UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ANALYSIS OF COMMON ERRORS IN STUDENTS' WRITING:

A CASE STUDY OF EJISU PRESBY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FORM ONE

STUDENTS IN EJISU MUNICIPALITY

DORCAS MANSAH TANE

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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DORCAS MANSAH TANE

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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, Dorcas Mansah Tane declare that, this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been inducted and acknowledged are entirely my own original work and has not been submitted either in part or whole for another degree elsewhere.

Signature: ……………………………..………..

Date: …………………………………..……..

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
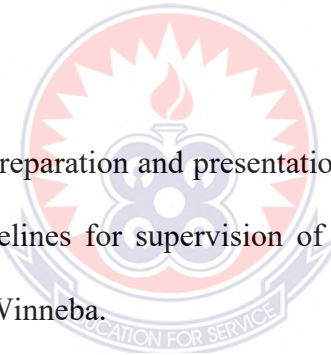
Name of Supervisor: Charlotte Fofo Lomotey (PhD)

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Date: ……………………………………………....

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear husband, Dr. Jonathan Mensah Dapaah, Sociology Department – KNUST.

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, the poor performance of Junior High School pupils in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) English Language paper has evolved a number of questions as to why this has been recurring. Particularly with essay writing, which is undeniably an area of challenge, a candidate's inability to express himself or herself with clarity and coherence in a way befitting the language, and his or her input on exposition, narration, argument and mechanical accuracy needs have been woeful. The first year pupils of Ejisu Presby Junior High School's inability to write good essays attest to the problem. The pupils found it difficult to deal with the rules ever regulating English grammar, and are absorbed in essay writing. This is what prompted the research work. The researcher made use of test to identify the problem. The outcome of these tests essentially revealed that difficulties with mechanical accuracy, concord and tense are major factors that highlight the poor performance of students in the Junior High Schools. In spite of the challenges, students were exposed to a range of grammar lessons and teaching methods to improve their understanding of grammar skills.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Overview

English language has been and continues to be the foundation of all the academic work in most parts of the world, including Ghana. Apart from this, English language is the language of business, commerce, law and governance. It is the language used in the social lives of people. In line with the language policy of Ghana, English is used as the channel of interaction in our educational setups right from primary three to the university level. In view of this, the success of the Ghanaian child in other subject areas depends largely on his or her proficiency in English.

1.1   Background of the Study

Junior High School pupils' performance in the English language, particularly with essay writing has been a source of worry to stakeholders of education and the government. A thorough observation of the basic school pupils' low performance these days raises several questions pertaining to their levels of proficiency in English. This hinges on essay writing which is undeniably an area of challenge that has caused the poor performance of pupils at the junior high school level. As pupils find it difficult to deal with the requisite rules invariably regulating English grammar, and are absorbed in essay writing at the junior high school level, their proficiency in the English language, a compulsory subject for the entire school system has woefully been low.

Language is a means of human communication either spoken or written. Accuracy or lack of errors is deemed as a crucial component in essay writing assessment despite the fact that nowadays communicative approaches have prevailed and the communicative effectiveness of a text is made prevalent over other text

features when rating essay quality. Hawkey and Baker's (2004) statement conveys the essence of this issue:

... even in a language teaching and testing...where communicative approaches hold sway, with emphasis on message rather than form, accuracy plays a key part in the impact of communication on interlocutors.

The English Language Syllabus for Junior High Schools (2012) highlights that success in education at all levels depends, to a very large extent, on the individual's proficiency in the language. English language is the main medium of instruction for teaching and learning, for office work and for international communication. The need to study the language is therefore crucial for basic school students as well as other sectors of the population.

In the teaching of English, four skills are developed: listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are classified into both receptive skills (listening and reading) where learners receive information and productive skills (speaking and writing) where learners give information. Additionally, a critical look at the B.E.C.E Chief Examiner's Report from 2017 to 2018 reveals that students have problems with grammar, tense and sentence construction.

As there have been a number of studies that have demonstrated the relationship between accuracy and proficiency so that both constructs develop linearly; the higher the proficiency, the higher the accuracy (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). So an essay that displays many errors will obtain lower scores and vice versa. Considering the reports in line with the performance of pupils of Ejisu Presby Junior High School, it interests the researcher to investigate the causes of the increase in essay writing errors. My curiosity was more heightened when as an English Language teacher, I was posted to Ejisu Presby Junior High School in 2017. I observed that the

pupils of the school found it difficult to deal with most errors expressed in their writing. They found it more difficult to inscribe the correct punctuations in sentences, make accurate spellings, and also showed many deficiencies with subject verb agreement, among others.

Since English language is the recommended medium of instruction in schools, the problems associated with it must not be overlooked. Undeniably, the instruction and learning of English should be taken seriously as it is the foundation for good performance in all subjects.

There is no doubt that the above stated problem will continuously recur in our junior high schools if measures are not taken to deal with it. This dent can be traced to the fact that teachers of other subjects like Social Studies, Religious and Moral Education and Pre- technical Skills do not check the errors in pupils' scripts when they are marking, leaving all the tasks on the English language teachers. The noted reason for such actions are that they are frequently hard pressed with time to finish the syllabus and to mark the bulk of scripts.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

It is expected that pupils who come to Junior High School form one should be able to speak and write English with some level of proficiency. Additionally, issues like punctuation marks and capitalisation should not be a problem. However, the situation is different. Pupils come to the Junior High School with low levels of proficiency speaking and writing of English Language. Grammar errors have been found to be rampant in Senior High School students' written essays. Evidence from the WAEC Chief Examiner's report from 2006 till date observed this. It has also been said by Yankson (1994) that students have difficulty in handling tense, spelling and concord. Again, Edu-Buandoh (1997) has also argued that the abysmal performance

of students in the English language may be as a result of inadequate time allotted to the teaching of grammar as well as lack of proper attitudes of teachers in handling grammar.

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

The first year pupils of Ejisu Presbyterian Junior High School are no exception to the problem of poor essay or writing befitting their level. The situation is worst to the extent that the English language teacher sometimes has to take pupils through the basics of writing, even in some cases the writing of the English alphabets. All these came to the fore following an assignment given to the pupils on the essay topic, "*Write a letter to your friend in another school telling him or her about what you do on Sundays*".

Scholars confirm that Error Analysis (EA) could lessen the number of errors in students' work. Errors play an important role in learning a second/foreign language; identification of errors by teachers will give them a mastery over the teaching of the language which will help them to help students overcome the difficulty in the learning

of the language. For Richards & Schmidt, errors occurs from borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending patterns from the target language, and learners expressing meanings using words and grammar which are already known (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). It has been argued that, for better understanding of students' errors, there is the need for proper investigation and examination of errors. For Corder (1974), a systematic analysis of errors made by second language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching. When errors are allowed to overtake one's writing, reading becomes somewhat difficult understanding of one's speech is inhibited. Therefore, it became necessary for this study to be carried out in order to get a better understanding of the pupils' problems in English as a whole and how to solve these challenges through analysis of the errors.

