

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA



**GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN EXERCISES OF JHS1
STUDENTS OF NJAU-TANOSO R/C JHS IN THE TAIN DISTRICT**



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MASTER OF EDUCATION

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**A dissertation submitted to the school of graduate studies in
partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of
the degree of Master of Education
(Teaching English as a Second Language)**

**DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS,
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DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I **Nyame Emmanuel Gregory**, declare that, this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledge is my own original work and has not been submitted, either in part or whole for award of another degree elsewhere.

Signature :

Date:

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Name: Dr. Kwaku Ofori

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the Almighty God, for protecting and guiding me from the start of this work to a very successful end. With a heart full of appreciation and gratitude, I dedicate this work to the Nyame's family, and my mother, Mrs. Asima Cecilia for their prayers, affection, and companionship during the study.



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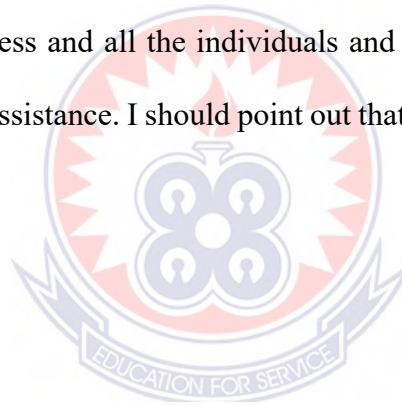
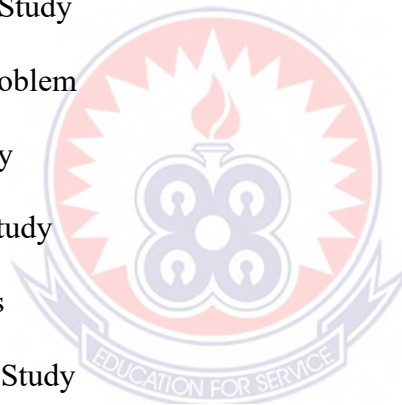
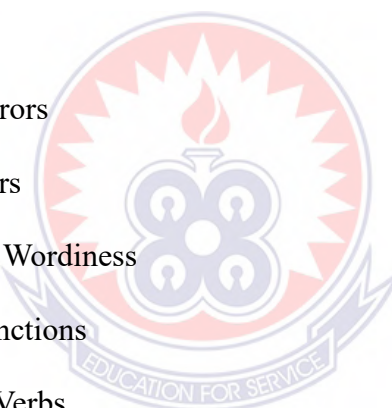


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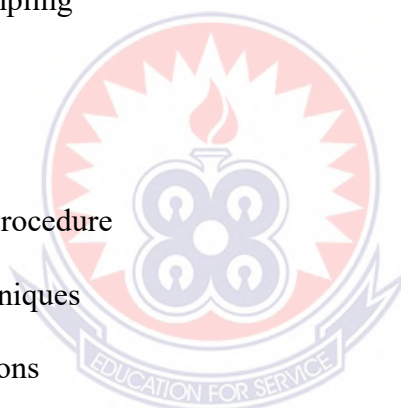
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the types, causes, and implications of grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS1 students at Njau-Tanoso R/C Junior High School in the Tain District of Ghana. Using a qualitative approach, the researcher analyzed written samples from students and conducted interviews with English language teachers to gather data. Widespread grammatical faults were found, including problems with subject-verb agreement, inconsistent tenses, overuse of articles, incorrect use of prepositions and pronouns, sentence fragments, punctuation and spelling, and interference from the mother tongue. Poor teaching methods, little exposure to standard English, a lack of feedback, and inadequate basic knowledge were blamed for these mistakes. The study came to the conclusion that these grammatical problems are systemic and need to be fixed by integrating digital learning resources, improving curricular focus, training teachers, and providing explicit grammar teaching. Grammar instruction is advised as a fundamental part of language instruction. The study adds to the body of knowledge on second language learning in educational environments with limited resources and has policy implications for curriculum reform, teacher preparation, and resource allocation.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL) is of critical importance to both teachers and learners. English is extensively used by people from diverse sociocultural backgrounds, serving as a primary medium of communication in many contexts. In Ghana and other Anglophone countries within the West African subregion, English functions as the official language and is widely spoken across educational, administrative, and social domains. For these reasons, teachers are required to give considerable attention to the teaching and learning of English, particularly in the area of written communication.

Globally, English serves as a common linguistic medium that connects people of different nationalities in situations such as travel, business transactions, and intercultural interactions. As a result, English is taught to learners in many countries as either a second or foreign language (Nordquist, 2022). This underscores the need for English language instruction to receive special focus within the teaching and learning process. Grammar, as a core component of effective communication, plays a crucial role in ensuring clarity and accuracy in language use. Consequently, the mastery of grammatical structures is essential for Junior High School (JHS) students in Ghana.

Despite the importance of grammar, several studies have shown that JHS students experience persistent difficulties with grammatical accuracy in their written work (Ankomah, 2017; Owusu, 2019). In response to this challenge, Chief Examiners' reports on English language examinations have consistently highlighted a decline in students' performance over the years. These reports frequently cite common errors such as incorrect spelling, misuse of punctuation, subject–verb disagreement, inappropriate

tense usage, and improper capitalization. As a result, English language teachers are expected to identify these recurring errors in students' written work and address them systematically during instruction.

The situation at Njau-Tanoso R/C Junior High School reflects these broader challenges. Pupils, particularly those in JHS I, struggle with key grammatical areas including subject–verb agreement, tense usage, spelling, and punctuation. These difficulties have adversely affected their overall performance in English and significantly limited their ability to communicate effectively in written form. Students' assignments often contain numerous grammatical errors, with subject–verb agreement errors being particularly prominent. One major contributing factor is the pupils' inability to distinguish between number marking in nouns and verbs. Learners frequently confuse plural nouns, which require the inflectional marker *-s*, with verb forms, leading to inappropriate verb choices, especially when plural subjects are involved.

It is against this background that the present study seeks to identify the underlying causes of grammatical errors in students' written exercises and to explore appropriate strategies for addressing and reducing these challenges.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Grammatical errors in the written assignments of Junior High School (JHS) students hinder their ability to communicate effectively and achieve academic success. Learning English is a complex process that requires consistent and structured exposure to the four fundamental language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. According to Brown (2000), mastery of the English language depends on adequate engagement with all these skills. However, in the teaching of grammar, many teachers do not consistently employ effective instructional strategies, a situation that has

contributed to the increasing incidence of grammatical errors in the written assignments of students at Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic Junior High School.

Despite ongoing efforts to improve grammar instruction, students continue to commit numerous errors, indicating that the nature and underlying causes of these challenges require thorough examination. Common errors observed in students' written work include incorrect spelling, misuse of punctuation, inappropriate tense usage, and subject-verb disagreement. The persistence of these errors provides clear evidence of difficulties in written communication, which English language teachers must address to support students in developing effective writing skills.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to investigate into grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS1 students of Njau-Tanoso R/C and the best teaching methodologies to be adopted to salvage the situation.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to improve the written communication skills of Njau-Tanoso R/C Junior High School form one students.

The specific objectives were

1. to identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors in written exercises of JHS1 students
2. to find out the possible causes of grammatical errors in the written exercises of the JHS1 students
3. to identify effective teaching strategies to reduce grammatical errors in written exercises

1.5 Research Questions

The study addresses itself to the following research questions

1. What types of grammatical errors are most prevalent in the written exercise of JHS students?
2. What are the possible causes of grammatical errors in the written exercise of JHS students?
3. What are the effective teaching strategies to be used to reduce grammatical errors in written exercises of JHS1 students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be relevant to learners, syllabus designers, textbook writers, language teachers, and other stakeholders in English language education. From a theoretical perspective, the study will contribute to the identification and understanding of patterns of grammatical errors among Junior High School students in Ghana. Practically, the findings will provide teachers with valuable insights for designing targeted instructional strategies and interventions to address identified grammatical challenges. The study will also serve as a useful reference for language education planning and curriculum development, thereby informing policy decisions related to English language teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the findings are expected to enhance students' performance in English language and literature by promoting improved grammatical competence and effective writing skills. At the societal level, the study will encourage clearer and more effective communication within Ghanaian society, which is essential for national development. For policymakers, the study will offer evidence-based guidance for the allocation of resources toward language education, as well as for the strengthening of teacher training and continuous professional development programmes.

1.7 Limitations

Several challenges were encountered by the researcher in the course of attempting to investigate and address grammatical errors in the written exercises of students at Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic Junior High School. One major challenge was the reluctance of some teachers and students to provide primary data. This hesitation was largely due to concerns about confidentiality and a fear of being identified, which limited the extent of information willingly shared.

Another challenge related to financial constraints. The researcher incurred transportation costs while travelling from the district capital to the school during the data collection process, which posed some difficulty. In addition, time constraints could not be entirely eliminated, as the study was conducted within a limited period. As a result, the sample size was restricted. The study involved a relatively small number of participants, comprising 59 students from the JHS One class, selected within the one-year timeframe allocated for the research.

Furthermore, the researcher found it challenging to examine each student's written exercises in detail and to accurately identify and categorize the various types of grammatical errors present. This was due to the volume of scripts and the time required for thorough analysis.

Despite these limitations, the findings of the study provide valuable insights into the declining standard of English language proficiency among Junior High School students in Ghana.

1.8 Delimitation

The scope of the study was limited to only the JHS student of Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic, junior high school, and not to any other school and class due to time constraints. The problem investigated was also limited to grammatical errors in the

written exercises of the students and no other aspect of the English language. The other aspects of English such as reading, literature, etc. were not in focus.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This essay is organized into five chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction to the study and outlines the background of the research, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, its limitations, delimitations, and the overall organization of the work.

Chapter Two comprises the review of related literature. It examines the views of scholars in the field of English language teaching, with particular emphasis on error analysis and the possible causes of grammatical errors among learners. The chapter also discusses various approaches and methods employed by educators in the teaching of English, especially grammar instruction.

Chapter Three focuses on the research methodology adopted for the study. It describes the research design, sources of data, and the instruments used for data collection, including students' written exercises and classroom observation.

Chapter Four presents the analysis and interpretation of the data collected through the research instruments. The findings are discussed in relation to the research questions and the objectives of the study.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the major findings, draws conclusions from the study, and offers recommendations for educational practice and future policy direction. The chapter also presents an overall summary of the study, highlighting the research process from inception to conclusion. The recommendations made are expected to be useful to teachers, curriculum developers, and other stakeholders in English language education.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a thorough analysis of the body of research on grammatical errors in students' written English, particularly as it relates to junior high school (JHS) instruction in Ghana and other similar settings. The conceptual understanding of grammatical errors, theoretical viewpoints, empirical findings pertinent to the study's goals, a conceptual framework for the investigation, gaps in the literature, and a conclusion are all included in the chapter's structure. Grammatical proficiency is still a key component of learning a second language, and its absence has a big influence on students' academic performance and communication skills (James, 2013, p. 45; Richards & Schmidt, 2018, p. 62). In Ghana, English serves as both the official language and the medium of instruction in schools, making proficiency in it particularly critical. However, numerous studies have observed consistent grammatical errors in students' writing across junior high schools (Asiedu, 2021, p. 29; Ankomah, 2017, p. 14). This review explores key concepts and findings in the area to provide a strong theoretical and empirical basis for the current investigation.

2.1 Concepts of Grammatical Error in Writing

The general definition of grammatical errors in writing is any infraction or departure from the rules and conventions that control a language's structure and usage, especially its syntax, morphology, punctuation, and usage conventions. In the context of English as a second language (ESL), these errors are significant markers of learners' linguistic growth in addition to impairing communication accuracy and fluency. Incorrect verb forms, poor subject-verb agreement, wrong word order, overuse of

articles and prepositions, and errors in spelling and punctuation are just a few examples of how these deviations can appear. These errors show a discrepancy between the learners' proficiency and the target language's linguistic norms (Ellis, 2008, p. 90).

Since they offer a window into how learners internalize and rebuild the grammatical rules of the target language, grammatical errors have been a major focus in the study of second language acquisition (SLA). According to Corder (1981), mistakes are normal outcomes of language learning rather than only indications of incapacity or failure. As learners try to bridge the gap between their native language and the target language, a transitory linguistic system known as the learner's interlanguage develops. They provide insightful information on this system. As a result, these mistakes are regular and indicative of the fundamental mental operations that second language learners perform when building their information.

Grammatical errors are particularly harmful in written communication since writing is regarded as a formal and permanent method of expression. Unlike in conversation, when intonation, gesture, and prompt clarification can make up for grammatical errors, errors in writing are more readily observed and closely examined. Therefore, frequent grammatical errors in students' writing tend to reduce the overall efficacy of communication, obscure the intended meaning, and damage the credibility of the information. Both academic performance and linguistic self-confidence are seriously threatened by these errors for Junior High School (JHS) students in Ghana, especially those at the JHS1 level.

Numerous interconnected aspects, including the learner's mother tongue, the teaching approach used, the amount and quality of language exposure, and the learners' ability and motivation, all have an impact on how well students acquire English grammar. The impact of the first language (L1) on English (L2) grammar is frequently

seen in multilingual settings like Ghana, particularly when the two languages' syntactic and morphological systems differ greatly. For example, learners may struggle to construct grammatically accurate English sentences if the L1 does not denote tense or subject-verb agreement in the same manner as English.

Moreover, the educational setting plays a significant role in shaping grammatical proficiency. In under-resourced schools where English teachers lack adequate training, students are more likely to develop fossilized grammatical errors, persistent mistakes that become habitual and resistant to correction. As Ankomah (2017) notes in his study of selected Ghanaian JHS students, common errors include tense shifts within sentences, misapplication of plural markers, omission of auxiliary verbs, and incorrect use of prepositions. These errors not only reflect limited grammatical knowledge but also highlight deficiencies in pedagogical approaches to grammar instruction.

From a pedagogical perspective, a key element of language training should be the detection, evaluation, and remediation of grammatical faults. The practical and communicative application of grammatical structures should be the main emphasis of effective grammar instruction rather than mechanical memorization of rules. Teachers need to be able to identify the different kinds of errors that pupils make, comprehend the likely reasons behind them, and implement effective corrective measures. This involves using error analysis as a diagnostic tool to guide instructional design, curriculum development, and assessment procedures.

Understanding grammatical errors also has broader implications for language policy and curriculum development. In Ghana, where English serves as the official language and the primary medium of instruction at all educational levels, grammatical competence is not just an academic requirement but a socio-economic necessity.

Proficiency in written English is a prerequisite for academic success, participation in national examinations, and access to higher education and employment opportunities. Therefore, the prevalence of grammatical errors in students' writing, especially among those at foundational levels such as JHS1, is a matter of urgent concern for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the education sector.

