors of interlingual influence. As presented in table 8, the frequency of occurrence of the errors identified as interlingual errors from the data was less than that of the intralingual errors. All the grammatical and lexical errors identified occurred one hundred and twenty-five times in the forty essays analysed. The intralingual errors

occurred eighty times while the interlingual errors occurred forty-five times. This outcome implies that adequate attention should be given to the teaching of the rules governing the use of the English language because they commit many errors because of their lack of knowledge of the rules of L2.

This finding is consistent with findings of Bataineh's (2005) study on the kinds of errors committed by Jordanian students studying English as a foreign language (EFL). Bataineh also identified syntactic error such as deletion of the indefinite article, substitution of the indefinite article for the definite article, and substitution of the definite for the indefinite article in the students' use of the English language. Others were substitution of 'a' for 'an', use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals, use of the indefinite article with marked plurals, use of the indefinite article with uncountable nouns, and use of the indefinite article with adjectives. All these errors were committed because of students' incompetence in the application of the rules of the L2.



In a study elsewhere, Yin and Ung's (2001) findings indicated that about fifty percent (50%) of the errors committed by the students have their source from influence of their L1. The study examined how the native language or mother tongue influences the students' acquisition of English. The analysis indicated that lack of proficiency in students' English language use, allowed the students to rely heavily on their L1. The study noted that coined words and slang, language switch, medium transfer, inappropriate use of tenses, omission of articles, omission or wrong usage of articles, adjective morphology errors, prefabricated patterns, and literal translation were some of the L1 interference errors. Interlingual and Intralingual influences on the learning

of the target language were therefore categorised as the two sources of the grammatical and lexical errors identified in the students' essays.

Research Question 3 examined the perspectives of students and teachers on the causes of syntactic errors and how they could be minimised in students' English essays.

Findings from the data revealed that students commit syntactic grammatical and lexical errors in their compositions because there is little or no interest in them to study the L2 so that they would master the rules governing its usage. Data also indicated that most students do not find it important to study the grammar of the L2 therefore, they take the study of the rules regarding the study sentence structure of the English language for granted. This subsequently result in most students over generalising some grammatical rules such as subject/ verb agreement, the use of plural marker, use of prepositions, use of articles and use of apostrophe. This indicates that students committed syntactic errors in their essays because there is little or no motivation to encourage them study how the L2 operates and to frequently use the L2 to improve their compositions. The data also found that most spelling errors and wrong use of expressions committed by students were as a result of the influence of their L1. Thus, most students speak and write local or Ghanaian English.

Data also revealed that teachers of the English language sometimes employed inappropriate approaches to their teaching. This was evident in one of the informant's response thus, "...if you spell a word wrongly, the teacher will shout at you...". It was clear that such teaching methods discourage students from getting themselves fully involved in learning the L2. When this goes on, the students see nothing to motivate them in learning the L2 hence they lose interest entirely in studying the language.

Helping students understand better in the classroom must be one of the primary concerns of every teacher.

From the perspective of the interviewees, the syntactic errors were committed due to students' disinterest in learning the L2, inadequate knowledge on the rules of L2 operates in sentence formation, influence of students' L1, inappropriate teaching strategies among others.

5.4 Conclusion

The structure of the English sentences depends largely on the knowledge of the orderly arrangement of words in the sentence, taking into consideration the grammar of the language, checking spelling and punctuations. To be able to make any meaningful expression, one needs to arrange the words that constitute the said expression well to rid listeners or readers of the strain they would have to put in to understand.

The researcher decided to go into this area of analysing grammatical and lexical errors in students' English language use to identify the common errors students commit in their written as well as spoken communication, to categorise such errors and account for each of them.

The study revealed that most students had challenges in the use of the English language. Dominant in the errors committed by students were grammatical. The challenges students have in their use of the English language use were manifested in the errors collected in the written scripts and test items. Some of these errors were also revealed when the students were observed outside their classrooms. Since the structure of the English sentences depends largely on the proficiency of the orderly

arrangement of words in the sentence, taking into consideration the grammar of the language, it is important that errors committed by learners are identified and corrected accordingly. Therefore, when Senior High School students continue to have challenges in their compositions, it should call for concern of all.

5.5 Implications and Recommendations

This study has pedagogic implications for the teaching and learning of English in Senior High Schools in Ghana. According to Bhela (1999), an understanding of the English syntactical structure and the type of errors committed by learners of a second language helps in the teaching and learning process. The study will help English language teachers to predict possible future errors in the target language (English) and may begin to attribute a cause to an error with some degrees of precision. In addition, the Ghanaian L2 teacher can also build up a picture of the frequency of types of errors so that they can find out whether, L1 interference, or teaching techniques or problems inherent in L2 are the major causes of the learner's errors. In this way, it will be possible to plan remedial English language instruction classes to give specific help to earners of English to improve their writing.