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the errors committed in essays of junior high school pupils. The basic nature of mistakes made in the use of subject-verb agreement, punctuation, syntactic additions, inter lingual transfer errors, et cetera, in their essays have been of keen interest to the researcher as such similar mistakes were mentioned in the B.E.C.E Chief Examiner's Reports for 2017 and 2018.

Besides, the study seeks to account for the poor usage of subject-verb agreement mechanical flaws as far as pupils' essays are concerned and to find shortcomings, if any, in the teaching strategies adopted in presenting these concepts to pupils.

Also, the purpose is to provide necessary suggestions to both teachers and pupils in solving the problems associated with essay writing.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the research address the following:

1. To find out the kind of errors form one pupils in Ejisu Presby Junior High School commit in their essays.

2. To examine the errors according to their causes.

1.5 Research Questions

Based on the stated problems above, the following research questions were raised.

1. What are the common errors frequently committed by pupils of Ejisu Presby JHS in their English essay writing?

2. What are the causes of the errors?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This research will help to endorse the importance of good essay writing. It will enlighten pupils in learning the creative skills in writing and help teachers to identify some problems that impede essay writing skills in their classrooms. The study is also essential to the teaching of essay writing, as it will show certain pedagogies and techniques of teaching essay writing and suggest solutions to typical problems. This will certainly extend the essence of providing pupils the chance to learn from their mates. It will also serve as a document for academics and authorities of education to make references and to make recommendations for future instructional use. Finally, the study will inform policy makers in education and all other stakeholders on the need to give writing and reading prominence in policy formulation and implementation.

1.7 Delimitation

The focus of the study was in the area of English writing with emphasis on common errors students make in their essays. Thus, the study looked at subject-verb agreement errors, mechanical errors, syntactic errors and inter-lingual transfer errors. In terms of the study location, it was carried out at the Ejisu Presby Junior High School. However, the study respondents were mainly form one pupils of the school.

1.8 Limitations

This case study was limited to only Junior High School pupils in the first year JHS One pupils of Ejisu Presby Junior High School. A research on the whole school would have been appropriate, looking at the topic of the present study. This would have enabled the researcher to solve, if not all, some of the critical problems relating to essay composition once and for all, instead of studying a year group of the school whereas other year groups in the school   have the same problem. Additionally, time and financial constraints had undermined such an undertaking. Pupils' performance in essay writing could also be attributed to the socio/cultural environment in which they come from, but the research   is specially limited to classroom environment.

 1.9   Organisation of the Study

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

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suggestions for correction are discussed. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn and suggestions proposed in reducing the errors identified.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter takes a look at the concept of writing, the concept of error analysis and the difference between error and mistake. The chapter also discusses the significance of errors in language learning especially in second language learning and previous studies in errors in second language acquisition.

2.1   The Concept of Writing

According to Brown (2000), for learners to master English Language, they have to be much exposed to all the four fundamental skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. As one of the major skills in language learning, writing is very essential in man's culture as it preserves thoughts, ideas, and speech sounds (Ramelan, 1992).

Ulijn and Strother (1995) affirm that writing is generally regarded to be one of the active or valuable skills of language usage. In students ' academic studies, writing English is relevant as research work depends on it. It is necessary to take notes, identify objects or tools, write essays, answer written questions, write their compositions, write experimental papers, etc. Writing is the process of producing language in written form that comes from our thoughts. As noted by Finnochiaro (1974), writing is 'written thinking' since it invariably relies on thinking processes. Writing skills is seen as the most difficult and complex language skills because it requires the development of one's comprehension and critical thinking with good grammar and concepts awareness and understanding. Bacha (2002) is of the view that the process of writing helps develop the thinking skills required by the students to achieve language learning.

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Indeed, the writing process, primarily through a practical research task, also helps to develop the cognitive skills of the students in learning the requisite techniques such as evaluating the outcomes of a research task, referring to the significant differences found in the comparison of means, frequencies (Bacha, 2002). For these reasons, writing has always been a significant and scholarly component of English's curriculum.

Raimes (1983) expounds that writing is an area where students make errors, and is useful for learning students. First, it reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms and vocabulary that have been taught to students. Second, when students write, they also have the chance to be adventurous with the language. Third, when they write they necessarily become involved with the new language. The results of expressing ideas and using ears, hands and brains continuously is a unique way of improving reading.

2.2 Approaches to the Study of Errors

According to Latiff and Bakar (2007), there are four approaches to L1 interference in L2 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. For the purpose of this study, the error analysis approach is discussed in this chapter.

2.2.1 Meaning of error analysis

Errors are a crucial learning factor. It is difficult to imagine a system of long-term and stable learning without errors. Theories on errors, although widely accepted today, did not become common in second and international language learning until the 1970s (Schachter & Celce-Murcia, 1977), when Error Analysis replaced the

strong version of contrastive analysis as a dominant approach to studying and analyzing errors made by second-language learners' (Dagut & Laufer, 1982). Previously, errors are known to be unwelcome types (Ellis, 1994; Corder, 1981) and were often swept under the rug as an unwanted component of language learning (Izumi, Uchimoto, & Isahara, 2005).

As humans, we are susceptible to make mistakes in the use of language either in speaking or writing, although both are language skills. It occurs when both first (L1) and second (L2) languages are learned. Experts conclude that error in both L1 and L2 is a natural phenomenon. This shows why researchers have developed a lot of interest in studying the mistakes of the second language learners for decades. Error analysis is one of second language acquisition's most common theories. In applied linguistics, it is used to systematically research the forms created by a foreign language learner using any of the linguistic principles and procedures (Crystal, 2003).

Error Analysis in language teaching and learning involves studying the unacceptable forms that someone learns a language, particularly a foreign language, has created. According to James (2001, p. 62), Error Analysis (EA) refers to 'the study of linguistic ignorance, the enquiry of what people do not know, and how they try to cope with their ignorance.'

For Brown (as cited in Ridha, 2012, p.26) Error Analysis is 'the process to observe, analyse, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second languages and then to reveal systems operated by learners.' Another definition of Error Analysis, in the words of Candling (2001) is that, 'it is the monitoring and analysis of learners' language.'