2.2 Concepts of Grammatical Error in Writing

Deviations from the accepted conventions and guidelines that control a language's structure and usage are known as grammatical errors in writing. These errors cover a wide range of problems in the context of English as a Second Language (ESL), such as erroneous verb forms, poor subject-verb agreement, wrong word order, misuse of articles and prepositions, and spelling and punctuation errors. In addition to impairing written communication's coherence and clarity, these mistakes also reveal the learners' evolving interlanguage system, a transitional linguistic framework that they build as they advance toward complete mastery of the target language (Selinker, 1972).

The importance of comprehending grammatical errors as a window into the cognitive processes involved in second language acquisition has been highlighted by recent studies. For example, Salifu (2021) found 2,864 grammatical faults in essays submitted by Ghanaian senior high school students after doing a thorough study. The most common errors included prepositional phrases, subject-verb agreement, and verb use. Salifu came to the conclusion that these errors frequently result from learners' first language interfering, overgeneralization, and insufficient acquisition of grammatical rules (p. 45).

English serves as both the official language and the main teaching medium in Ghanaian schools. As a result, knowing English grammar is not only necessary for academic purposes but also for socioeconomic ones. According to Adu (2022),

grammatical errors have a major impact on students' performance in English composition, especially on the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). According to the study, common errors include sentence fragments, improper article usage, and tense shifts, all of which reduce the efficacy of students' written communication (p. 38).

In multilingual settings like Ghana, the impact of the first language (L1) on the acquisition of second language (L2) grammar is especially noticeable. The effects of Akan, a commonly spoken Ghanaian language, on students' English writing were examined by Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016), who discovered that L1 interference resulted in recurring errors in verb tenses, sentence construction, and article usage. These results highlight the necessity of teaching methods that specifically address the structural distinctions between students' home languages and English (p. 12).

Furthermore, a student's grammatical proficiency is greatly influenced by their educational environment. Students are more prone to make fossilized errors—persistent mistakes that become ingrained and difficult to correct—in underfunded schools where English teachers do not have access to sufficient training and teaching tools. According to Salifu (2021), these kinds of settings frequently fall short of giving pupils the feedback and reinforcement they require in order for them to internalize proper grammar (p. 47).

Pedagogically, the identification and analysis of grammatical errors should be integral to language instruction. Effective grammar teaching extends beyond rote memorization of rules; it involves contextualized practice, immediate feedback, and the use of error analysis as a diagnostic tool. Teachers should be equipped to recognize common error patterns, understand their underlying causes, and implement targeted

interventions. This approach not only enhances students' grammatical competence but also fosters greater confidence in their writing abilities.

2.2.2 Importance of Grammar in Writing

Grammar plays a vital role in the mastery of language, acting as the structural basis that enables individuals to communicate ideas with clarity, coherence, and fluency. In the domain of writing, grammar becomes even more crucial, as written language lacks the paralinguistic signals, such as tone of voice, gestures, or facial expressions, that often enhance understanding in spoken communication. The written word must, therefore, stand on its own, relying exclusively on grammatical structures to express meaning clearly and efficiently. As such, writing rational, convincing, and understandable written speech requires a solid command of grammar.

Grammar in writing is very important in second language learning environments like Ghana. At all educational levels, English is used as the medium of instruction in addition to being the official language. As a result, it is required of students to show mastery of English grammar in all subject areas, especially when taking written tests. Grammar errors frequently lead to misunderstandings, a distorted understanding of the intended meaning, and an inability to construct cogent arguments or stories. The effects of these shortcomings on children's academic achievement and overall educational achievements are profound.

The claim that grammatical proficiency is essential for academic performance has been supported by recent empirical research. For instance, a study on the writing abilities of Ghanaian junior high school pupils by Gyan and Boateng (2021) discovered a direct link between total writing scores and grammatical accuracy. According to the researchers, pupils who struggled with grammar were more likely to produce fragmented, unclear, or nonsensical compositions because they were unable to organize

their thoughts logically (p. 114). The significance of grammar in high-stakes academic assessments was further highlighted by a study by Asamoah and Dwira (2020), which found that grammatical errors were the most commonly reported reason for the deduction of marks in the English composition sections of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) (p. 97).

Through its Chief Examiners' Reports, the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) continuously highlights the importance of grammar in student achievement. Examiners found that a significant percentage of students lost points for recurring grammatical errors, including erroneous verb tenses, subject-verb disagreement, and improper use of articles and prepositions, in the 2019 report on the BECE English Language exam (WAEC, 2019, p. 5). Since students who struggle with grammar are unable to write coherent essays or effectively express their ideas, the report emphasized the importance of teachers concentrating on enhancing grammar instruction in schools.

Additionally, grammar has social as well as academic purposes. Writing in grammatically accurate English is linked to intelligence, education, and credibility in many institutional and professional contexts. Grammar errors in professional writing, such as letters, reports, or academic essays, can damage the writer's credibility and reduce the text's persuasive power, according to Adjei (2022) (p. 132). Students are under more pressure to learn grammar because of this social attitude, particularly as they enter higher education or the workforce.

Students with strong grammar skills are typically more comfortable writing in class and are more eager to take on challenging assignments. They are able to convey complex ideas clearly, employ transitional phrases skillfully, and alter sentence forms thanks to grammar. Their critical thinking and expressive abilities are both improved by this aptitude. Conversely, children who have trouble with grammar tend to avoid

writing assignments or write sentences that are too simple, which hinders their ability to learn and grow intellectually.

Additionally, from a teaching perspective, grammar is a dynamic system that interacts with vocabulary, discourse structures, and context rather than merely being a collection of prescriptive rules to be learned. The communicative function of grammar is emphasized by contemporary approaches to teaching it, which support an emphasis on the meaningful application of grammatical structures in everyday situations. Teachers are thus encouraged to integrate grammar into broader language skills instruction, using writing tasks as opportunities to reinforce grammatical accuracy in a functional and context-sensitive manner (Mensah & Oppong, 2020, p. 53).

2.2.3 Categories of Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors in student writing can be categorized into various types. Burt and Kiparsky (1974) proposed a dichotomy of “global” and “local” errors. Global errors affect overall sentence meaning and can hinder communication, such as wrong word order or incorrect verb tenses. Local errors, while less severe, include issues like article misuse or preposition errors. Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982) later categorized errors into omission, addition, misformation, and misordering. These categories are commonly used in error analysis of student writing.

2.2.4 Common Grammatical Errors in JHS Writing

Numerous studies conducted in Ghana have revealed that junior high school (JHS) pupils frequently make grammatical mistakes in their writing, which suggests a more serious problem with fundamental English language acquisition. Inappropriate tense shifting, in which pupils change the tenses of verbs within a sentence or paragraph without providing grammatical explanation, is one of the most common errors seen.

This breaks the consistency of sentences and frequently results in meaning confusion. An unstable understanding of temporal consistency in writing can be seen, for example, when a student starts a phrase in the past tense and ends it in the present (Amponsah, 2020, p. 44; Mensah & Darko, 2021, p. 59).

Another well-documented problem is the disregard for subject-verb agreement rules, which includes instances in which singular subjects are paired with plural verbs or vice versa, for example, "He go to school" instead of "He goes to school" (Asare, 2022, p. 41). Experts contend that this issue frequently arises from mother-tongue interference, in which the syntactic rules of local languages are unconsciously transferred into English constructions (Tamakloe & Boadi, 2020, p. 38).

Another common issue among JHS students is spelling mistakes. The influence of social media jargon, a small vocabulary, and the misunderstanding of British and American spelling rules are commonly blamed for these mistakes. Inconsistencies in written texts might result from pupils using words like "color" instead of "colour" or "organize" instead of "organise" (Nyarko & Appiah, 2021, p. 52; Anane, 2023, p. 30). These discrepancies have the potential to damage their academic work's overall presentation and reliability.

Misuse of punctuation, such as leaving out full stops, overusing commas, or putting apostrophes in the wrong places, is another issue that compromises sentence boundary identification and clarity. For instance, some students write lengthy, imprecise phrases that are hard to understand (Boakye & Owusu-Antwi, 2022, p. 48). Furthermore, there are still many capitalization mistakes, such as not capitalizing proper nouns or the first words of sentences. This frequently indicates a lack of focus or an inability to absorb the rules of proper English writing (Acheampong & Yeboah, 2020, p. 33; Kwabena, 2023, p. 28).

In addition to impeding clear communication, these grammar errors also indicate more significant structural issues with language teaching. Students who struggle with grammar are less able to communicate themselves clearly in writing, which can have a detrimental effect on their academic achievement in all subject areas (Asiedu, 2021, p. 36; Osei & Dankwa, 2023, p. 61). Furthermore, the prevalence of these errors points to the need for more concentrated interventions, such as retraining teachers, putting more emphasis on writing exercises, and incorporating feedback on grammar in evaluations given in the classroom (Boateng & Ababio, 2022, p. 53).

2.2.5 Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Subject-verb agreement errors remain a pervasive grammatical challenge among Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students in Ghana. These errors occur when the verb form does not correspond in number with its subject, such as using "He go to school" instead of the correct "He goes to school." This issue reflects a failure to apply the rule that a third-person singular subject in the present tense requires a verb ending in *-s* or *-es*.

The frequency of subject-verb agreement problems at the JHS1 level is influenced by a number of factors. The involvement of pupils' mother tongues, many of which do not strictly respect subject-verb concord rules, is one important cause. For example, learners in Ghana transfer inaccurate grammatical structures into their English writing since many indigenous languages are not inflected for subject-verb agreement in the same way as English. Early English learners who are still internalizing the language's syntactic principles are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon, which is frequently referred to as negative language transfer (Bakuuro, 2017, p. 25).

The lack of exposure to standard English structures is another factor. Many students rely on spoken English from family, friends, or local media, which may be

marked by informal usage and non-standard forms. As a result, these students reproduce these incorrect structures in their writing. Additionally, teachers may not always have enough time to provide individualized grammar instruction, particularly in large classes, which leads to a failure to correct deeply ingrained errors (Addison et al., 2021, p. 140).

An additional factor is the cognitive development stage of JHS1 students. Many pupils are moving from simple sentence formation to more intricate sentence structures at this point. It is possible that their concentration is more on ideas than on using proper grammar. In longer phrases, where the distance between the subject and verb can make their relationship difficult to discern, this cognitive overload frequently results in the neglect of agreement rules (Adu, 2023, p. 45).

Furthermore, the uneven implementation of grammatical rules in textbooks and classroom instruction might encourage subject-verb agreement mistakes. Students may not acquire the grammatical intuition required for proper usage if instructional materials do not offer sufficient and contextualized practice in recognizing and fixing such errors (Toga, 2021, p. 32).

Research has repeatedly shown how common errors in subject-verb agreement are in student writing. A study carried out in the Cape Coast Metropolis, for instance, revealed that pupils' weak understanding of general fundamental grammar, particularly in the domain of agreement (concord), hindered their ability to communicate (Addison et al., 2021, p. 145). Subject-verb agreement errors were also found to be among the most common grammatical errors in essays written by students at Kaneshie Awudome '3' JHS, suggesting a more general problem of insufficient command of English grammar rules (Adu, 2023, p. 50).

English language instructors must employ a range of teaching techniques to solve this problem, including focused grammar mini-lessons that highlight agreement norms, peer editing, and sentence-combining tasks. To help students become aware of these errors and gradually fix them, diagnostic tests and comments could also focus on particular subject-verb disagreement patterns (Bakuuro, 2017, p. 27).

2.1.6 Tense Errors

Tense usage poses a significant challenge to learners of English as a second language, particularly among Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students. Errors commonly occur when students fail to maintain consistent tense within a paragraph or use the wrong tense for the intended meaning. These errors are indicative of incomplete internalization of tense rules and poor mastery of narrative structures.

Recent studies have highlighted the prevalence of tense errors in students' writing. For instance, Nahak et al. (2024) conducted an error analysis on EFL students' use of the simple past tense in writing narrative texts and found that students frequently made errors such as omission, addition, misformation, and misordering (p. 240). Similarly, Purba et al. (2023) identified that EFL students often struggle with the correct usage of various tenses and aspects, leading to errors in their writing (p. 137).

There are a number of reasons behind these errors. Interference from pupils' first language (L1), which may have different tense structures than English, is one important reason. When students apply L1 grammatical norms to English, it might result in negative language transfer and tense errors (Listia & Febriyanti, 2020, p. 88). These errors are also caused by a lack of knowledge about the purpose and significance of various tenses. Without completely understanding the circumstances in which they should be used, students may memorize tense forms, which could result in improper usage while writing (Listia & Febriyanti, 2020, p. 90).

The lack of exposure to and practice with regular English tense forms is another significant issue. Students sometimes rely on spoken English, which may contain informal or non-standard language, from peers, family, or local media. As a result, these pupils frequently use these flawed forms in their writing. Furthermore, especially in big classrooms, teachers might not always have the time to provide specialized grammar teaching, which could lead to a failure to rectify deeply established errors (Nahak et al., 2024, p. 242).

English language instructors must use a range of teaching techniques to solve these problems. These could include giving students lots of chances to practice using tenses in purposeful writing assignments and contextualizing grammar instruction that highlights the role and significance of tenses. Additionally, diagnostic tests and focused feedback can help students become more conscious of their mistakes and enhance their command of English tense structures (Listia & Febriyanti, 2020, p. 93).

2.1.7 Article Usage Errors

Ghanaian junior high school form one (JHS1) students and other English as a Second Language (ESL) learners frequently make erroneous statements concerning the usage of the definite and indefinite articles (a, an, and the). These mistakes happen when students apply articles incorrectly or leave them out completely. For instance, rather than writing "I saw a cat on the road," students can write something like "I saw cat on the road." These errors frequently show a lack of knowledge about the syntactic and semantic functions of English articles.

Recent research indicates that local language interference is the main source of article usage problems. When learners try to apply English grammatical structures, they become confused because many indigenous languages in Ghana, such as Twi and Ga, lack direct equivalents for the English articles. Students find it challenging to

understand the importance of articles in English since they are not used before nouns in many of these languages (Quayson & Asare, 2022, p. 54). As a result, students frequently leave out articles or abuse them by putting them in inappropriate places or ignoring them completely.

Because they are not familiar with the syntactic and semantic purposes of articles, learners often ignore them, according to additional analysis by Swan and Smith (2017) (p. 41). English articles aid to demonstrate a noun's countability in addition to defining its specificity or generality. According to Swan and Smith (2017), "many learners, especially those from languages that do not use articles, find it difficult to distinguish between definite and indefinite articles" (p. 42). Students may therefore utilize a, an, or the inconsistently or not at all since they frequently struggle to grasp when to use them.

Furthermore, pupils' exposure to English may be restricted to spoken rather than written forms, with informal discourse occasionally omitting articles. The problem is made worse by this lack of formal exposure as well as a lack of emphasis on grammatical precision in educational settings. Recent research by Abubakar and Nuhu (2020) indicates that Ghanaian JHS students have a significant propensity to leave out articles in both academic and descriptive writing, which results in mistakes that impair overall communication and clarity (p. 88).