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

The L2 teacher must have a working knowledge of the learner's native language and the L2 to be able to determine the source of the error and the type. This is likely to

present a challenge to most English teachers in Ghana since most of them have not studied their L1 to know how the language works, though they might be speakers of the language. English language teachers should make conscious efforts to teach the similarities and differences in the structures being taught between the L1 and English so that students could master the difference in the structures.

For example, Sheen (2007) indicates that overt attention should be given to targeted syntactic contrasts between learners' native language and English to help reduce L1 interference error rates. Teachers should be able to demonstrate to students that not all L1 strategies might be useful and effective for successful L2 writing. This will help teachers train their students to reflect on the way they process writing in both L1 and L2. Also, English language teachers should be trained adequately in second language teaching like error analysis and error correction so that they can deal with learners' errors effectively. English language teachers should be proficient both spoken and written English so that learners can emulate them as models because in most cases, learners copy the language their teachers use in class as a result, what students use and write in class is a replica of what they hear and see in class.

Additionally, English language teachers should encourage their students to speak L2 in class in a communicative way because according to McLaughlin, (1982), oral proficiency in a particular language enhances writing proficiency. It is imperative therefore on teachers as well as parents to help students by making interesting reading books available for students use. This will motivate students gradually to develop the interest in reading and subsequently improve their language usage and minimise the errors they commit in their essays.

It is believed that second language learning thrives in an environment where learners can take risks without fear of intimidation. It therefore behoves on English language teachers to create conducive classroom environment for students to participate in class writing activities to improve their competence in speaking and writing of the English language. This will help reduce the grammatical and lexical errors students commit in their writings.

The Ghana Education Service must emphasise the training of English language teachers in Ghana for the Senior High School level on strategies to help them cope with the time consuming and painstaking task of error correction. This will motivate the teachers to spending time in correcting students' errors and ensure that students follow the rules appropriately.

It is recommended that the study of error analysis, which involves identification of errors, their sources, and treatment, should be an integral part of the training of English language teachers in the country. Moving forward, English language teachers already in the field must be taken through frequent workshops and in-service training in the content and pedagogic knowledge of the L2 for them to be effective in the classroom. In addition, English teachers should serve as models by using appropriate English in their spoken and written expressions for students to emulate. This would encourage students to work hard to improve upon their communication skills. Finally, parents should try as much as they can to get involved in the provision of adequate reading materials for their children.

5.6 Suggestion for Further Studies

The current study identified grammatical and lexical errors in the students' use of the English language. Several research studies to identify grammatical errors in students' essays have been conducted by local as well as international researchers. However, there appear to be little studies on finding out the causes of the errors from the perspectives of both students and teachers. This is the research gap based on which the current study sought to fill.

It is suggested therefore that similar studies would be conducted with a larger sample involving two or more schools to bring out diverse views on the causes of the grammatical and lexical errors students commit in their spoken and written expressions.



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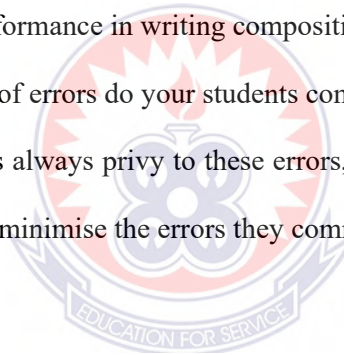
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APPENDIX A - Interview Guide with Teachers

This interaction was to gather data from two English language teachers on their perspectives on the causes of student's syntactic errors, and how these errors could be minimised. Since the unstructured style of interviewing was adopted, no written questions were strictly followed. However, a few topical questions were asked. The interactions were in an informal conversation manner. The interviews began with the establishment of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees and the relevant questions were subsequently asked to seek the needed data. Each interview session lasted for 15 to 20 minutes depending on direction of the responses from the informants.

1. Can you please tell me the general performance of your students in English language, especially their performance in writing composition?
2. What are the kinds of errors do your students commit in their essay writings?
3. As a teacher who is always privy to these errors, what do you think could be done to help these students minimise the errors they commit in their essays?

Thank you.



APPENDIX B - Interview Guide with Students

This interaction was to gather data from five students selected from the sample on their perspectives on the causes of the syntactic errors they commit in their essays and how the occurrence of these errors could be minimised. The unstructured style of interviewing was adopted therefore, no written questions were strictly followed. However, a few topical questions were asked. The interactions were in an informal conversation manner. The interviews began with the establishment of rapport between the interviewer and the interviewees and the relevant questions were subsequently asked to seek the needed data. Each interview session lasted for 10 to 25 minutes depending on direction of the responses from the informants.

1. What do you think are the reasons for the errors you committed in the essay you wrote?
2. What can you do as a student to improve upon your performance in the writing of your essays?
3. What do you think your school, teachers and parents can do to help you to minimise the errors you commit in your essays?

Thank you.