Abisamra (2003) holds the view that Error Analysis can be viewed as a form of linguistic analysis based on errors learners make. In the same vein, Keshararz

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(2012) considers evaluation as a procedure used by both researchers and educators to collect learner language samples, recognise errors, define them by according to their nature and causes, and determine their severity. To explain what Error Analysis entails, it is the analysis of language types that deviates from the standard language norm which arises in the language learning context of learners.

For Brown (1980), Error analysis involves the process of observing, analysis and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learners.

2.2.1.1 Identification and description of errors

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

2.2.1.2 Why error analysis?

Error analysis is useful in second language learning because it reveals to teachers syllabus designers and textbook writers the problem areas of the language learners. Corder (1971) stated that error is visible proof of learning taking place. He reiterated that if errors are studied systematically, it can provide significant insight into how a language is actually learned by a foreigner. Again, he believed that

studying learners' errors has immediate practical application for language teachers. 'A learner's error …are significant in (that) they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language" (Brown, ibid; p. 217 cited Corder, ibid p. 167). Moreover, language learning is not about acquiring a set of automatic habits; however it is a "process of discovering the underlying rules, categories and systems of choice in the learning by some sorts of processing by the learners of the data of the language presented to him by the teacher" (Zhu, 2010; p. 127 cited in Bondzie, 2011). It continued that error making is one of the discovery stages and processes that learners go through. Again, learner's errors actually indicate the nature of the learners' knowledge about the language. It give the teacher of what the learners know and what is needed to be taught.

Additionally, Zhu (ibid) argued from Corder's point of view that errors are important to the learner as they are means through which the learner uses to test hypotheses concerning the language being learned. And to the teacher, error analysis show how effective the teaching materials and techniques are. Error analysis informs the teacher when to introduce a topic or to repeat a topic, and to plan or organize their teaching procedures and materials. Several authors argued that error analysis helps to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. It assists to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and to find out how people learn a language (Nzama ibid; cited in Ancker, 2000; Weireesh, 1991; cited in Bondzie, 2011). On what to do with the grammar errors in the students' writings, the teachers can identify the challenges of the learner's and device a holistic technique to address them.

2.2.1.3 Criticism against error analysis

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

Another argument against error analysis is that the textual data to be analyzed is inadequate. According to Corded (1981), he identified two constraints; external and internal constraints. The reason is that textual data does not adequately give a better view of the learner's language. As regards to the external constraints, it is posited that the textual data is not a spontaneous utterance on the language produced by the learner who is not under pressure. Therefore, it does not show any natural communicative needs of the learner. Then, regular exercises can be done in the form of oral examination in addition to the textual data to get better impressions of the learner's language. This can help in determining where the difficulties are and to respond appropriately. In effect, SHS students can be tested only on grammar in

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addition to the written exercises in order to ascertain their problems on grammar and address them accordingly only if the goal of learning the language is learning.

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

2.3   Error and Mistake

Corder (1967, 1971) brought the distinction between mistake and error into contemporary language discourse. Coder postulated that mistakes are significant in and of themselves (Corder, 1967). He further introduced his learner-oriented argument later, arguing that the presence of errors was, in effect, justification for learners to 'investigate' the L2 method and check it for differences and similarities with L1 (Corder, 1981). This work does not occur in either L1 or L2, but in a linguistic system referred to as learner *language* by Corder (1967). In 1972, Selinker coined the term *interlanguage* to describe this system of language (Abusaeedi & Boroomand, 2015).

Indeed, Corder (1967) as cited in Kara (2006) refers to mistakes as unsystematic errors and systematic ones as errors. Unsystematic errors occur in one's own local or native language and are of no importance in the language learning process as they do not represent a deficiency in our skills – they are not caused by

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incompetence- but are traceable to performance failure. Errors are systematic and they occur in second language. They are systematic deviations from the norm or set of norms. An error cannot be self-corrected but a mistake, if the deviation is pointed out to the speaker, can be corrected.

As argued by Brown (2000), a mistake (in performance) refers to a performance error in that it is the learners' failure to utilize a known system correctly, while an error (in competence) is a noticeable deviation from adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the inter-language competence of the learner. James (2013, p.78) says 'we can now refine the definition of error as being an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant and is not self-corrigible by its author.' An error is thus deviant and self-correcting intentionally or unintentionally.

As far as teachers and researchers are concerned, moving away from the deficiency-focused approach to learner mistakes, i.e. treating them as accidental and requiring correction, has opened new avenues for teaching and investigation (Loewen & Reinders, 2011). Error Analysis was considered to allow for a systematic analysis of learner performance in terms of error description and error forecasting by contrasting target language and target language errors (Murad & Khalil, 2015). Therefore, teachers are supposed to be able to better predict learner progress and better target areas that need improvement, and researchers may observe learner strategies for L2 acquisition and glimpse the language learning system as such (Izumi, Uchimoto, & Isahara, 2005). This methodology was rapidly gaining prominence at the time and is now recognized as having made an important theoretical and methodological contribution to the advancement of applied linguistics and pedagogy (Andrian, 2015).

2.4   Types of Errors

Learner's errors could be grouped in different ways. It could be global or local depending on the varying magnitudes of it according to Brown (2000). Also, there are two areas of errors; the domain and the extent. Domain is considered as the rank or the level of linguistic   unit i.e. from phoneme to discourse which must be taken as context so as to bring the error to the fore. The extent is also the level or rank of the linguistic unit that would have to be deleted, replaced, supplied, or reordered so as to repair a sentence .It can be mentioned that identifying and describing errors are important in the analysis of the learners errors since that will enable the researcher to know the causes of the errors and the necessary sanction to be applied to arrest the situation. This suggests that if a teacher is able to identify and describe the grammar errors made by the SHS 3 student, the likelihood is that it will inform decision on the teaching and learning of English grammar. Brown (2006, cited Lennon (1991) and mentioned some ways of identifying and categorized errors as; addition, omission, and ordering. This idea is supported by Dulay et al (1982) by adding misformation and misordering.

2.4.1   Omission errors

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.4.2 Misformation errors

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

2.4.3 Regularization

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

1. *runned* for run .