These errors in article usage not only make communication less clear, but they also reveal more serious problems with learners' comprehension of English grammar. While students can frequently use context to express meaning when speaking, written communication necessitates a stricter attention to grammatical standards, such as the proper use of articles. Since accuracy is crucial in academic writing, such errors can

skew meaning and make it more difficult for readers to understand the intended message (Akoto & Nartey, 2021, p. 75).

Teachers must concentrate on focused grammar education that includes the explicit explanation of article norms, followed by plenty of practice in a variety of scenarios, in order to reduce article usage errors. "Repeated exposure to articles in a variety of written genres, combined with focused corrective feedback, can significantly reduce errors," as suggested by Abubakar and Nuhu (2020) (p. 90). To help students better understand these ideas, teaching materials should also clearly explain the functions of articles in sentence structure and meaning.

2.2.8 Preposition Errors

Preposition errors, particularly the incorrect use of words such as *in*, *on*, *at*, and *to*, are another common grammatical challenge faced by Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students. These errors arise due to the complex nature of prepositions, which often lack clear, consistent rules for their use in English. For instance, students may incorrectly write "*She is good in English*" instead of the grammatically correct "*She is good at English*."

According to recent research, the absence of standardized guidelines for preposition usage may contribute to prepositional errors made by second language learners. According to Richards and Schmidt (2018), prepositional errors are often caused by both insufficient vocabulary input and overgeneralization (p. 130). Learners may apply norms from their first language or other prepositions they have learnt to inappropriate situations by overgeneralizing them. Because of similar structures in their original language, learners may, for instance, refer to a place or activity with *in* rather than *at*. Learners who have not yet assimilated the subtle usage of prepositions in English are likely to make this kind of mistake.

Preposition errors are also influenced by learners' first language (L1). In many African languages, including those spoken in Ghana, prepositions are used differently or may not exist at all, making it difficult for Ghanaian learners to know when and how to use English prepositions appropriately. For instance, languages such as Twi and Ga may not distinguish between the spatial prepositions in and at, which frequently causes confusion in the English language. According to a study by Osei and Adu (2020) on language interference in Ghanaian students, these kinds of errors are common in written exercises, especially when expressing location or direction (p. 67).

Moreover, these errors are partly as a result of irregular exposure to English prepositional constructions. Students' ability to effectively use prepositions in writing may be limited in Ghanaian schools due to a lack of familiarity with these words in a variety of settings. In academic writing, where proper prepositional usage is essential for precision and clarity, this lack of experience is especially noticeable (Agyemang & Akoto, 2021, p. 73).

Another common error is using prepositions excessively. According to Richards and Schmidt (2018), students may also write extra prepositions in phrases that don't need them, like "I am waiting for you at the door" rather than "I am waiting for you" (p. 133). When students attempt to translate sentences straight from their native tongue or use prepositions in English constructions when they are superfluous, they are engaging in overgeneralization.

Effective teaching methods must concentrate on offering contextualized practice in order to address preposition errors. Exercises that specifically emphasize the proper use of prepositions in various circumstances, including as time, location, and direction, should be included by teachers. Additionally, to assist students in internalizing proper prepositional usage, language teachers might employ interactive

techniques like peer editing, rectification exercises, and specific grammar instruction. According to Osei and Adu (2020), giving students more experience and a wider variety of material is crucial to assisting them in developing a better comprehension of preposition usage (p. 68).

2.2.9 Misuse of Pronouns

Another common grammar problem among Junior High School Form One (JHS1) pupils is pronoun errors. Students commit these errors when they mix up pronouns, such as subject, object, and possessive forms, or when they don't match pronouns with their antecedents in terms of gender and number. For example, rather than writing the grammatically correct "Everyone must do his or her homework," students can write "Everyone must do their homework." The former example is still seen as inappropriate in formal academic writing, even though it is becoming more and more common in informal spoken English (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 2015, p. 73).

Pronoun errors like these are a sign of a larger problem with grammatical sensitivity, especially when it comes to agreement and reference cohesion in English. Alarcón and Morales (2020) state that students frequently have trouble comprehending and using the rules of agreement between pronouns and their antecedents, particularly when the antecedent is an indefinite noun like everyone or someone, which is typically treated as singular (p. 214). In these situations, students may treat these singular antecedents as plural, which results in the incorrect use of plural pronouns like theirs.

Language interference from learners' native tongues is another significant element that leads to pronoun misuse. Pronouns may not indicate gender distinctions at all or may not always match the number or gender of the noun they refer to in many indigenous Ghanaian languages, including Twi, Ga, and Ewe. Ghanaian pupils can

therefore find it difficult to appropriately apply these ideas in English. According to Osei and Agyemang (2021) study on the impact of native language structures on Ghanaian students' English writing, the lack of gendered pronouns in several local languages was commonly blamed for pronoun problems (p. 96).

The issue is also made worse by the pervasive usage of non-standard English in daily conversations. Since many kids are used to speaking informally, pronoun agreement standards may be less stringent. Because of this informal usage, which is frequently observed in media and discussions, students may extrapolate these non-standard forms into their academic writing, where accuracy and grammar are crucial. This informal impact is especially powerful when it comes to possessive pronouns, where learners may mix up his, her, and their in situations that call for distinct differentiation, according to Osei and Agyemang (2021) (p. 100).

Furthermore, the lack of targeted instruction in formal grammar and agreement rules contribute to these errors. While general language instruction may cover pronoun usage to some extent, students often do not receive focused lessons on the correct application of pronouns in different contexts. Teachers may not have sufficient time to give detailed attention to pronoun agreement, especially in large classes where individual error correction is challenging.

Targeted grammar courses that emphasize subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement are crucial for addressing pronoun errors. With lots of examples and practice opportunities, instruction should clearly explain how pronouns must fit the number and gender of their antecedents. The difference between formal and casual English use should also be emphasized in feedback and error correction. Exercises that emphasize formal English structures, especially those utilized in academic writing, may aid

students in internalizing the proper forms, according to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2015) (p. 75).

2.2.10 Sentence Fragment Errors

Sentence fragment errors are a common issue in the written compositions of Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students. A sentence fragment occurs when an incomplete thought is presented as a complete sentence, typically missing one or more essential components such as a subject or predicate. An example of a sentence fragment is “*Because I was late*”, which lacks a main clause to form a complete thought. In formal writing, fragments can be distracting and negatively impact the clarity of communication.

According to Ferris and Hedgcock's (2014) research, learners frequently make sentence fragment errors as a result of misusing complicated sentence structures or being confused about how to use conjunctions (p. 110). For example, pupils may misuse subordinating conjunctions like *although*, *if*, or *because* without finishing the subsequent thought. This misuse results from students' incomplete comprehension that these conjunctions need an independent clause to complete a sentence. A sentence that lacks a major clause is incomplete, which can perplex the reader and throw off the text's flow.

Furthermore, learners' developmental stages in language acquisition are frequently associated with sentence fragment errors. Students are moving from simple to more sophisticated sentence patterns at the JHS1 level. Students may find it difficult to accurately connect ideas during this period, which could result in sentences that are not complete. Students at this stage could find it challenging to identify when a sentence requires a coordinating or subordinating conjunction to fully connect ideas, claim Alhassan and Agyemang (2020) (p. 85). When students try to employ increasingly

complex sentence forms before they have mastered the fundamentals of sentence construction, this challenge can lead to fragments.

The pupils' limited exposure to a variety of sentence forms in both written and spoken English is another element that contributes to sentence fragment errors. In their writing, JHS1 students frequently utilize simple, basic sentences, and when they try to use more complicated sentences, they might not connect the clauses correctly. Consequently, their early manuscripts of their work sometimes contain fragments. According to a research by Osei and Adu (2021), fragmented structures are a common feature of written works among Ghanaian pupils, especially in narrative and descriptive essays (p. 45). Students' capacity to integrate many clauses cohesively is limited when they don't receive systematic practice with complicated phrases.

Moreover, students' poor comprehension of punctuation may also contribute to sentence fragmentation. When linking clauses and making sure a phrase is full, the appropriate use of commas, periods, and conjunctions is essential. Fragments can readily appear in the absence of these components. According to Ferris and Hedgcock (2014), students might not know that some conjunctions, such as because or while, need a complete independent clause in order for the sentence to be grammatically correct (p. 111).

Agyemang and Akoto (2020) suggest using interactive sentence-combining activities to give students practice in forming complete sentences from fragments (p. 72). Teachers should emphasize the importance of sentence structure in their grammar lessons, include targeted exercises that focus on identifying and correcting fragments, and explicitly teach students how to join dependent and independent clauses. Students should also be encouraged to carefully review and revise their drafts to identify any incomplete thoughts before final submission.

2.2.11 Run-on Sentences and Comma Splices

Students in Junior High School Form One (JHS1) frequently commit two related errors in their written compositions: run-on sentences and comma splices. When two separate clauses are connected incorrectly without the right punctuation or coordinating conjunction, the result is a run-on sentence. Similar to this, a comma splice happens when two independent clauses are connected wrongly by a comma instead of a semicolon or coordinating conjunction. For instance, rather than writing "He came late, so he missed the exam," a student can write "He came late, he missed the exam." In the latter instance, a grammatically erroneous construction is produced by using a comma without a conjunction.

These errors imply that students are having trouble understanding sentence boundaries and how to properly punctuate sentences to divide concepts. Such mistakes, according to Nordquist (2022), are a sign of students' inability to coordinate independent clauses and identify when two ideas need to be treated separately or properly connected (p. 95). Writing generated by pupils who have not yet fully assimilated the principles of punctuation and conjunction usage in English sometimes contains run-on sentences and comma splices.

These errors are common among JHS1 students for a number of reasons. The impact of learners' native tongues, which might not follow English's punctuation norms, is one cause. Sentences in various Ghanaian languages are made up of shorter phrases that are not subject to the rigid punctuation rules that apply to writing in English. Students may thus incorporate their first language's grasp of sentence structure into their English writing, which could result in a lot of run-on sentences and comma splices. According to a study by Osei and Agyemang (2020), pupils whose home languages

lacked sophisticated punctuation systems were more likely to make these mistakes (p. 88).

Comma splices occur when students fail to recognize the syntactic rules governing the use of conjunctions and punctuation (p. 142). The developmental stage of students in writing also plays a role. At the JHS1 level, students are still learning how to organize their ideas into coherent sentences and paragraphs. As they move from basic to more complex sentence structures, they may attempt to combine multiple ideas into a single sentence without fully understanding how to manage the relationship between those ideas. For example, students may attempt to connect clauses using a comma because they are familiar with this punctuation mark, but fail to understand that a semicolon or conjunction is necessary in such cases.

Moreover, the overuse of simple sentences and a lack of practice with compound or complex sentence structures can also lead to run-on sentences and comma splices. Many students at the JHS1 level tend to favor short, simple sentences in their writing, often due to limited exposure to varied sentence structures in the classroom. This lack of experience with more sophisticated sentence forms can make students more prone to errors when attempting to combine ideas. A study by Ankomah and Ofori (2021) highlighted that, students who had more practice with structured sentence-combining exercises showed a significant reduction in these types of errors (p. 51).

English teachers should concentrate on teaching pupils the principles of punctuation and conjunction usage in an organized way in order to address run-on sentences and comma splices. Clear explanations of how to properly join separate clauses with coordinating conjunctions (such as for, and, nor, but, or, still, so) or semicolons should be included in the instruction. Through activities that prioritize the use of appropriate punctuation, teachers should also provide children plenty of chances

to practice combining sentences. According to Agyemang and Akoto (2021), students can have a better understanding of how to construct grammatically acceptable complicated phrases by participating in sentence-combining exercises and peer editing (p. 120).

2.2.12 Punctuation Errors

Junior High School Form One (JHS1) pupils frequently make punctuation errors in their written work. These errors, which include the improper use or removal of quotation marks, commas, periods, and apostrophes, can seriously impair a student's writing's efficacy and clarity. The reader may become confused, the logical flow of thoughts may be broken, and the intended meaning of a statement may be obscured by improper punctuation. The phrase may become unclear if a student writes, for instance, "Let's eat dinner now" rather than "Let's eat dinner now" or if they leave off a comma in "I went to the store, and bought some apples." These errors show a lack of knowledge about how punctuation helps structure and makes sense of a text.

Hyland (2019) asserts that punctuation helps the reader follow the writing's logical flow in addition to indicating grammatical boundaries (p. 101). In addition to highlighting the connections between various sentence components, proper punctuation makes it easier for the reader to follow the writer's ideas. Confusion might arise from phrases that are run-on or fractured due to improper punctuation. Furthermore, according to Hyland, improper punctuation can weaken written arguments' ability to persuade by compromising the message's clarity, which is particularly troublesome in academic writing.

JHS1 students frequently make these errors because they are unfamiliar with English punctuation rules. Many Ghanaian students are exposed to written English later than spoken English, so they may not be as aware of the rules. Additionally, local

languages, like Akan or Ewe, have different punctuation conventions, and this linguistic interference can cause errors in English writing. In many Ghanaian languages, punctuation is not used in the same way as in English, so students frequently apply the structures of their first language to English writing, which can result in errors like omitting commas or periods where they're needed (Ankomah, 2020, p. 74).

The lack of exposure to sophisticated sentence patterns in the classroom is another element that contributes to punctuation errors. Many JHS1 students may use simple sentences or phrases because they are still honing their writing abilities. Students frequently struggle with punctuation placement while trying to compose more complicated phrases. For example, they could misuse commas in sentences or leave them out after introductory phrases. Punctuation errors are particularly prevalent among students who have little experience editing and rewriting their own writing, claim Agyemang and Akoto (2021) (p. 88).

Careless punctuation errors might also result from the pressure to write fast for tests or class assignments. Students may overlook punctuation mistakes in their haste to finish their writing when they are concentrating on completing their work within a set amount of time. These errors might not be spotted in the first draft, but they can have a big impact on how their work is presented in the end. Osei and Adu (2020) point out that timed writing tests frequently make punctuation errors worse since students tend to focus more on speed than precision, which results in hurried and insufficient sentences (p. 102).

Teachers must integrate focused instruction on punctuation rules into their lesson plans in order to address punctuation problems. In addition to giving students opportunity to practice utilizing punctuation in context, this lesson should highlight the distinct purposes of punctuation signs including commas, periods, apostrophes, and

quotation marks. Both formal punctuation courses and unstructured writing exercises that let students try out different sentence structures and punctuation are recommended by Agyemang and Akoto (2021) (p. 90). Peer review and self-editing strategies, which allow students to proofread their own work for punctuation mistakes before submitting it, should also be promoted by teachers.

2.2.13 Spelling Errors

Students in Ghana's Junior High School Form One (JHS1) frequently struggle with spelling errors in their written assignments. Numerous reasons, such as phonological misunderstanding, overgeneralization of spelling rules, and uneven exposure to the intricacies of English orthography, are frequently associated with these errors. For instance, pupils might write "wich" instead of "which" or "definatly" instead of "definitely," which reflects common spelling errors made by beginning English language learners. Asiedu (2021) claims that these errors are very common and could be made worse by the structural distinctions between English and the regional Ghanaian languages, especially with regard to spelling rules and phonemic representation (p. 43).