2. *growed* for of *grew.*

3. *goed for go*

4. *mans* for *men.*

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

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2.4.4 Archi–forms

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

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

b. *That boys for That boy.*

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

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

2.4.5 Misordering errors

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

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

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

2.4.6 Simple addition

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

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

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

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

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

2.5   Sources of errors

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

2.5.1   Interlingual transfer

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

2.5.2 Intralingual transfer

Intralingual transfer occurs within the target language itself. It happens when learners begin to acquire new structures in the target language. As learners progress in the, their experiences begin to include structures in the target language. This causes negative intralingual transfer or overgeneralization. In this case learners are unable to

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apply the rules they have learnt in the target language correctly. Some errors caused by learning strategies include:

2.5.2.1 False analogy

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

2.5.2.2 Overgeneralization

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

2.5.2.3 Ignorance of rule restrictions

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

2.5.2.4 Incomplete application of rules

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

2.5.3   Context of learning

The context of learning can also be a source or cause of error, even though it overlaps with both types of transfer. Brown (2006) refers to the context as the classroom with tis teachers and its methods in the case of school learning. He

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asserted, it is possible for the teacher or the textbook to let the learner make faulty judgment about the target language. Again, he maintained that 'student often make errors because of a misleading explanation from the teacher or faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook or even because of a pattern that was rotely memorized in a drill but improperly contextualized" (Brown, 2006; p. 226). In short, the teacher and the teaching material or methodology could trigger grammar errors.

There are stages in terms of what the learner does with the errors. The stage are random errors, emergent, systematic and stabilization (Brown, 2005; cited in Bondzie, 2011). Indications are that, at the random stage, the learner is "vaguely aware that there is some systematic order to a particular class of item" (Brown, 2005; p. 227) it continued that there is development in consistency in language production in the learner's language at the emergent stage. The learner is not able to correct error when shown to them. At third stage i.e. systematic stage the learner is able to discern the rules and internalized certain system. Even though the rules may not be correct in the target language, the learner sees them as legitimate. This is basically an on and off situation. Again, there is more consistency at the third stage. That is to say not all forms are well formed; they are however approximate to the target language.

In the third stage, the learner is able to correct errors when pointed to them. As regards to the stabilization stage, usually the learner commits relatively few errors and is able to reach near perfection or master the rules to the extent that fluency and decoding of meaning are not problematic. At this stage the learner is able to self-correct (Brown, ibid; p. 227-229). Corrections can be made without any input from the teacher. The above description of the stages of error correction appropriates the view that error correction is systematic from the point of view of the learner since at every stage there is an improvement on the previous stage. In this case, at what stage

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do we place SHS students? Are they at the random, emergent, systematic or the stabilization stage? The reason is that our ability to place them on any of stages outlined by Brown may enable teachers to deal with grammar errors that occur in SHS graduates' written compositions appropriately.

2.5.4   Communication errors

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

2.5.5   Developmental errors

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

2.6   Significance of Errors

One of the most unavoidable things in the world is to commit errors. Students in the process of learning language benefit from the errors they make by getting feedback to make new attempts that successively approximate their desired objectives. Selinker (1969) cited in Brown (2002) has identified three importance of errors in language learning. First, errors make the language teacher aware of the progress of learners in the language learning process. Second, errors make the language researcher have insights into how language is learned. Third, errors help language learners get involved in hypothesis testing to know what they have learned

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is being used appropriately. Thus, to Selinker, the errors in language learning have importance to the language learner, researcher and teacher.

Validatinejad (2008) affirms that error analysis can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. This provides the necessary details about what is missing in the abilities of the learner. Mitchell and Myles (2004) as cited in Keshavarz (2003) maintains that errors if studied could reveal a developing system of student L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. This opinion was reinforced by Stark's study (2001), which also clarified that teachers need to interpret student errors favourably and should not regard them as the failure of learners to grasp the rules and structures but rather should view the errors as process of learning.

Corder (1967) indicates that errors are important in three different ways. First of all, they tell the teachers how far the learners have come towards the learning target and also what remains to be learned by the students. Second, they provide researchers with details of how language is acquired and learned as well as the techniques, strategies or methods used by learners in language learning. Thirdly, for the learners themselves, they are invaluable because making errors can be seen as a tool or means used by the learner to learn.

To Richards (1971), the significance of errors can be viewed in psycho-linguistic, linguistic, and pedagogic perspective. Linguistically, it helps us to discover what constitutes human intelligence. Errors can also reveal mental processes involved in language with regards to psycholinguistics. Pedagogically, errors help language teachers identify and analyse learners' errors and design appropriate ways of dealing with these errors. To conclude, error analysis identifies the types of errors committed

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by learners and attributes the reasons of making those errors (Nation & Newton, 2001).

2.7   Related Studies

There are some studies on Error Analysis based on students' written work. Among the researchers who have worked on errors of second language learners, Richards (1984) holds a prominent place. He has examined intralingual errors produced by speakers of Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagaloss, Maori, Maltese, and the major Indian and West African languages. He has come out with six types of intralingual errors which are; errors in production of verb groups, errors in the distribution of verb groups, errors in the use of prepositions, errors in the use of articles, errors in the use of questions and miscellaneous errors.

AbiSamra (2003) also studied errors in the written work of ten Grade 9 students and found a total number of 214 errors. These are divided according to the different categories; 29 grammatical errors, 35 syntactic errors, 26 lexical errors, 3 semantic errors and 120 substance (mechanical and spelling) errors. Another work worthy of study for this research is Darus and Suhramanian (2009), who used Corders (1967) model on error analysis to examine errors in a compilation of 72 essays written by 72 Malay students. They found that students' errors were of six types which are: singular and plural forms, verb tense, word choice, prepositions, subject-verb agreement and word order.

Similarly, Ridha (2012) examined English writing samples of English as first language college students and concluded that grammatical, lexical and semantic, mechanics and word order are the types of errors these students made. Also she found that most of the learners rely on their L1 in expressing their ideas. She added that although the rating processes showed that the participants' essays included different

types of errors, the grammatical errors and the mechanical errors were the major and frequent ones. The results showed that most of the students' errors could be due to L1 transfer.

In addition, Sarfraz (2011) investigated the errors made by 50 undergraduate Pakistani students in written essays. He found that a great number of errors the students made were as a result of learners' interlanguage process and some errors resulting from mother tongue interference. A local study which is important to this study is a research conducted by Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2011) on L1 interference in L2 writing of Akan junior high school students. The data was collected using 90 students' written essays. The researchers used content analysis approach to analyse the errors of students in these essays having to do with L1 interference. The study revealed that transliteration, omission, wrong word use were the errors that occurred in the students' writing as a result of L1 interference. It was also found that the most frequently committed errors in the writings of the Akan speakers learning English in the junior high school were transliteration and omission errors.

These studies have given the researcher an idea of how to create major categories as the reference point for the types of errors she is looking for. As a result the researcher will use the following as error categories she will be using for the study. These are substance errors (mechanical and spelling), grammatical errors, lexical errors, omission errors, word errors, transitions and conjunction errors.