Students find it challenging to acquire precise spelling abilities because of the discrepancy between the phonetic nature of various Ghanaian languages and the peculiarities of English spelling rules.

One of the main causes of spelling errors is phonological misunderstanding. When English words do not adhere to standard phonetic conventions, many students have the tendency to spell words according to their sound, which can result in errors. For example, kids might pronounce terms like "receipt" as "recipt" instead of spelling them correctly. The fact that English orthography is frequently not phonetically consistent, many words have silent letters or irregular spellings, like "colonel" or

"knight", complicates this problem. As Hyland (2020) points out, this inconsistency in English spelling presents a significant hurdle for second-language learners who rely on their phonetic intuition (p. 58).

According to Goto (2019), this tendency to overgeneralize spelling rules is particularly noticeable in learners who are still in the process of mastering the idiosyncrasies of English spelling conventions (p. 112). However, overgeneralization is a normal part of language learning, and it can be frustrating for students when these errors become habitual. Additionally, students may incorrectly apply rules they have learned for other words to new ones, such as writing "teh" for "the" or "recieve" for "receive," based on the pattern they have observed in other words.

Uneven exposure to English spelling is another issue that leads to spelling errors. Since English is often taught to children in Ghana as a second language, they might not have many opportunity to interact with English-language literature outside of the classroom. They might therefore not get the consistent reading and writing practice necessary to build excellent spelling abilities. Because they have less opportunity to learn proper spelling patterns through reading, pupils who are not routinely exposed to written English typically suffer with spelling accuracy, claim Agyemang and Akoto (2020) (p. 97).

Spelling issues are also greatly influenced by the distinctions between Ghanaian local languages and English. The writing systems of many Ghanaian indigenous languages, including Akan, Ewe, and Ga, are more phonetic, with words being spelled exactly as they are pronounced. In contrast, there are several inconsistencies and deviations to traditional spelling norms in the English language. Asiedu (2021) points out that these structural variations frequently cause students switching from their native

tongues to English to become confused, especially when they are learning how to spell words with silent letters or irregular pronunciations (p. 43).

Spelling mistakes can be found and fixed with the use of contemporary technology, such as spellcheckers, but internalizing proper spelling patterns is still necessary. Spellcheckers frequently miss homophones (such as "there" vs. "their") or problems with words that sound alike but have distinct spellings. Furthermore, spellcheck is unable to rectify students' overgeneralization of spelling patterns or teach them the fundamentals of English spelling. Richards and Schmidt (2018) state that although spellcheckers can help students spot glaring errors, they cannot take the place of in-person spelling lessons and practice (p. 72).

English language instructors must give focused training that aids students in comprehending and remembering proper spelling patterns in order to address spelling problems. Activities like dictation exercises, spelling tests, and the usage of word walls or spelling journals to reinforce proper spelling might help achieve this. Additionally, as frequent exposure to written English promotes word identification and orthographic memory, incorporating substantial reading into the curriculum might aid kids in becoming more comfortable with proper spelling. Over time, spelling errors can be considerably decreased by combining frequent reading practice with direct spelling teaching, as suggested by Hyland (2020) (p. 59).

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instead of "definitely," which reflects common spelling errors made by beginning English language learners. Asiedu (2021) claims that these mistakes are very common and could be made worse by the structural distinctions between English and the regional Ghanaian languages, especially with regard to spelling rules and phonemic representation (p. 43).

This mismatch between the phonetic nature of many Ghanaian languages and the idiosyncratic nature of English spelling rules makes it difficult for students to develop accurate spelling skills.

One of the main causes of spelling mistakes is phonological misunderstanding. When English words do not adhere to standard phonetic conventions, many students have a tendency to spell words according to their sound, which can result in mistakes. For example, kids might pronounce terms like "receipt" as "recipt" instead of spelling them correctly. The fact that English orthography is frequently not phonetically consistent, many words have silent letters or irregular spellings, like "colonel" or "knight," complicates this problem. This discrepancy in English spelling is a major challenge for second-language learners who depend on their phonetic intuition, as noted by Hyland (2020) (p. 58).

Furthermore, spelling standards that are overly generalized may result in recurring mistakes. Pupils could misapply the rules they have learnt for one word to another. For instance, based on the pattern they've observed in other words, they might write "teh" for "the" or "recieve" for "receive." This propensity to overgeneralize spelling norms is particularly apparent in students who are still learning the peculiarities of English spelling conventions, claims Goto (2019) (p. 112). Although overgeneralization is a natural aspect of language acquisition, students may find it annoying if these mistakes become second nature.

Uneven exposure to English spelling is another issue that leads to spelling mistakes. Since English is often taught to children in Ghana as a second language, they might not have many opportunity to interact with English-language literature outside of the classroom. They might therefore not get the consistent reading and writing practice necessary to build excellent spelling abilities. Because they have less opportunity to learn proper spelling patterns through reading, pupils who are not routinely exposed to written English typically suffer with spelling accuracy, claim Agyemang and Akoto (2020) (p. 97).

Spelling issues are also greatly influenced by the distinctions between Ghanaian local languages and English. The writing systems of many Ghanaian indigenous languages, including Akan, Ewe, and Ga, are more phonetic, with words being spelled exactly as they are pronounced. In contrast, there are several inconsistencies and deviations to traditional spelling norms in the English language. Asiedu (2021) points out that these structural variations frequently cause students switching from their native tongues to English to become confused, especially when they are learning how to spell words with silent letters or irregular pronunciations (p. 43).

Spelling mistakes can be found and fixed with the use of contemporary technology, such as spellcheckers, but internalizing proper spelling patterns is still necessary. Spellcheckers frequently miss homophones (such as "there" vs. "their") or problems with words that sound alike but have distinct spellings. Furthermore, spellcheck is unable to rectify students' overgeneralization of spelling patterns or teach them the fundamentals of English spelling. Richards and Schmidt (2018) state that although spellcheckers can help students spot glaring errors, they cannot take the place of in-person spelling lessons and practice (p. 72).

English language instructors must give focused training that aids students in comprehending and remembering proper spelling patterns in order to address spelling problems. Activities like dictation exercises, spelling tests, and the usage of word walls or spelling journals to reinforce proper spelling might help achieve this. Additionally, as frequent exposure to written English promotes word identification and orthographic memory, incorporating substantial reading into the curriculum might aid kids in becoming more comfortable with proper spelling. Over time, spelling errors can be considerably decreased by combining frequent reading practice with direct spelling teaching, as suggested by Hyland (2020) (p. 59).

2.2.14 Capitalization Errors

The written work of Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students in Ghana is often characterized by capitalization errors, which are typically caused by students' inconsistent application of capitalization rules, especially with regard to proper nouns, the first word in a sentence, and titles. One common example of capitalization errors is when proper nouns are not capitalized, such as when writing "the president of Ghana" instead of "the president of Ghana." This disregard for capitalization rules can make writing appear less formal, less polished, and more difficult to read, especially in academic and professional settings.

The frequency of capitalization errors among pupils is caused by a number of factors. One major contributing reason is inattention during writing, where students may fail to capitalize important words because they are writing too quickly or are not paying enough attention. Such mistakes are frequently the consequence of inadequate proofreading techniques or a lack to thoroughly check one's work, claims Langan (2020) (p. 48). Students frequently focus so much on the topic of their writing that they overlook writing mechanics like spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. The pressure

to finish assignments fast might exacerbate this error by causing a lack of attention to detail.

Another issue that contributes to capitalization problems is inadequate teaching on writing mechanics. The capitalization rules are taught to many children in elementary school, but as they go through the grades, they might not get enough practice or reinforcement. According to Kormos (2019), because these rules are frequently not consistently emphasized in the curriculum, students may find it difficult to follow more complex capitalization requirements, such as capitalizing particular terms in titles or after colons (p. 112). Students could internalize improper capitalization patterns that translate into their written work if they don't receive constant practice and reminders.

Furthermore, the misinterpretation or improper use of capitalization rules may also be influenced by linguistic interference from regional Ghanaian languages. Because capitalization is not utilized in many native Ghanaian languages as it is in English, pupils may overlook or misunderstand the rules when writing in English. Boateng (2021) suggests that pupils' uneven use of capitalization in English may be caused by the lack of capitalization rules in several African languages (p. 134). This phenomena emphasizes how crucial it is to educate students about the distinctions between their native tongue and English as part of their English language education.

Additionally, the increasing use of digital tools and informal online communication, where capitalization is often disregarded, may influence students' writing habits. In online spaces, such as social media and texting, capitalization is frequently ignored or used inconsistently. This shift in writing norms can further reinforce the neglect of proper capitalization rules among students. As Mahoney (2020)

argues, the casual nature of digital communication has led to a decline in the adherence to formal writing standards, including capitalization (p. 99).

Teachers should stress the value of capitalization and provide students lots of chances to practice it in a range of writing situations in order to reduce these errors. Along with proofreading activities intended to reinforce these standards, the curriculum should provide explicit instruction on when and where to capitalize (for proper nouns, the beginning of sentences, and titles, for example). According to Hyland (2019), educators should also provide examples of proper capitalization and promote peer review sessions so that students can spot and fix capitalization mistakes in one another's work (p. 126).

2.2.15 Word Order Errors

Word order errors, especially with adjectives, adverbs, and auxiliary verbs, compromise sentence structure. Examples include “She always is late” instead of “She is always late.” English follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structure, and deviations from this pattern often confuse readers. Odlin (2020, p. 60) suggests that transfer from first language syntax is a common cause of such errors, particularly in languages with flexible word order.

2.2.16 Redundancy and Wordiness

Redundancy and wordiness are two common issues that negatively affect the clarity and conciseness of written work, particularly among Junior High School Form One (JHS1) students. Redundancy refers to the unnecessary repetition of words or ideas, which weakens the overall message. Phrases like "each and every student" or "past history," when one term is sufficient to express the concept, are common

instances. In addition to making writing more verbose, these repeating patterns introduce unnecessary information that makes it harder for the reader to understand.

Conversely, wordiness happens when pupils use more words than are required to convey a concept. Overly wordy sentences might be difficult for readers to understand and follow. For instance, "If the student does not complete the assignment, they will face consequences" might be a more succinct way to phrase this than "In the event that the student does not complete the assignment, they will face consequences." This type of wordiness results from a tendency to over-explain or use formal-sounding language that does not contribute to the clarity of the message.

According to Leki (2017), students frequently make the mistake of assuming that verbosity equates to sophistication, thinking that using more sophisticated language makes their work seem more professional or academic (p. 89). This idea causes individuals to overuse words and phrases that don't really offer anything, which eventually makes their writing less effective. Redundancy and wordiness are prevalent problems in academic writing, according to Hyland (2019), as students attempt to strike a balance between the need to convey complicated concepts and clarity (p. 152). When compared to their home languages, which may permit more complex or descriptive sentence patterns, English language learners may also make similar errors due to a lack of knowledge about how to communicate concepts succinctly in English.

Furthermore, they might not be aware of how these errors affect the readability and professionalism of their writing, which could lead to an inability to prevent wordiness and redundancy. Many students might not understand that the goal of academic and professional writing is frequently to convey ideas as effectively and clearly as feasible. According to Richards and Schmidt (2018), clear and concise presentation of the topic is just as important to effective English communication as

content correctness (p. 227). In order to improve the overall quality of their writing, students must learn how to cut out superfluous repetition and wordiness.

One major factor contributing to these issues is the lack of focus on writing strategies that prioritize conciseness and clarity. In many classrooms, grammar and syntax errors are often the primary focus of instruction, while issues related to style, redundancy, and wordiness receive less attention. As a result, students may not develop the skills necessary to identify and correct these issues in their own writing. According to Ahmad and Amin (2020), teaching students how to recognize redundant phrases and avoid wordy constructions can significantly improve their ability to produce clear, impactful writing (p. 45). Teachers should incorporate exercises that encourage students to rephrase overly wordy sentences and eliminate redundancy, thereby helping them to develop a more concise writing style.

Furthermore, students might benefit greatly from peer review and revision procedures in recognizing wordiness and repetition. Students are more likely to identify superfluous repetition and overly worded sentences when they evaluate each other's work. In addition to assisting students in identifying these problems, this cooperative method helps them to cultivate a critical eye for their own writing.

2.2.17 Misuse of Conjunctions

Students in Junior High School Form One (JHS1) frequently misuse conjunctions in their writing, especially those who are learning English. Well-structured sentences require the use of conjunctions, both coordinating (like and, but, so) and subordinating (like because, although). However, students frequently misuse these conjunctions, either by using them erroneously or redundantly, which causes confusion in their writing's logical structure.

The redundant use of a coordinating conjunction and a subordinating conjunction in the same sentence is a typical instance of conjunction abuse. Students could write, for example: "He went to school even though he was sick." Because although, a subordinating conjunction, and but, a coordinating conjunction, are both used to join sentences that already make sense together, this sentence is erroneous. "Although he was sick, he went to school" is the proper sentence. Although introduces the subordinate clause in this case correctly, but is superfluous.

This type of error reflects difficulties in understanding how conjunctions function to connect ideas logically and cohesively. According to Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (2015), misuse of conjunctions often indicates underlying issues with sentence coordination and logical structure (p. 103). In many cases, students struggle with recognizing the differences between coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, leading them to confuse or overuse these elements. Coordinating conjunctions are used to join two independent clauses, whereas subordinating conjunctions connect an independent clause with a dependent clause, introducing a cause-and-effect or conditional relationship.

The misuse of conjunctions is further exacerbated by interference from the students' native languages. Many indigenous languages in Ghana, for example, have different sentence structure conventions, and may not use conjunctions in the same way as English. This can lead to errors when students attempt to transfer their first language structures into English sentences. Studies by Boateng and Osei (2019) indicate that such transfer errors are common among ESL learners and often hinder their ability to produce grammatically correct sentences (p. 112).

Additionally, students often over-rely on conjunctions like *and*, *so*, and *but*, using them excessively in their writing. While these conjunctions are useful, overusing

them can lead to choppy, repetitive, and monotonous writing, which lacks variety in sentence structure. To improve their writing, students need to be taught how to use a wider range of conjunctions appropriately, as well as how to avoid redundancy by selecting the most suitable conjunction for the intended meaning.

The cognitive challenge of understanding conjunctions' roles in sentence structure is also significant. Learners at the JHS1 level are still developing their skills in forming complex sentences, and may find it difficult to understand how conjunctions can signal relationships between ideas, such as contrast, cause and effect, or condition. As argued by Hyland (2019), mastering conjunctions requires an understanding of how different ideas relate to one another and how to express those relationships in written form (p. 188). Without this understanding, students are more likely to make errors in conjunction usage, leading to confusion in their writing.

Furthermore, teachers often focus more on basic grammar rules, such as subject-verb agreement and tense usage, while the use of conjunctions is sometimes overlooked. This lack of emphasis on conjunctions in instruction may prevent students from fully understanding the nuanced ways in which conjunctions can structure their thoughts and arguments. According to Rich (2021), explicit teaching of conjunctions, including practice exercises that emphasize the correct use of coordinating and subordinating conjunctions, can help students improve the clarity and flow of their writing (p. 75).

2.2.18 Errors in Modal Verbs

Students in Junior High School Form One (JHS1) frequently commit errors when using modal verbs in their writing, especially those who are learning English. Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs that convey need, possibility, authorization, or ability. Examples of these verbs are can, may, must, should, and would. Because of their

peculiar grammatical characteristics and erratic usage, these verbs pose difficulties for students even though they are crucial for expressing content and modality in sentences.

When students misuse modal verbs, they often combine them with third-person singular forms, whereas a regular verb would need to have -s or -es added. For instance, rather than writing the grammatically acceptable phrase "He must go to school," a pupil may write, "He must goes to school." This mistake results from a failure to understand that modal verbs do not accept the third-person singular ending -s, which is typically appended to normal verbs. Modals like must, can, and should do not follow the same conjugation rules as regular verbs, as noted by Richards and Schmidt (2018), and this irregular behavior frequently confounds learners (p. 140).

The complete omission of modals is another frequent error. Instead of writing "He can go to school" or "He should go to school," students can write something like "He goes to school." In these situations, leaving off the modal verb undermines the sentence's meaning and leaves it vague or unfinished. These errors reveal a poor comprehension of modality, which includes the speaker's perspective on the condition or activity that the verb describes. The improper use of modal verbs indicates that students may not yet fully understand these complex meanings, which are essential for expressing necessity, possibility, permission, and capacity.

Furthermore, some students could mix up the definitions or applications of various modals. For instance, they may wrongly replace one modal with another, such as using may when must is required. A student might write, for instance, "He may go to school" when they really mean, "He must go to school." Making mistakes when expressing necessity, permission, or possibility might result from a lack of awareness of the nuanced variations between modals. Azar (2020) claims that students frequently

have trouble choosing the right modal verb for a particular situation, which can change a sentence's intended meaning (p. 134).

These errors may also be influenced by the students' first languages. In Ghana, many indigenous languages do not have an equivalent grammatical structure for modals, which leads to the direct translation of thoughts from the first language into English, often resulting in errors. Studies by Ansah (2019) reveal that such interference from native languages is common among English learners in Ghana, where modal verbs are not used in the same way or frequency as in English (p. 77). This language transfer can cause students to either omit modals entirely or use them incorrectly, reflecting a lack of full comprehension of their functional roles.

Furthermore, the teaching of modal verbs may not always receive sufficient emphasis in grammar instruction. Teachers may focus more on other grammatical structures, such as tense or aspect, which are often seen as more fundamental. As Hyland (2019) notes, teachers should ensure that students are exposed to the various uses of modals in both oral and written contexts to develop a deeper understanding of their functions (p. 150).

To improve their use of modals, students need targeted practice in both understanding and applying the correct modal verb forms in context. This can be achieved through exercises that focus on form, meaning, and use, along with exposure to authentic English texts where modals are used in various contexts. Additionally, feedback from teachers on the proper use of modals can help students become more aware of these errors and correct them over time.

2.2.19 Passive Voice Errors

Students in Junior High School Form One (JHS1) frequently make erroneous statements when using the passive voice, particularly when writing in English. When

the subject of the sentence is the one who received the action rather than the one who performed it, this is known as the passive voice. When used correctly, the passive voice necessitates the verb's past participle, which frequently causes it to be confused with the simple past form. A student might write, for instance, "The book was wrote by him" rather of "The book was written by him." Students make this error by using the incorrect past participle written rather than the simple past written, which is against the norms of verb tenses.

One reason for these errors is the students' limited understanding of the different verb forms required in passive constructions. Unlike the active voice, where the verb typically follows a simple past or present tense form, passive constructions use the auxiliary verb *be* and require the past participle. As Richards and Schmidt (2018) explain, many learners struggle with this aspect of passive voice because it involves an additional layer of complexity with verb forms, particularly when distinguishing between the simple past and past participle (p. 157). The incorrect use of *wrote* instead of *written* is a frequent manifestation of this issue.

Furthermore, passive voice is a syntactical feature that often perplexes early English learners. While the passive voice is common in formal writing, especially academic and scientific texts, it is not always emphasized in the informal spoken language, which may make it more difficult for students to grasp in written compositions. According to Hyland (2019), passive constructions are typically introduced later in language instruction, and many students, particularly those in the early stages of learning English, may misuse or overuse passive structures inappropriately due to insufficient exposure or understanding (p. 122).

Furthermore, some students have a tendency to abuse the passive voice, erroneously using it in place of active constructs when it is not required. For example, a student might write, "The students complete the project," but, "The students completed the project" would be a more appropriate statement. Although the passive voice is a crucial component of academic writing, Swales and Feak (2012) contend that excessive usage of it can result in ambiguity and reduce the message's clarity (p. 59).

It's critical that students know when to stress the action or the action's recipient using the passive voice and when an active voice formulation would be more plain and understandable. The students' native tongues may also have an impact on their passive voice errors. In Ghana, many indigenous languages do not have a direct equivalent of passive constructions. As a result, learners may find it challenging to internalize this structure in English. Studies have shown that such language transfer issues are prevalent in Ghanaian learners of English, particularly in the early stages of language acquisition (Ansah, 2020, p. 68). Without proper instruction or exposure to well-formed passive structures, students may either avoid using them or misuse them in their writing.

In order to improve the use of passive voice, English language teachers should provide students with targeted practice in recognizing and producing both passive and active constructions. This could include exercises that focus on verb tense distinctions, sentence transformation activities, and analysis of academic texts that use passive voice appropriately. Feedback on passive voice errors should emphasize the importance of using the correct past participle form and ensuring that passive constructions are used where appropriate for the intended meaning.

2.2.20 Code-Mixing and Mother-Tongue Interference

Ghanaian junior high school Form One (JHS1) pupils frequently make grammatical mistakes in their work due to code-mixing and mother tongue meddling.

Code-mixing refers to the merging of components from several languages in speech or writing, which is particularly widespread in multilingual societies like Ghana, where pupils routinely transition between their native languages and English. Students make mistakes in tense, pluralization, word order, and prepositional phrases when they translate phrases or grammatical structures from their first language straight into English. This phenomenon is known as mother-tongue interference. For instance, using "He come yesterday" instead of the proper phrase "He came yesterday" is a common mistake caused by mother-tongue interference. This error reflects the influence of a local language that may not distinguish between present and past tense forms as English does.

First-language interference is a major obstacle for second-language learners, especially in the early phases of language learning, according to Odlin (2020). When trying to apply grammatical principles from their first language to English, learners may overgeneralize them, which can result in errors like omitting auxiliary verbs or using the wrong tense. Furthermore, Odlin (2020) contends that these errors are profoundly embedded and frequently challenging to fix, particularly when pupils are still learning English grammar (p. 82).

The grammatical patterns of Ghanaian pupils' home tongues, Akan, Ewe, or Ga, frequently diverge from those of English. For example, there may be no equivalent words for specific English tenses in several Ghanaian languages, and subject-verb agreement is not as important in these languages as it is in English. When pupils try to construct grammatically correct English sentences, this disparity frequently results in errors. An example of a direct translation from a Ghanaian language is "He came yesterday," where the verb form does not change with tense as it does in English. When

learners are not yet completely aware of the syntactical distinctions between English and their native language, this kind of interference is very apparent.

Moreover, code-mixing is often a result of the influence of informal speech patterns and the frequent switching between languages in everyday communication. In Ghana, it is common for people to switch between English and their native language, often even within the same sentence. In writing, this habit may lead to the inclusion of non-standard forms of English, which can compromise the clarity and correctness of students' work. For example, students might write sentences that combine elements of both English and their local language, leading to confusion and grammatical errors.

To mitigate the impact of code-mixing and mother-tongue interference, it is essential for English teachers to implement strategies that raise students' awareness of the grammatical differences between their first language and English. Activities that encourage students to focus on verb tense, subject-verb agreement, and correct word order can help students reduce the influence of their native language on their English writing. Furthermore, exposure to more formal written English through reading materials and structured writing exercises can help students internalize correct grammar rules and reduce the tendency to code-mix or rely on direct translations from their first language.

2.3 Theoretical Review

Theoretical frameworks play a significant role in shaping the understanding of grammatical errors, particularly in second language acquisition (SLA). This section explores the major linguistic and pedagogical theories that underpin the causes and patterns of grammatical errors among JHS1 students in Ghana. The review focuses on behaviorist theory, interlanguage theory, and error analysis theory, each of which offers unique insights into how learners acquire and process English grammar.

2.3.1 Behaviorist Theory of Language Learning

Behaviorist theory, championed by B.F. Skinner in the mid-20th century, posits that language learning is primarily a process of habit formation through stimulus-response-reinforcement mechanisms. According to this perspective, learners imitate language input, and their correct responses are reinforced, while errors are seen as evidence of incomplete learning or failure to form correct linguistic habits (Skinner, 1957, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2020, p. 35).

From a behaviorist perspective, JHS1 pupils' writing contains grammatical faults that can be attributed to inadequate reinforcement of proper grammar usage and poor copying of language structures. For example, continuous use of improper speech and writing patterns that are not sufficiently or promptly corrected may be the cause of recurrent subject-verb agreement problems, such as "He go to school" rather than "He goes to school." Students may fossilize wrong forms in Ghanaian schools, where instructor input is frequently limited due to large class sizes (Adu-Gyamfi, 2022, p. 91). Critics argue, however, that behaviorism underplays the cognitive processes involved in language acquisition. Nevertheless, it remains useful for understanding the importance of repetition, correction, and reinforcement in reducing grammatical errors in written communication.

2.3.2 Interlanguage Theory

Interlanguage theory, developed by Larry Selinker (1972), offers a more nuanced and learner-centered explanation of grammatical errors. It suggests that second language learners create an intermediate linguistic system, a blend of elements from the native language (L1) and the target language (L2). This interlanguage evolves with exposure and instruction but is prone to systematic errors, particularly in grammar and syntax.

Language transfer, training transfer, second language learning methods, second language communication strategies, and overgeneralization of L2 rules are the five main processes that Selinker (1972) identified as being responsible for the formation of interlanguage. Ghanaian JHS1 pupils, for instance, could overgeneralize rules like adding "-ed" to all verbs to produce their past tenses, which could lead to errors like using "runned" instead of "ran" (Selinker, 1972; Ellis, 2020, p. 54). These errors are not arbitrary; rather, they are a reflection of the learners' internal theories about how English functions as well as their current developmental level.

Interlanguage theory also helps explain why some errors persist despite repeated correction. This is often due to fossilization, a condition where incorrect language forms become permanent. According to Brown (2021, p. 81), fossilization may result from lack of meaningful practice, low motivation, or inadequate feedback. Thus, this theory emphasizes the importance of guided instruction and corrective feedback in grammar teaching.

2.3.3 Error Analysis Theory

Error Analysis (EA) emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to the limitations of the contrastive analysis approach, which overly attributed errors to negative transfer from the native language. EA views errors as a natural and informative part of the language learning process, offering insights into the learner's internal grammatical system (Corder, 1974, as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2017, p. 98).

EA involves identifying, classifying, explaining, and evaluating language errors. For instance, when JHS1 students repeatedly commit subject-verb agreement errors or misuse tenses, these patterns provide teachers with diagnostic information about learners' interlanguage development. Corder (1974) emphasized that some errors are developmental (reflecting the learner's progress through stages of acquisition),

while others are intralingual (arising from overgeneralization or simplification of L2 rules).

In the classroom context, EA supports the implementation of formative assessments and targeted grammar interventions. Teachers can use data from student writing to categorize common error types, such as verb tense misuse, article omission, and faulty sentence structures, and tailor instruction to address these issues (Richards & Schmidt, 2018, p. 121).

Moreover, EA helps in shifting the pedagogical focus from merely penalizing errors to using them as learning opportunities. This theoretical lens aligns well with modern communicative and learner-centered approaches to language instruction, which value process over perfection in early language production.

2.4 Empirical Review

Empirical studies provide the foundation for understanding the patterns and nature of grammatical errors in second language learners, particularly among junior high school students. This section reviews relevant empirical research based on the three main objectives of the study: identifying and categorizing the types of grammatical errors, examining the causes of such errors, and proposing effective teaching strategies to mitigate them.

2.4.1 Identifying and Categorizing Types of Grammatical Errors in Written Exercises

Several empirical studies have attempted to identify the common grammatical errors in students' writing at the basic and junior high school levels in Ghana and other Anglophone African countries. Owusu (2019) conducted a study on the written compositions of JHS students in the Central Region of Ghana and found that the most

prevalent grammatical errors were in verb tense usage, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, capitalization, and article usage. The study categorized the errors as syntactic (structural), morphological (word formation), and mechanical (spelling and punctuation), which are consistent with the problems observed at Njau-Tanosso R/C JHS.

Similarly, Agyekum (2021) conducted an analysis of 120 writing samples from JHS students across the Ashanti Region and found that verb-tense inconsistencies (such as mixing past and present tenses), incorrect pluralization, omission of auxiliary verbs, and subject-verb mismatches were the most frequently committed errors. These findings corroborate Ankomah's (2017, p. 66) conclusion that Ghanaian JHS students struggle particularly with English grammar rules due to inadequate foundational exposure at the primary level.

In Nigeria, Ajayi (2022) examined the writing of 300 junior secondary school students and found that grammatical errors fell into six major categories: tense, concord (subject-verb agreement), article use, word order, prepositions, and punctuation. These categories align with common linguistic difficulties in ESL contexts and mirror those seen in Ghana, affirming the regional consistency of such issues among learners in Anglophone West Africa.

These studies provide a strong empirical foundation for identifying and categorizing error types, reinforcing the need for targeted interventions that address these specific areas.

2.4.2 Investigating the Possible Causes of Grammatical Errors

Empirical evidence suggests that multiple, often overlapping, factors contribute to the grammatical errors made by junior high school students. One of the most common causes is the interference of the mother tongue or first language (L1). In a study by

Boakye and Asare (2020), it was discovered that students from Akan and Dagaare-speaking backgrounds often transferred L1 grammar rules into their English writing, resulting in non-standard constructions, such as the omission of auxiliary verbs or improper word order. This supports the theory of negative transfer, as discussed under interlanguage theory.

Another key finding is the poor teaching methodology and inadequate emphasis on grammar in the curriculum. In a qualitative case study involving five JHS schools in Northern Ghana, Danquah (2023, p. 42) reported that many English teachers focus heavily on literature and reading comprehension at the expense of direct grammar instruction. The study concluded that students' lack of grammatical competence stemmed partly from insufficient teacher training and a lack of practical, grammar-specific teaching materials.