2.8   Conclusion

The discussion so far has indicated that there is no single way of categorizing and analyzing errors that occur in the writings of students. They all depend on the focus of the researcher. The discussions have given the researcher an idea of how to create major categories as the reference point for the types of errors to look out for in

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this study. The discussion has also indicated that the problem of errors in the written essays of students still persists .The discussion has also revealed that the sure way of analyzing students errors is for the language teacher to understand the L1 of the learner to be able to understand why certain errors are committed. The teacher should also see errors in students' writings as a learning situation.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This chapter looks at the methodology of the study which includes the research design, the population of the study, sample and sampling technique, research instrument, data analysis and limitations.

3.1   Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case study as the research design. This allowed the research to do an in-depth study of the problem. In addition, the case study design enabled the researcher to look at a single case thoroughly which can be generalised for similar cases studies.

3.2   Population

As pointed out by Best and Khan (2006), cited in Owu-Ewie (2011), population is a group of individuals who have one or more characteristics in common and an interest to the researcher. The population involves all the people, objects and institutions among others who are the subjects of the study. The population chosen for the study is students of Ejisu Presby Junior High School. The school has a total population of seven hundred and fifty (650) students. It has three hundred and fifty-eight boys and two hundred and ninety-two girls.

The target population for the study is the Junior High School (JHS) 1 or Form One students. The JHS 1 has four classes: fifty-seven (57) students in JHS 1A, fifty-five (55) students in JHS 1B, fifty-five (55) students in JHS 1C, and fifty-two (53) in JHS 1D, giving a total population of the Form One students as two hundred and twenty. The researcher intends to get study respondents from each class.

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3.3   **Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

Since all the JHS 1 students could not be used in this study due to time constraints, the researcher used the simple random sampling technique to select the participants for this study. In order to give all pupils an equal chance of being selected for this study, the lottery method was used. Thus, "Yes" and "No" were written on pieces of papers, folded and mixed up in a bowl. Students were then asked to pick one paper each from the bowl. All those who picked "Yes" took part in this study as respondents. Fifteen (15) students were selected from each class giving a total sample size of 60 participants. Indeed, these students are of varied intellectual capacities and are a better representation of the JHS 1 students.

3.4   **Data Collection Instruments**

The researcher used a writing task to collect data for the study. Thus, she gave essay writing to the sampled pupils in the class and gave them time to write after which she collected the scripts from them for analysis. In this case, the essay writing became the instrument through which the researcher used to collect the relevant data for the study.

3.5   **Data analysis**

The following four steps of Huang (2002) were taken to analyse the data: data collection, identification of errors, classification of errors into types, and statement of error frequency. Thus, the written essays were collected from the 60 students who were sampled for the study. The written essays were read, marked and analysed. They were then evaluated. The data obtained from the students' work was recorded in descriptive terms using a checklist. These errors were classified into three types of errors: concord, verb tense, preposition, punctuations. After the identification, the

frequency of each kind of error was calculated and the results were displayed in the form of a table to present the number of errors and percentage. The errors were then discussed in detail with examples of each type. In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998, p. 304), categorization and sub-categorization were used to record all the occurrence of errors which were committed by the students.

3.6   Ethical Considerations

Bowen (2009) argues that ethical issues in research concern personal disclosure, authenticity and credibility of a research report by demonstrating a high level of objectivity and sensitivity in the protection of research participants. To ensure that ethical issues were adhered to in the study, the researcher first had discussions with the Headteacher of the selected school. The researcher wrote a letter to the Headteacher of the school to be given permission to use the school for the study. When consent was given, the researcher met the English language teachers and explained the purpose of the research to them. Though few questions were raised, they agreed to assist the researcher to carry out her work. The teachers agreed to assist the researcher in conducting the exam. This arrangement was done because the researcher did not want to disturb structures in the school and wanted the students to write the essays under a relaxed environment. Lastly, the researcher met the students and explained to them why they were not allowed to write their names on scripts but rather code numbers which were given to the individual participants. This was meant ensure confidentiality and anonymity in the publication of the research findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

Crystal (1987) emphasises that error analysis is a method for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by a learner of a foreign language, using the provided principles and procedures of a linguist. In short, it can be seen that error analysis is an activity for identifying, interpreting, describing, evaluating and preventing language errors made by learners. Indeed, this is what the researcher did with the JHS 1 pupils of Ejisu Presby JHS in their English essay composition.

The study was conducted to identify the common errors frequently committed by first year (JHS 1) pupils of Ejisu Presby JHS in their English essay writing during 2019/2020 academic year. The total population of the JHS I classes was two hundred (200) pupils. A sample size of sixty (60) pupils from JHS 1A, JHS1B, JHS 1C, and JHS1D were joined together to represent the Form 1 classes. The respondents were from JHS 1A, JHS B, JHS 1C and JHS 1D. Each of the four classes was represented by 15 pupils, given the sample size of 60 respondents. . In all, the respondents were made up of thirty-eight (38) males and twenty-two (22) females. The researcher marked the 60 scripts of the sample, and grammatical errors were identified and analyzed for errors

4.1   Common Errors Frequently Committed by Pupils of Ejisu Presby JHS

A number of common errors were found in the essays the students that were analysed. These errors have been summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Common errors frequently committed by pupils of Ejisu Presby JHS

CLASS	SAMPLE SIZE	NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO COMMITTED ERRORS	SUBJECT AGREEMENT ERRORS	MECHANICAL ERRORS	SYNTACTIC ADDITIONS	INTER LINGUAL TRANSFER ERRORS	TOTAL
JHS 1A	15	8	51	42	63	32	188
JHS 1B	15	9	48	48	33	38	167
JHS 1C	15	12	59	57	37	29	182
JHS 1D	15	11	67	49	56	23	195
TOTAL	60	40	225	196	189	122	732

Mean Errors = Total Errors

Sample size

Mean Errors = $\frac{732}{60}$ = **12.2**

The errors identified were subject-verb agreement errors, mechanical errors, inter lingual transfer errors, and syntactic omission. As expressed in the Table 4a, the highest aggregate of errors committed only under Subject-Verb Agreement was 67 and the lowest was 48. For instance, out of the 15 pupils from JHS 1D 11 of the respondents committed the following errors:

- 67 subject-verb agreement errors;

- 49 mechanical errors;

- 56 syntactic additions; and

- 23 inter lingual transfer errors.

The 11 pupils from JHS 1D committed a total of 195 errors. This applies to all the other pupils in JHS 1A, JHS 1B, and JHS 1C. It can be inferred that the total number of errors committed by the 60 respondents is 732, ranging from subject-verb agreement, mechanical, syntactic additions and inter lingual transfer. Proportionally,

each pupil in the Presby JHS 1 is likely to make 12 grammatical errors in an essay of not more than 200 words, as the mean calculation indicates.

Table 4a summarizes the percentage representation of the errors made by the pupils. The greatest number of errors committed by the pupils was 31% subject-verb agreement errors, and the lowest representation of 16% errors was on lexical omissions.