Additionally, a study by WAEC (2018) analyzing candidates' performance in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) English papers revealed that students' grammatical errors were not only due to teaching quality but also poor reading habits, limited vocabulary, and insufficient exposure to correct English in both school and home environments. This aligns with findings by Darko (2021), who showed that students in rural schools are particularly disadvantaged because they are less likely to encounter English outside the classroom, thereby limiting reinforcement.

Peer influence and informal communication habits (e.g., texting, slang) have also been identified as contributing factors. In a study by Opoku-Asare and Arko-Achemfuor (2022), 61% of JHS students admitted that they transferred informal language features from social media and texting into their academic writing, often resulting in ungrammatical sentences and incorrect punctuation.

Collectively, these studies highlight that grammatical errors result from a complex interplay of linguistic, pedagogical, environmental, and cognitive factors, and any intervention must address this complexity holistically.

2.4.3 Effective Teaching Strategies to Reduce Grammatical Errors

Several empirical studies have also investigated how best to address grammatical errors among JHS students. Amoah (2022), in a study involving an intervention program in five JHS schools in the Eastern Region, found that the use of contextual grammar teaching—integrating grammar instruction into reading and writing activities, was significantly more effective than traditional rule-based teaching. The post-test scores of students who received contextualized instruction improved by an average of 27% compared to the control group.

Another promising strategy is the use of formative assessment and feedback. Kusi (2021, p. 83) demonstrated that timely, specific, and constructive feedback on grammar in student writing led to measurable improvements in grammatical accuracy over an academic term. This study supports the idea that error correction, when done supportively, can enhance students' metalinguistic awareness and reduce recurring errors.

Use of collaborative learning has also shown positive outcomes. A study by Addae and Mensah (2023) revealed that peer review and cooperative writing tasks encouraged students to become more conscious of grammar rules and take responsibility for their writing. These strategies not only reduced grammatical errors but also increased student motivation and engagement.

Further, professional development for teachers is identified as a crucial intervention. In a survey conducted among 80 JHS English teachers in the Brong Ahafo Region, Nyarko and Frempong (2023, p. 55) found that 73% of teachers lacked formal

training in grammar pedagogy. However, those who had received in-service training on grammar instruction were more confident and effective in helping students overcome grammatical challenges.

Digital learning tools have also been found useful. In a quasi-experimental study, Asante (2022) implemented a blended learning model using grammar-focused mobile apps and online exercises. Students exposed to this model demonstrated statistically significant gains in grammar tests compared to those in the traditional classroom.

Taken together, these empirical studies demonstrate that effective grammar instruction must be multifaceted, incorporating explicit teaching, contextualized practice, timely feedback, teacher capacity building, and technological support. Such approaches are especially crucial for JHS1 students in rural settings like Njau-Tanoso R/C JHS, where educational resources are limited.

2.5 Related Studies

A number of related studies both within Ghana and in similar multilingual and resource-constrained contexts reinforce the findings and theoretical underpinnings discussed in the previous sections. These studies provide important comparative perspectives and contextual relevance for understanding grammatical errors among JHS1 students in Njau-Tanoso and beyond.

In the Ghanaian context, Asiedu (2021) and Ankomah (2017) observed persistent grammatical errors in students' writing, particularly in areas such as tense, subject-verb agreement, and punctuation. Their findings highlight structural weaknesses in grammar instruction at the basic education level. Similarly, Owusu (2019) and Agyekum (2021) identified tense inconsistencies, poor pluralization, and article misuse as dominant issues in JHS students' compositions, findings that align

with the present study's observations. These studies further categorize grammatical errors as syntactic, morphological, and mechanical, providing a useful taxonomy for error identification.

Beyond Ghana, Ajayi's (2022) study in Nigeria supports regional parallels. His analysis of junior secondary school essays revealed major errors in article use, concord, prepositions, and word order, errors also common in Ghanaian classrooms. These shared challenges suggest broader systemic issues in English instruction across West Africa.

Interference from native languages has also been a recurring theme in related studies. Boakye and Asare (2020) and Ansah (2019) explored how Ghanaian languages, such as Akan and Dagaare, influence students' English constructions. Their findings support Selinker's Interlanguage Theory and underscore the importance of recognizing negative transfer in classroom grammar instruction.

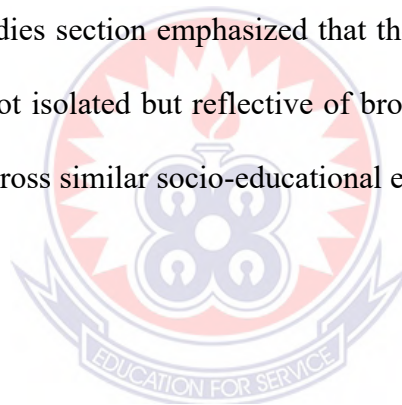
In terms of intervention studies, Amoah (2022), Kusi (2021), and Asante (2022) have demonstrated the positive impact of contextual grammar teaching, formative feedback, and digital tools in reducing grammatical errors. These approaches have shown significant improvements in students' grammar accuracy, offering practical strategies for replication in schools like Njau-Tanosso R/C JHS.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has provided an extensive literature review on grammatical errors among JHS1 students, organized under conceptual, theoretical, and empirical domains. The discussion began with an overview of various types of grammatical errors commonly committed by students, such as subject-verb disagreement, tense inconsistencies, misuse of conjunctions, modal errors, and issues with passive voice and code-mixing. These errors were linked to deeper cognitive, instructional, and

linguistic challenges. The theoretical review incorporated three key frameworks, Behaviorist Theory, Interlanguage Theory, and Error Analysis Theory, each explaining how and why learners produce grammar errors, and how these theories can inform targeted teaching strategies. Empirical studies from Ghana and West Africa were reviewed to examine patterns of grammatical errors, their causes, and evidence-based teaching strategies. Factors such as mother-tongue interference, poor instructional methods, lack of exposure to standard English, and inadequate teacher training were highlighted as major contributors. Effective remedies identified include contextual grammar teaching, timely feedback, teacher professional development, and digital learning interventions.

The related studies section emphasized that the challenges identified at Njau-Tanoso R/C JHS are not isolated but reflective of broader systemic issues in English language instruction across similar socio-educational environments.

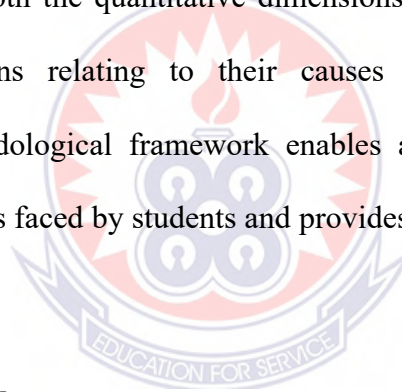


CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that guided the study on grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS One students at Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic Junior High School in the Tain District. It outlines the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study, the research design and approach, the population and sampling techniques, data collection procedures, types and sources of data, data analysis techniques, variables, and ethical considerations. A mixed-methods approach was adopted to examine both the quantitative dimensions of grammatical errors and the qualitative explanations relating to their causes and possible remedies. This comprehensive methodological framework enables a deeper understanding of the grammatical challenges faced by students and provides insight into effective strategies for addressing them.



3.1 Research Philosophy

This study is primarily grounded in interpretivism, reflecting a qualitative orientation that seeks to understand grammatical errors through the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of JHS One students and their teachers. From an interpretivist perspective, language learning is viewed not merely as a technical skill but as a socially situated practice shaped by learners' cultural backgrounds, everyday interactions, and classroom contexts. As noted by Creswell and Poth (2018), an interpretivist stance enables researchers to explore the subjective meanings that participants attach to their linguistic choices, a perspective that is particularly valuable for examining the persistence of specific grammatical errors. Although the study

incorporates a limited quantitative component to describe the frequency of identified error types, this numerical data serves a supplementary purpose and does not determine the direction of the inquiry. Consequently, the interpretivist framework remains central to the study, ensuring that the findings are firmly grounded in the sociocultural realities of the learners.

3.2 Research Design



Consistent with its qualitative orientation, the study adopts an exploratory qualitative research design with an embedded descriptive component. The core of the investigation involves in-depth data collection methods, including semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, as well as a detailed analysis of students' written exercises, to generate rich and contextualized insights into grammatical challenges and their underlying causes. Classroom observations further complement these data sources by capturing the instructional contexts within which the errors occur. A limited quantitative procedure—namely, the counting and tabulation of error frequencies—follows the qualitative analysis and serves only to illustrate the relative prevalence of the identified error categories. This sequential approach ensures that statistical summaries are interpreted through, and remain subordinate to, the qualitative narratives that explain them (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017).

3.3 Research Approach

The study is guided primarily by inductive reasoning, allowing themes and patterns to emerge organically from participants' narratives, classroom interactions, and authentic student writing samples. This approach enables theory to be developed from the data rather than imposed in advance. The limited quantitative component employs simple descriptive statistics, guided by deductive logic, to categorize grammatical errors—such as tense usage, article use, and subject–verb agreement—after they have been qualitatively identified. The integration of these two modes of reasoning enhances the study's credibility: inductive analysis provides depth and contextual understanding, while deductive quantification offers a concise overview of the frequency of each error type (Bryman, 2016). Nevertheless, the inductive qualitative strand remains dominant, ensuring alignment between the research approach and the study's predominantly interpretivist philosophical orientation.

3.4 Population and Sampling

The population for this study comprises all JHS One students and English language teachers at Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic Junior High School in the Tain District. The target population specifically includes the 59 students enrolled in JHS One and the two English language teachers responsible for their instruction. A purposive sampling technique was employed in the qualitative phase to select participants, with teachers chosen based on their teaching experience and direct involvement in English language instruction at the JHS level.

For the quantitative phase, written exercises from 56 out of the 59 JHS One students were successfully collected and subjected to content analysis to facilitate a comprehensive identification and categorization of grammatical errors. This census-based approach strengthened the accuracy and contextual relevance of the findings by minimizing sampling bias. A demographic analysis of the 56 student participants revealed that 32 students (57.1%) were male, while 24 (42.9%) were female. With respect to age, 35 students (62.5%) were between 12 and 14 years, 15 students (26.8%) were aged between 15 and 16 years, and 6 students (10.7%) were below 12 years.

In terms of language use at home, 22 students (39.3%) reported Twi as their primary language, 17 (30.4%) indicated Dagbani, 9 (16.1%) reported Dagaare, 6 (10.7%) indicated English, and 2 (3.6%) reported the use of other Ghanaian languages. These findings indicate that the majority of the students primarily communicate in local languages at home, a factor that may have implications for their grammatical accuracy and overall proficiency in English.

3.5 Data

3.5.1 Source and Type

The study primarily relied on primary data, which were collected directly from students' written English language exercises, interviews conducted with both teachers and students, and classroom observations. These sources offered firsthand evidence on the types, causes, and possible remedies for grammatical errors among JHS1 students.

In addition, the study made use of published materials, such as textbooks, curriculum guides, and relevant academic literature on English language teaching and learning in Ghana, not as secondary data, but as supporting resources. These materials provided contextual and theoretical grounding to enhance the interpretation and discussion of the primary findings.

3.5.2 Data Collection Procedure

The primary focus of the study was on students' written English exercises, which were systematically collected and analyzed to identify grammatical errors. A range of written materials, including class assignments, classwork, and test scripts, was obtained from JHS One students over a specified academic term. These writing samples were collected with the informed consent of both teachers and students and were used to assess students' grammatical competence within authentic classroom contexts.

To examine the nature and frequency of grammatical errors, a structured coding scheme was developed based on commonly reported error categories in the literature. The categories included tense usage, punctuation, article use, spelling, capitalization, subject–verb agreement, sentence fragments, and run-on sentences. Each student's written work was carefully reviewed, with errors identified, coded, and quantified in accordance with the established framework.

In addition to the textual analysis, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected English language teachers and students to complement the analysis of written data. The interviews sought to explore participants' perceptions of the causes of grammatical errors and the strategies employed to address them in writing instruction. These qualitative insights provided contextual depth and helped to explain the patterns observed in the students' written exercises.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process integrated both qualitative and quantitative techniques, in line with the study's predominantly qualitative orientation and its supporting descriptive statistical component. This combined approach facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the grammatical errors evident in students' written work and the factors underlying their occurrence. For the qualitative data, thematic analysis was employed. Interview transcripts and students' written exercises were systematically reviewed, coded, and organized into emergent themes. These themes captured recurring grammatical error patterns, perceived causes of such errors, and views on the effectiveness of grammar instruction, as expressed by both teachers and students. NVivo software was utilized to manage and organize the qualitative data, thereby enhancing the rigor, consistency, and transparency of the coding process.

The quantitative analysis focused on identifying and summarizing the frequency and distribution of grammatical error types in students' written exercises. A structured coding framework was applied to 56 writing samples to classify errors into categories including tense usage, punctuation, article use, subject–verb agreement, and spelling. Descriptive statistical measures, specifically frequencies and percentages, were computed using STATA software. This quantitative component provided a clear numerical overview of the most prevalent grammatical errors and served to complement

and substantiate the qualitative findings derived from the thematic analysis.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, including both students and teachers, prior to data collection. The researcher clearly explained the purpose of the study, emphasized the voluntary nature of participation, and informed participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through the use of pseudonyms, and all collected data were securely stored and accessed solely for research purposes. In addition, ethical approval was sought from the appropriate educational authorities and the school management. All research activities were conducted in accordance with established ethical guidelines for educational research, as prescribed by the Ghana Education Service and relevant institutional review boards (BERA, 2018, p. 9).

In summary, this chapter has outlined the comprehensive methodological framework adopted for investigating grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS One students at Njau-Tanosso Roman Catholic Junior High School. The predominantly qualitative approach, supported by a complementary descriptive component, enabled an in-depth examination of both the prevalence and underlying causes of grammatical errors, as well as potential strategies for improvement. The next chapter presents and analyzes the data collected through the procedures described in this chapter.

3.8 Summary

Chapter Three presents the methodological framework adopted for investigating grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS One students at Njau-Tanosso Roman Catholic Junior High School in the Tain District. Guided by a pragmatic research

philosophy, the study employed a predominantly qualitative approach, supported by a complementary quantitative component, to examine both the types and frequency of grammatical errors as well as the contextual factors contributing to their occurrence.

An exploratory sequential research design was adopted, beginning with qualitative data collection through interviews with selected teachers and students to gain insight into the causes of grammatical errors. This phase was followed by a quantitative content analysis of students' written assignments, classwork, and test scripts. Grammatical errors were analyzed across categories including tense usage, punctuation, article use, spelling, capitalization, and subject–verb agreement. The study involved all 59 JHS One students and the two English language teachers at the school, employing purposive sampling for the interview phase and a census approach for the analysis of written data. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically, while descriptive statistical techniques were used to analyze the quantitative data, with NVivo and STATA software supporting the respective analyses.

Ethical considerations were strictly adhered to throughout the study, including the obtaining of informed consent, the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, and the approval of relevant educational authorities. Overall, this chapter outlines a comprehensive and context-sensitive methodological approach for examining grammatical challenges in students' writing and for informing strategies aimed at improving grammatical competence.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and examines the results of the study titled *Grammatical Errors in the Written Exercises of JHS One Students of Njau-Tanosso Roman Catholic Junior High School in the Tain District*. The chapter focuses on the empirical findings derived from classroom observations, questionnaires administered to students and English language teachers, and analyses of students' written assignments. The presentation and discussion of the results are guided by the three main objectives of the study: (1) to identify and classify the various types of grammatical errors present in students' written work; (2) to examine the possible causes of these errors; and (3) to identify effective instructional strategies for addressing the identified challenges.

The findings are presented in line with these objectives. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize responses from the students' questionnaires, while thematic analysis is applied to the open-ended responses from teachers and to the qualitative data obtained from students' written exercises. Tables, charts, and illustrative excerpts from the data are employed to present the findings clearly and systematically.

The chapter is organized into the following major sections, based on the study's qualitative approach and the specific research objectives:

- 4.1 Objective One: To identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors in students' written exercises
- 4.2 Objective Two: To examine the students' perceptions of the possible causes of these grammatical errors and the teaching strategies they find effective).
- 4.3 Objective Three: To identify effective teaching strategies to reduce grammatical errors in written exercises

- 4.4 Discussion of Key Findings in Relation to Research Objectives

4.1 Objective One: To identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors in students' written exercises

This section presents the qualitative analysis conducted to address Objective One of the study, which sought to identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS One students. Out of the total population of 59 students at Njau-Tanos Roman Catholic Junior High School, 56 students participated by submitting a range of written tasks, including classwork, homework, and test scripts. These written materials were systematically examined using a thematic content analysis approach.

Through careful coding and interpretation of the data, grammatical errors in the students' writing were identified and classified into major categories. This qualitative approach enabled an in-depth examination of recurring error patterns and provided contextual insights into the grammatical challenges encountered by the students. In addition, students were asked to indicate factors they perceived as contributing to the grammatical errors in their writing. The results of these responses are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Grammatical Challenges Faced by Students

Grammatical Feature	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Subject-verb agreement	41	73.2
Use of tenses	39	69.6
Spelling	36	64.3
Punctuation	32	57.1
Use of articles	28	50.0
Pronouns	24	42.9
Sentence structure	34	60.7

The data highlight subject-verb agreement and tense usage as the most problematic areas. Spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure were also frequently cited challenges.

4.2 Objective Two: To Find Out the Possible Causes of Grammatical Errors in the Written Exercises of the JHS1 Students

This section addresses Objective Two of the study: To find out the possible causes of grammatical errors in the written exercises of the JHS1 students. A qualitative approach was adopted to gain deeper insights into the students' own understanding of the challenges they face in writing grammatically correct English. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and informal discussions conducted with 56 students of Njau-Tanosso R/C Junior High School. Students were encouraged to reflect on their writing experiences and to express their views on what they believed contributed to their grammatical errors. The responses were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and perceptions. The emerging themes are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Students' Perceived Causes of Grammatical Errors

Cause	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Translating from local language	38	67.9
Lack of understanding of grammar rules	40	71.4
Forgetting correct forms during exams	28	50.0
Teachers not correcting all errors	26	46.4
Inadequate writing practice	33	58.9
Lack of interest in English	21	37.5

The quantitative results reveal that the majority of students identified mother-tongue interference and poor understanding of grammar rules as the main causes of

their grammatical errors. Other significant factors included inadequate writing practice, lack of sufficient feedback from teachers, and test anxiety.

4.3 Objective Three: To identify effective teaching strategies to reduce grammatical errors in written exercises

This section addresses Objective Three of the study, which sought to explore in depth the nature and patterns of grammatical errors in JHS One students' written work using a qualitative, grounded theory approach. By allowing themes to emerge inductively from the data, this analysis complements the earlier quantitative findings and provides deeper insight into how and why specific grammatical errors recur in students' writing.

The purpose of this analysis was to identify and categorize grammatical errors as they occur in students' natural written expression, thereby offering insights beyond the self-reported difficulties captured through questionnaires. A grounded theory approach was adopted to enable patterns and themes to emerge organically from the data, rather than being imposed a priori.

The written samples analyzed were drawn from regular classroom activities, including short essays, narratives, and descriptive paragraphs. In total, 56 scripts were examined. The analysis revealed eight major categories of recurrent grammatical errors: subject–verb agreement errors, tense errors, incorrect use of articles, pronoun misuse, prepositional errors, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and spelling and punctuation errors.

Among these categories, subject–verb agreement errors were the most prevalent. Many students struggled to align singular subjects with singular verbs and plural subjects with plural verbs. For instance, some students wrote “*The boys goes to the field every day*” instead of the correct form “*The boys go to the field every day.*”

Similarly, constructions involving compound subjects posed difficulties, suggesting limited mastery of concord rules. These challenges may be influenced by syntactic structures in the students' first languages, where subject–verb agreement is often absent or operates differently.

Verb tense errors were also common. Students frequently shifted tenses within the same narrative, reflecting inadequate understanding of tense consistency and irregular verb forms. For example, a student wrote, *“Yesterday, I wake up early and walk to school. I arrive before the teacher arrived,”* instead of the correct construction, *“Yesterday, I woke up early and walked to school. I arrived before the teacher did.”* Such errors indicate weak control over past tense formation and sequencing of events.

Another recurrent problem involved the misuse or omission of articles. Students often used *a*, *an*, and *the* incorrectly or failed to use them altogether. Examples include *“She is eating apple”* and *“I saw elephant in the zoo,”* which should correctly read *“She is eating an apple”* and *“I saw an elephant in the zoo.”* The frequency of these errors suggests limited familiarity with article usage rules, particularly given that many Ghanaian languages do not employ definite or indefinite articles.

Pronoun errors also featured prominently in the students' writing. Confusion between subject and object pronouns was common, as seen in sentences such as *“Me and him went to the market”* and *“The teacher gave she the book,”* instead of *“He and I went to the market”* and *“The teacher gave her the book.”* These errors reflect misunderstandings of grammatical case and pronoun function within sentence structures.

Prepositional errors further reduced clarity in students' writing. Learners frequently used inappropriate prepositions or omitted them entirely. For instance, *“She sat the chair”* was used instead of *“She sat on the chair,”* while *“He is good in playing*

football” appeared instead of “*He is good at playing football.*” Such errors highlight students’ difficulty with fixed prepositional collocations and idiomatic expressions in English.

Sentence structure posed additional challenges. Many students produced sentence fragments or run-on sentences, indicating limited understanding of sentence boundaries and clause relationships. An example of a fragment was “*When I was going to school,*” which lacks a main clause and should be completed as “*When I was going to school, I met my friend.*” A run-on sentence such as “*I went to the market I bought rice I returned home*” should be correctly structured as “*I went to the market, bought rice, and returned home.*”

Spelling and punctuation errors were widespread across the scripts. Students often spelled words phonetically or confused homophones, as in “*I wont to see the movie*” instead of “*I want to see the movie.*” Punctuation was frequently omitted or misused, with some students writing entire paragraphs without full stops or commas, thereby making their writing difficult to read and interpret.

Overall, the findings from this qualitative analysis align closely with the earlier questionnaire data, reinforcing the conclusion that subject–verb agreement, tense usage, and article application constitute the most problematic grammatical areas. The persistent nature of these errors suggests underlying linguistic challenges, likely influenced by first-language interference and limited exposure to standard written English. These findings provide a strong empirical foundation for the development of targeted instructional interventions, which are discussed in the subsequent chapter.

4.4 Thematic Analysis of Teacher Responses

This section presents the thematic analysis of qualitative data obtained from English language teachers at Njau-Tanosso Roman Catholic Junior High School. The

teachers responded to open-ended questions focusing on the grammatical errors they commonly observe in students' written work, their perceptions of the underlying causes of these errors, the instructional strategies they employ, and the challenges they encounter in teaching grammar. Through a systematic process of thematic coding and analysis, four major themes emerged: the prevalence of core grammatical errors, the influence of mother-tongue interference, instructional challenges, and suggested strategies for improvement.

The first theme, which featured prominently in all teacher responses, concerned the widespread occurrence of specific grammatical errors in students' writing. Teachers consistently identified subject–verb agreement and tense errors as the most frequent problems. Other commonly observed issues included sentence fragments, misuse of articles, incorrect spelling, and poor punctuation. One teacher noted that students often struggle to use appropriate verb forms, particularly when narrating past events. Another observed that even high-performing students frequently demonstrate difficulty with subject–verb agreement, producing constructions such as “*He go to school every day.*” These observations corroborate the findings from both the quantitative data and the analysis of students' written exercises.

The second theme emphasized the influence of students' first languages on their English grammatical performance. All participating teachers agreed that mother-tongue interference plays a significant role in students' grammatical errors. One teacher explained that students often structure English sentences in ways that reflect the syntactic patterns of their native languages, many of which differ considerably from English. Another teacher indicated that learners frequently translate directly from their mother tongue into English, resulting in grammatical inaccuracies. This finding aligns with the study's interpretivist orientation, which recognizes the importance of

sociolinguistic context in understanding challenges associated with second language acquisition.

The third theme addressed the instructional challenges that limit effective grammar teaching. Teachers identified large class sizes, limited instructional time, and inadequate teaching and learning resources as major constraints. One teacher explained that managing classes with over 50 students makes it difficult to provide individualized feedback or to thoroughly mark written assignments. Another noted that the lack of grammar-focused textbooks and structured writing practice materials restricts opportunities for reinforcement and guided learning. These systemic challenges were perceived as negatively affecting both the frequency and quality of grammar instruction.

Despite these constraints, the fourth theme highlighted several strategies teachers employ to support students' grammatical development. Teachers reported using techniques such as explicit grammar instruction, error correction, group writing activities, peer editing, and whole-class feedback. One teacher observed that group work encourages students to identify and discuss grammatical errors collaboratively. Another emphasized the value of highlighting common errors in students' written work and addressing them collectively in class, as this approach helps learners recognize recurring patterns. Extensive reading, repeated practice, and increased exposure to correct language models were also identified as important strategies for improving grammatical competence.

In summary, the thematic analysis reveals strong alignment between teachers' perspectives and the findings derived from students' data. The persistence of grammatical challenges—particularly those related to subject–verb agreement, tense usage, and sentence structure—is largely attributed to first-language interference and

structural limitations within the instructional context. Nonetheless, teachers identified several evidence-based strategies that could significantly enhance students' grammatical proficiency if supported by adequate resources and reduced class sizes. These findings further reinforce the need for targeted pedagogical interventions, as discussed in the subsequent chapter.

4.5 Discussion of Key Findings in Relation to Research Objectives

This section discusses the key findings from the analysis of students' written exercises and teacher interviews in relation to the study's three main objectives. The discussion is framed using relevant theoretical perspectives and supported by empirical research findings reviewed in Chapter Two.

Objective One: To Identify and Categorize the Types of Grammatical Errors in Students' Written Exercises

The analysis revealed a high frequency of errors in subject-verb agreement, tense usage, article omission, punctuation, and sentence structure. These errors were categorized as syntactic, morphological, and mechanical, reflecting structural and surface-level grammatical challenges among JHS1 students.

Error Analysis (EA) theory, which holds that such recurrent errors provide insight into the learner's evolving interlanguage, is consistent with this finding (Corder, 1974, as quoted in Gass & Selinker, 2017). Corder's characterization of developmental and intralingual faults—many of which result from overgeneralization or incorrect application of English grammar rules—is supported by the high frequency of tense and subject-verb agreement errors.

According to empirical research by Owusu (2019) and Agyekum (2021), the most common mistakes in JHS writing in Ghana were verb-tense inconsistencies, auxiliary verb omission, article overuse, and poor punctuation. This consistency

confirms that the patterns seen at Njau-Tanoso R/C JHS are indicative of more widespread systemic grammar issues in comparable educational settings.

Objective Two: To Examine the Causes of Grammatical Errors

The results of teacher interviews revealed a number of contributing variables, including informal communication practices, inadequate grammar instruction, mother-tongue interference, and a lack of exposure to standard English. The Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972), which contends that students create a distinct linguistic system by combining aspects of L1 and L2, is supported by these factors. For example, "He go to school" and "She runned" are examples of overgeneralization and poor transfer from the native language.

Boakye and Asare (2020) showed that Ghanaian students often transferred L1 grammatical structures into English writing, confirming the importance of mother-tongue impact in this setting. Additionally apparent is the phenomena of fossilization, in which mistakes grow impervious to correction, corroborating Brown's (2021) claim that a lack of meaningful practice and feedback impedes L2 development.

From a behaviorist standpoint, these mistakes can be attributed to inadequate reinforcement and linguistic modeling (Skinner, 1957; Lightbown & Spada, 2020). Students frequently acquire wrong forms via repetition in rural schools like Njau-Tanoso R/C JHS, where class numbers are huge and specific feedback is scarce. This fact is highlighted by the teachers' remarks in the interviews, which highlight the lack of regular remedial training.

WAEC (2018), Darko (2021), and Danquah (2023) findings support other suggested causal factors, including bad reading culture, an excessive dependence on informal language, and inadequate teacher training. For instance, Opoku-Asare and Arko-Achemfuor (2022) stressed the influence of social media and texting on

grammatical accuracy, while Danquah's study focused on the curriculum's inability to prioritize formal grammar education.

These findings support the multifactorial nature of grammatical error formation, where linguistic, pedagogical, environmental, and socio-cultural elements intersect to shape students' written output.

Objective Three: To Propose Effective Teaching Strategies to Reduce Grammatical Errors

The study also sought to identify strategies that could help mitigate the grammatical issues faced by JHS1 students. Teacher responses suggested a need for:

- ✚ More explicit grammar instruction,
- ✚ Greater use of contextual and interactive methods,
- ✚ Improved teacher training, and
- ✚ Integration of technology and feedback mechanisms.

These suggestions echo recommendations found in several empirical studies. Amoah (2022) demonstrated that contextualized grammar teaching—linking grammar with reading and writing—was more effective than isolated drills. Similarly, Kusi (2021) showed that timely and constructive feedback significantly reduced recurring grammatical errors.

The emphasis on collaborative learning strategies, such as peer reviews and cooperative writing (as proposed by Addae & Mensah, 2023), aligns with teacher suggestions to engage students more actively in grammar learning. This is consistent with modern learner-centered approaches, which are also supported by Error Analysis theory, where errors are seen as valuable learning opportunities rather than solely deficiencies.