Table 4.2: Frequencies and percentages of pupils' errors

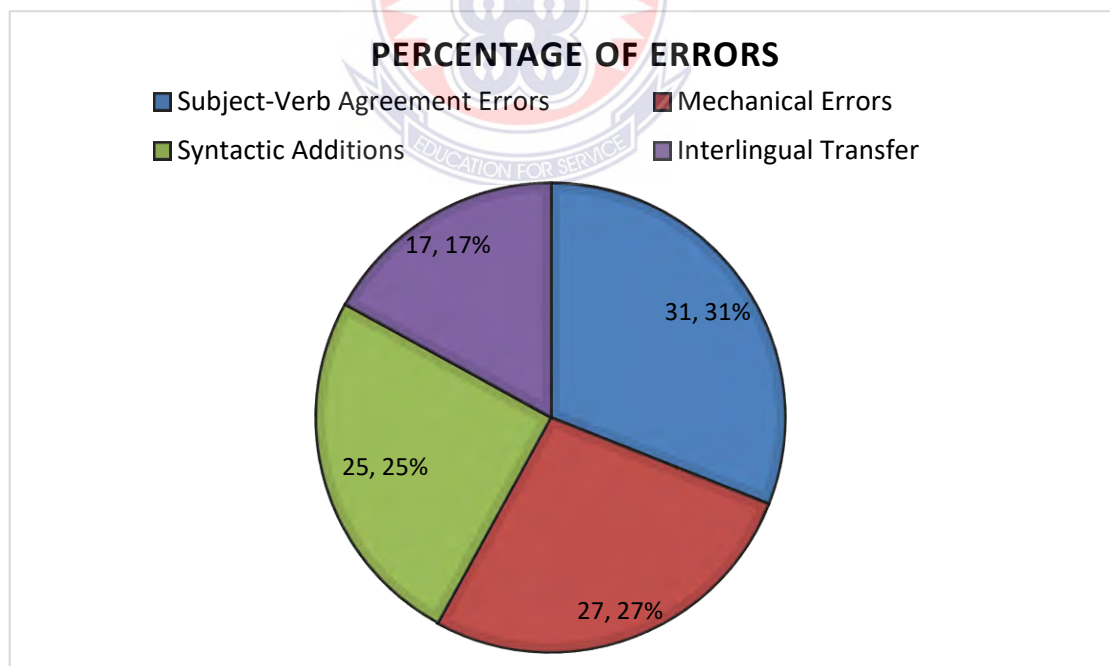| Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subject Agreement	225	31
Mechanical Errors	196	27
Syntactic Additions	189	25
Interlingual Transfer	122	17

Figure 4.1: Categories of pupils' errors

4.1.1 Subject–verb agreement errors

As noted from the Table 4a, the respondents made errors on subject-verb agreement because of their misunderstanding of the rules governing subject-verb agreement. An aggregate of 40 pupils (representing 66.6%) whose scripts were analysed violated the rules, and indeed lack understanding on grammatical arrangement of tenses.

A student's use of '***beating'*** instead of 'beaten' is evidently an indication that the student does not know the correct use of the tenses. That is to say the past tense in:

- Example 1: The boys have ***beating*** Amadu.

Thus pupils write verbs in the present continuous tense as the past participle tense. Similar flaws on subject-verb agreement identified in the pupils' scripts include the following:

- The new student **have bring** food to school.

- Once upon a time there **live** Kwaku Anansi.

- My sister **give** me the books yesterday.

Moreover, the researcher identified errors on the use of ***did*** (the past tense of do) and the negative form ***didn't.*** Pupils violated the rule that '*did* and *didn't* must be followed by a present tense of a verb' (Downing, 2015). Examples of errors pupils made using ***did*** and ***didn't*** in their scripts were written as:

- My father ***didn't gave*** me food because I did not come home early.

- **Did** you **came** to assembly this morning?

- This morning, John was afraid because he **didn't did** the maths homework.

4.1.2 Mechanical errors

Mechanical errors were the second most frequently–made errors recording a percentage of 27%. A close study of pupils' scripts revealed that there were

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predominantly a number of mechanical errors - particularly on spelling, capitalisation and punctuation marks. Spelling and punctuation marks were the most frequently committed errors as shown in the Table 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.2. Types of Mechanical errors Committed by Pupils

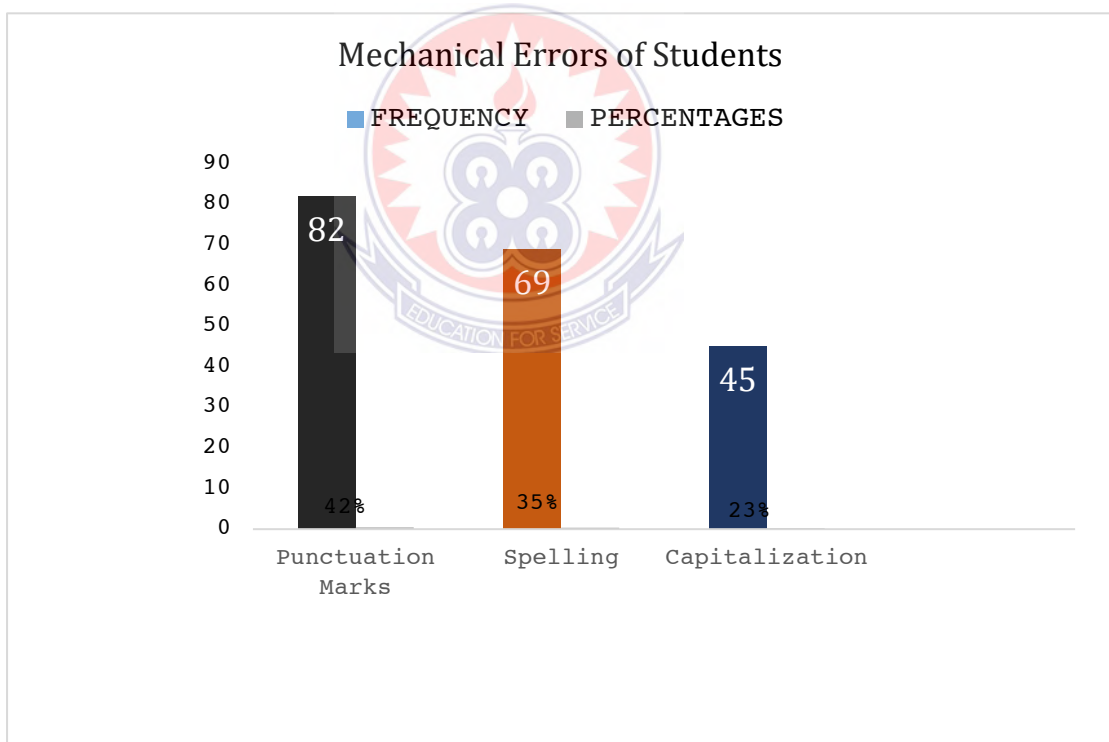| Mechanical Errors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Spelling	69	35
Capitalisation	45	23
Punctuation Marks	82	42
Total	**196**	**100**

Figure 4.2: Mechanical errors Committed by Pupils

4.1.2.1 Punctuation errors

The main punctuation marks pupils failed to provide correctly are the comma (**,**), the hyphen (–), and the period. A deeper analysis revealed that pupils frequently

committed a comma after a transition word or a subordinate clause. Again, pupils punctuated most of the words in series with periods instead of using the comma. The examples below illustrate errors pupils made in their scripts.