In addition, the call for professional development for teachers mirrors findings by Nyarko and Frempong (2023), who stressed that teachers with formal training in grammar instruction were significantly more effective. The integration of digital tools, highlighted by Asante (2022), was also raised by some teachers as a possible avenue to support student learning in resource-constrained environments.

Overall, these strategies reflect a shift from rote-based learning towards a more interactive, reflective, and resource-supported grammar instruction model, which is crucial in rural Ghanaian contexts.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study investigated the nature, causes, and possible solutions to grammatical errors in the written exercises of JHS One students at Njau-Tanoso Roman Catholic Junior High School in the Tain District of Ghana. The research was motivated by the persistent difficulties students experience in mastering English grammar, challenges that significantly affect both their academic performance and communicative competence. Specifically, the study sought to: (1) identify and categorize the types of grammatical errors present in students' written work; (2) examine the underlying causes of these errors; and (3) propose effective pedagogical strategies for addressing them.

Adopting a qualitative case study approach, the researcher analyzed students' written exercises alongside data obtained from interviews with English language teachers. The findings revealed that the most recurrent grammatical errors included subject-verb agreement problems, inappropriate verb tense usage, misuse or omission of articles, prepositional errors, pronoun inconsistencies, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, spelling and punctuation errors, capitalization errors, redundancy, misuse of conjunctions, incorrect use of modal verbs, inappropriate application of the passive voice, and the influence of mother-tongue interference.

These error patterns were interpreted within the theoretical frameworks of behaviourist theory, interlanguage theory, and error analysis theory. The findings indicate that students' grammatical difficulties arise from a combination of factors, including negative transfer from first languages, ineffective instructional practices, inadequate corrective feedback, limited exposure to standard English usage, and low levels of learner motivation and reading culture. Evidence from the reviewed literature

corroborated these findings, highlighting the multifaceted nature of grammatical incompetence among Junior High School learners in comparable educational contexts.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that grammatical errors among JHS One students are not isolated or incidental occurrences but represent systemic challenges rooted in cognitive, linguistic, pedagogical, and environmental factors. Students' persistent difficulties with fundamental grammatical structures point to gaps in their foundational language competence, which may be attributed to limited early exposure to English, ineffective instructional strategies, and insufficient reinforcement of standard grammatical forms.

From a behaviourist perspective, the findings suggest that students may have internalized incorrect grammatical patterns as a result of inadequate corrective feedback and limited positive reinforcement. Interlanguage theory further accounts for the persistence of these errors, viewing them as developmental features of learners' evolving linguistic systems rather than as random mistakes. Error analysis theory, in turn, emphasizes the pedagogical value of such errors, not merely as indicators of failure but as meaningful evidence of learner progress and as diagnostic tools for informing targeted instructional interventions.

Taken together, these conclusions underscore the urgent need for a multifaceted and context-sensitive approach to grammar instruction. Such an approach should encompass improvements in curriculum design and pedagogical practices, as well as the enhancement of learners' linguistic environments both within and beyond the classroom. Without systematic intervention, these grammatical challenges are likely to persist, leading to continued underperformance in both internal and external assessments and limiting students' ability to use English effectively for academic

advancement and future professional engagement.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the teaching and learning of English grammar at the Junior High School level.

First, English language teachers should prioritize explicit grammar instruction using both isolated and contextualized approaches. Grammar teaching should move beyond passive error correction to include structured, grammar-focused lessons that meaningfully integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Second, continuous professional development and regular in-service training programmes should be organized for English language teachers, particularly those serving in rural and underserved schools. Such training should equip teachers with practical and evidence-based strategies for diagnosing, explaining, and addressing grammatical errors in students' written work.

Third, curriculum planners should review and strengthen the English language curriculum to ensure that grammar is treated as a core component of language proficiency rather than a peripheral topic. Assessment practices should also be aligned with this goal by incorporating grammar-focused tasks that reflect authentic and functional language use.

Fourth, schools should invest in supplementary reading materials and promote sustained silent reading programmes to increase students' exposure to accurate grammatical structures in meaningful contexts. Additionally, parents and guardians should be sensitized to the importance of supporting English language learning at home by encouraging reading and appropriate language use.

Finally, the integration of digital tools and applications for grammar practice

should be encouraged, particularly in contexts where access to qualified teachers and instructional materials is limited. Mobile applications, grammar games, and interactive learning platforms can provide additional opportunities for practice and reinforcement beyond the classroom.

5.4 Practical and Policy Implications / Contributions to Literature

This study makes a meaningful contribution to the literature on second language acquisition in rural African contexts, particularly in Ghana, where limited educational resources and high levels of linguistic diversity pose distinctive challenges to effective language instruction. By examining grammatical errors among Junior High School students, the study enhances understanding of how such errors manifest at the early stages of secondary education and provides empirical support for theoretical perspectives that explain these patterns.

From a practical standpoint, the study offers valuable diagnostic insights for English language teachers, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers. It underscores the critical role of explicit grammar instruction and proposes actionable strategies for improving English language proficiency at the basic education level. For policymakers, the findings highlight the importance of integrating structured grammar programmes into national education policies and allocating adequate resources for teacher professional development and instructional material provision.

Furthermore, the study bridges theory and practice by demonstrating how behaviourist theory, interlanguage theory, and error analysis theory can be applied to classroom contexts to inform instructional decision-making. The findings provide a foundation for future pedagogical interventions and policy reforms aimed at enhancing literacy outcomes in similar educational settings.

5.5 Areas for Future Studies

Although this study provides valuable insights into the grammatical challenges faced by JHS One students, its scope is limited to a single school in the Tain District. Future research could adopt comparative or longitudinal designs involving multiple schools across both urban and rural settings to examine regional variations in grammatical competence over time. In addition, large-scale quantitative studies employing broader datasets could help establish statistical relationships between specific grammatical error types and learner variables such as age, gender, language background, and teacher qualifications.

Further research is also warranted on the influence of mother-tongue instruction on the acquisition of English grammar. Investigations into how bilingual and multilingual education policies affect learners' grammatical development could yield important implications for curriculum design and language-in-education policy. Moreover, empirical studies assessing the effectiveness of digital grammar instruction tools in resource-constrained environments would provide practical guidance for integrating technology into English language teaching.

In conclusion, this study lays a foundation for more focused investigations into second language grammar acquisition among Junior High School students. It also offers evidence-based recommendations that can inform future language education reforms in Ghana and other contexts with similar linguistic and educational characteristics.

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APPENDIX

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

RESEARCHER: Nyame Emmanuel Gregory

TITLE OF STUDY:

**GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN THE WRITTEN EXERCISES OF JHS1
STUDENTS OF NJAU-TANOSO R/C JHS IN THE TAIN DISTRICT**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR JHS1 STUDENTS AND ENGLISH TEACHERS

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is part of an academic research study being conducted by a student of the University of Education, Winneba, under the Department of Applied Linguistics. The study is titled "*Grammatical Errors in the Written Exercises of JHS1 Students of Njau-Tanoso R/C JHS in the Tain District.*" The main purpose of this study is to identify and understand the types, causes, and possible solutions to grammatical errors found in students' written English at the Junior High School level. Your responses will help the researcher make informed recommendations to improve the teaching and learning of English grammar. Please be assured that all information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. Your identity will not be disclosed in any part of the research findings. Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline or withdraw from answering any question or the entire questionnaire at any time without any consequences. Thank you for your time and contribution to this important academic work.

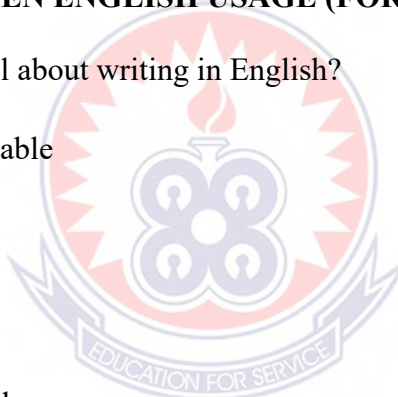
(Researcher)

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION (FOR STUDENTS)

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male Female
3. What language do you speak most often at home?
 English Twi Dagbani Dagaare Other: _____
4. How often do you speak English outside school?
 Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never
5. Do your parents/guardians speak English at home?
 Yes No

SECTION B: WRITTEN ENGLISH USAGE (FOR STUDENTS)

6. How do you feel about writing in English?
 Very comfortable
 Comfortable
 Neutral
 Uncomfortable
 Very uncomfortable
7. Which of the following do you find difficult when writing in English? (*Tick all that apply*)
 Subject-verb agreement
 Use of tenses
 Spelling
 Punctuation
 Use of articles (a, an, the)



Pronouns

Sentence structure

8. What do you think causes your mistakes in writing English? *(Tick all that apply)*

I translate directly from my local language

I don't understand the grammar rules

I forget the correct form during exams

My teachers don't correct all my mistakes

I don't get enough writing practice

I lack interest in English

Other (please specify): _____

9. How often does your teacher mark and explain your grammatical errors?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

10. What methods help you most in learning correct grammar? *(Tick all that apply)*

Class discussions

Group writing tasks

Grammar drills

Teacher corrections

Peer editing

Examples from textbooks

SECTION C: TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

(To be administered separately to English teachers at the school)

1. How long have you been teaching English at the JHS level? _____ years
2. What do you observe as the most common grammatical errors in your students' writing?
 - Tense errors
 - Subject-verb agreement
 - Punctuation errors
 - Spelling
 - Capitalization
 - Sentence fragments
3. In your opinion, what are the major causes of these grammatical errors? *(Tick all that apply)*
 - Poor language background
 - First language interference
 - Lack of reading habits
 - Ineffective teaching methods
 - Overcrowded classrooms
 - Inadequate instructional materials
4. How do you currently address these grammatical issues in your teaching?
(Open-ended)
5. What teaching strategies have you found most effective in reducing grammatical errors in students' writing? *(Open-ended)*
6. What challenges do you face when teaching grammar to JHS1 students? *(Open-ended)*

EXX-4

~~1. He~~

1. He have been writing a novel.
Since October, and now he is about
to finish.

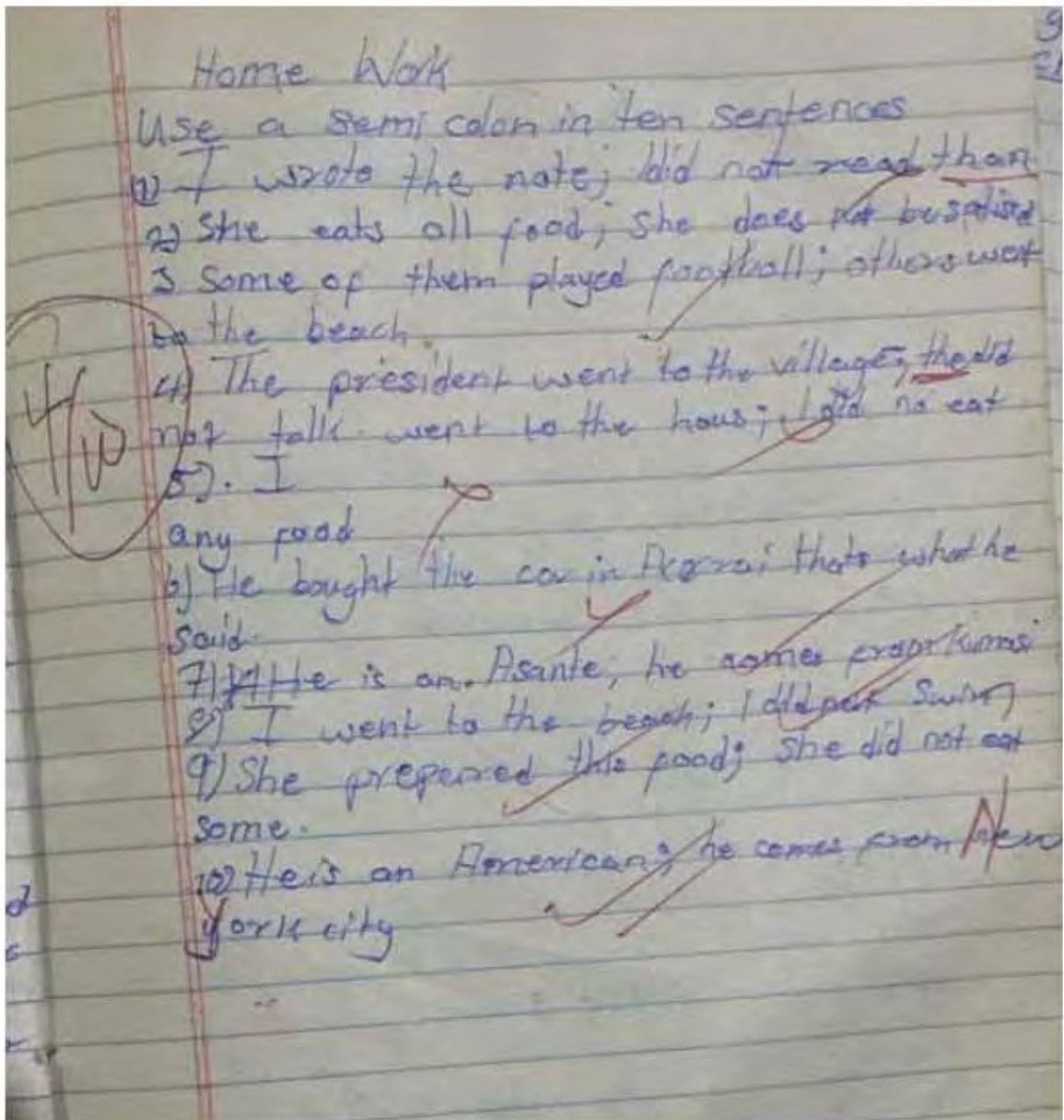
2. I will call you when the guests
arrive.

3. Age and experience brought
wisdom to man.

4. The prize was borne away by our
team.

5. They were being questioned.

03



~~Exit~~

21th Oct, 2024

I will study hard ~~in order to~~ pass the examination when, in order
~~Am~~ Ama did not follow the crowd ~~because~~ she did not want to be negatively influenced.

The learners will not go on break ~~so that~~ they finish their assignments

The way Ama insulted Kofi several times, he did not say a word

Corrections

The learners will not go on break unless they finish their assignments

~~The~~ Although Ama insulted Kofi several times, he did not say a word

Exercise-3

fill in the blank space with the correct form of verb.

1. It was ~~John~~ who _____ the police. (~~alerts~~, alert)

1. It was John who alerted the police. (~~alerts~~, alerted)

2. We ~~have been waiting~~ for ages. (~~are waiting~~, have been waiting)

OK

3. I ~~have known~~ her for a long time. (~~know~~, knew, have known)

4. The box ~~was~~ so heavy that I could not lift it. (was, has been, is)

5. One of my friends ~~has gone~~ to zambia recently. (~~has gone~~, went, goes)

Correction

5. One of my friend _____ to zambia recently. (~~has gone~~, went, goes)