- When I came to school I lost my money

  When I came to school (,) I lost my money (.)

- Every Saturday morning we watch Ghanaian movies.

  Every Saturday (,)   morning we watch Ghanaian movies.

- On weekend   my friends sell cassava (.) fish(.) cocoyam (.) and pepper in Ejisu market.

On weekends (,) my friends sell cassava (,) fish(,) cocoyam(,) and pepper in Ejisu market.

Besides, pupils failed to hyphenate compound words in their scripts, and instead of writing words like '**well–washed' and 'forty– five'** correctly**,** pupils wrote the following:

- When you light the stove, you put your **well washed** raised in the pot.

- We have **forty five** players in the school team.

4.1.2.2 Spelling errors

The percentage of spelling errors identified in the scripts was 35%. and it was made by 38 of the respondents. This consisted of 22 males and 16 females. Analyses of the errors showed that majority of the pupils spelt words wrongly when they omitted, used a wrong letter or wrote letter when it was not needed. These errors were made because pupils have poor English vocabulary foundation and mostly get confused with the correct form of words to write.

Examples of spelling errors identified in the scripts are shown below.

- We **scrabed** the bathroom every **moring** before we **barth.**

  We scrubbed the bathroom every morning before we bathed.

- After washing the **utilsils**, I **wosh** my **cloths.**

  After washing the utensils I wash my clothes.

- I **pore** the **blend perper** in the hot oil

  I poured the blended pepper in the hot oil.

- The **yorng** man **disaded** to marry the **beatful pricess.**

The young man decided to marry the beautiful princess.

4.1.2.3 Capitalisation errors

The 27% of capitalisation errors made by the respondents were caused by pupils' inadequate knowledge of capitalisation rules in that the first letter of a proper noun, as well as the pronoun "I" must always be written as a capital letter.

Besides, pupils failed to capitalise the first letter of a sentence. These three capitalisation errors were detected in the pupil essays. Examples of the capitalisation errors are:

- On **saturday** morning, when i wake up i wash my face.

  *On **Saturday** morning, when I wake up I wash my face.*

- I want to continue my education at **st louis senior high school.**

  *I want to continue my education at **St. Louis Senior High School.***

- The next place we visited during the **easter** holidays was kakum **national park.**

The next place we visited during the ***Easter*** holidays was Kakum ***National Park.***

4.1.3   Syntactic additions

A significant number of syntactic additions were identified in pupils' essays when they were analysed. Pupils made a total of 189 syntactic addition errors ranking it as the third most frequent errors in this study. The highest frequency of syntactic errors (63%) were made by the JHS 1A pupils whilst the lowest frequency of 33% was recorded by pupils in JHS 1B.

It was observed that the pupils did not know that the correct writing and speaking of good English Language are guided by different rules on the tenses and the parts of speech. Given this handicap, pupils failed to recognise the exception that an 's' is not added to some collective nouns such as *stadium and furniture,* and many   plurals forms of nouns such as *thieves and food* in their essays. Examples of such errors committed include the following:

- Every week, my brother makes some **furnitures** in his shop.

  *Every week, my brother makes some **furniture** in his shop.*

- He said the **thiefs** jumped over the school wall.

  *He said the **thieves** jumped over the school wall.*

- At the market we bought some foods **staffs.**

  At the market we bought some foodstuff.

4.1.4   Interlingual transfer errors

Interlingual transfer errors were also a major source of errors detected in pupils' scripts. As indicated in **T**able 1, the respondents made a total of 122 errors under this category, with the highest recorded frequency of 32 errors (representing 31%) made by the JHS 1B pupils. These errors were made because pupils quickly translated sentences in their first language or vernacular into written English sentences, thinking such translations are the same. Thus, pupils failed to see that their

transfers of sentences in the mother tongue to English language sentences are not without flaws.

4.2   Causes of the errors

4.2.1   Limited knowledge of English language rules, grammar and vocabulary and poor reading culture

Pupils' limited knowledge of English language rules, grammar and vocabulary, as well as the poor reading culture of the pupils invariably lead them to commit many writing mistakes. The data from the analysed essays confirm that the English vocabulary and grammar of the JHS 1 pupils have to be improved so as to help them write flawless essays. In the researcher's view, where regular word drills or dictation exercises, phonics lessons, group reading sessions and library hours are introduced, pupils will positively develop good vocabulary and writing skills.

4.2.2   Overgeneralization

This problem has been noted by Richard (1971). He asserts that *overgeneralization* covers instances where a learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures in the target language. Thus pupils who have not developed well in the rules of the second language, may transfer directly, the rules of their mother tongue into the English language, and may adversely resort to using a phrase in the mother tongue directly in the English language (Brown, 2000 & Corder, 1987)

4.2.3   False concept hypothesis

False concept hypothesis also prompt such errors as interlingual transfer. This, according to Richard (1971), occurs when pupils do not fully understand some differences in the second or target language. For example, that *was, were* and *did* are

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past tense markers in sentences such as *the boys were beaten* or *all the food was eaten*. It is evident in the analysis that the pupils made many direct transfers or erroneous translations of sentences in the affairs language into English language sentences. These examples highlight the ignorance of the pupils in such transfers.

- My mother **sent me to go** and buy some vegetables.

  My mother sent me to buy some vegetables.

- **I am going to come**.

  I will be right back.

- We wrote a **brief summary** of the story in the exercise book.

  We wrote a summary of the story in the exercise book.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion of the present study. It summarizes findings of the analysis and interpretations made in the previous chapter. The main aim of the study was to identify the errors made by pupils in their essays.

5.1   Summary of Findings

A total of seven hundred and thirty-two (732) errors were recorded from the essays of forty (40) Pupils (representing 66.6%) with subject-verb agreement errors topping the list of errors, giving an aggregate of 31 % of the total errors recorded. Errors in this category were mainly due to pupils'   misunderstanding of the rules governing subject-verb agreement. This finding indicates that Pupils in the Form 1 students of Ejisu Presby JHS have a major problem with subject-verb agreement.

The observation also showed that Pupils struggle to write and speak error free sentences. Most of the pupils the researcher observed make concord errors in their everyday conversation. The reason may be due to poor reading culture among Pupils. They really do not read a lot of storybooks but rather interested in viewing films on television. Another observation was that English teachers are also not enough in the school. Teachers who also teach are not trained to teach the Language. Only one English Language teacher teaches the 200 JHS1 pupils. This obvious work load does not help teaching and learning of the various aspects of the English language.

Besides, it was noted that the pupils are not motivated to speak the English so that they can be corrected when errors are committed. This does not encourage them to speak but are fond of speaking vernacular. The correct teaching methodologies are

also not used to teach concord. Pupils find it difficult to grasp the concept of subject-verb agreement. Finally, there is lack a school library and the inadequate English textbooks and story books in the school compounds the problem. The few that are there, there is no library to keep them so that the teachers could encourage them to read often. Mechanical errors of Punctuations, Spelling and Capitalization errors are pedagogical problems which can be handled appropriately by teachers in the schools. Mechanical errors were the second highest recorded errors, with 196 errors representing 27 %. These were mainly spelling errors of 35%; capitalization flaws of 23% and to which learners omitted uppercase letters in some instances and used them where they were not required. This distorted the meaning learners intended to convey in certain cases as some adjectives were written beginning with the uppercase letters within some sentences.

These errors suggest that most learners overgeneralized grammatical rules on the use of case letters and had poor reading and writing habits. Punctuation errors had the next highest frequency of 82 errors representing 42%. Learners errors on punctuation centred on wrong usage of punctuation marks and omission of punctuations where needed. 13.5%. The errors of syntactic additions and Interlingual transfer, the last two recordings, was mainly due students handicap to express themselves well in English and the frequent speaking of Twi being the most widely spoken language in the community. Twi being the most widely used language on most electronic media stations, semi-literacy/half-baked scholarly activities, undermines the desire of parents to help their wards acquire fluency in the English Language. Other factors are unavailability of libraries in the community and the school, poor parent-child relationship, lack of school remedial plans to the students, and the lack of parental control and the social media. The mother tongue had a tremendous impact on their

writing of the English essays indicating that teachers needed to take cognizance of the transfer and interference of the students' mother tongue in their spoken or written discourse.

5.2 The Implications of the Errors have on English Language Learning Process

The errors made by pupils in their English language learning process are of significant worth to classroom instructors as they provide some number of instructional guidelines especially to the teacher. First, the errors tend to highlight real problems students of English language have in their writing, and sensitize teachers to improve the learning outcome of the pupils using the errors. Again, in Corder's (1987) view, the errors inform the teacher how far the learner has progressed in his learning goal, and consequently what remains for the learner to learn, if the teacher has made a systematic analysis of a learner's errors.

Moreover, the errors are important to the researcher. The errors provide the researcher evidence of how English language is learned or acquired, and what strategies or procedures are employed by students in their discovery of the language (Corder, 1987). The researcher, as well as teachers, can use these errors to improve pupils' writing performances. Finally, since the pupils' essays highlight their vocabulary and grammar, the identified deficiencies will help the researcher to properly prepare relevant grammar and vocabulary lessons that can help reduce the frequently found errors in pupils' writings, as a means of boosting pupils' effectiveness in the writing English language sentences.

5.3   Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research the following suggestions are made. That:

i. Pupils make sure that they use English as a medium of communication, especially in the classroom as well as inside the school premises.

ii. Teachers ensure that almost all pupils/students belong to at least one literacy club such as the drama, debate, reading etc. clubs.

iii. Pupils listen to English news and watch other programmes in English both on the radio and television from especially stations that are noted for the use of Standard English language like the BBC and GBC.

iv. Pupils participate in debates and symposia as often as possible.

v. The Headteacher of the school does his best to assign the teaching of the English language to the most qualified teachers on their staff; where there are no qualified teachers, some level of competency assessment should be conducted before the subject is assigned.

vi. After the Pupils' writing, the English teachers should identify and record errors and discuss them with Pupils; this may be extended to errors identified through observations and other means.

vii. Teachers must undergo in-service training to learn and unlearn some pedagogy which they are used to, but have outlived its usefulness and rather adopt new ones that will facilitate and enhance the easy learning of the English language. In addition, errors which keep recurring should be used as samples on the board and students helped to correct them.

viii. Teachers expose the pupils to Standard English through literacy clubs, newspapers,

magazines, and school radio programmes. Pupils must also use most of their spare time in reading English books and newspapers, and minimise their engagements on social media.

ix.   The Teachers introduce competitions in both writing and reading among different classes of Pupils so as to improve writing and reading skills.

x.   The school must endeavour to have a library which is well-resourced and modern to be funded by the P.T.A. Municipal Assembly, N.G.Os in partnership, churches worshiping in their classrooms, influential people in the community.

xi.   The Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should make available in the basic schools adequate reading materials that aids English Language teaching. This would re-kindle the interest of pupils in the study of the language. In essence, supplementary readers must be made available for use by pupils so that as they read the books they can acquire more vocabulary that can be used in communication.

xii.   Reading a lot of English Language books will also help the Pupils to understand concord better so that they can avoid errors in their daily communications. The few library books that are in the school should also be used by pupils. Some teachers are of the view that when the pupils use the text books they will be torn, so they don't allow the pupils to use the books. This should be stopped. Teachers should be made to understand that the textbooks belong to the pupils so that could learn on their own. This should be emphasized by headteacher if possible the municipal director.

5.4   Suggestions for future research

The researcher suggests that in future a closer look should be taken at other errors such as ambiguity and misplaced and dangling modifiers which also contribute to the obstruction of intended meaning in the writing of pupils on a larger scale such as all JHS pupils in the Form 1. The researcher believes that by so doing, much can be done to minimize and eventually eliminate errors in the writing of pupils in the JHS which will have a telling effect on their writing in the SHS.

5.5   Conclusion

In conclusion, it is quite clear from the study conducted that the error of subject verb agreement, mechanical errors, syntactic additions, and inter-lingual transfer errors have really become endemic in the Ejisu Presby JHS among the Form 1 pupils as far as the usage of the English language is concerned. A number of causative factors were identified in which each and every stakeholder has a role to play in order to mitigate the problem. The errors as they manifested in the written essays as well as in observations were discussed with the teachers and heads of the schools concerned. A positive change was promised by the schools if the researcher should visit the time. It is actually the desire of the researcher to see the problem ameliorated in the near future.

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