

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**



**THE USAGE OF ENGLISH DETERMINERS IN LEARNERS' WRITTEN  
COMPOSITIONS: A CASE STUDY OF CRIG JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN  
THE ABUAKWA NORTH MUNICIPALITY**



**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,  
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**MAY, 2025**

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## DECLARATION

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

Signature.....

Date.....

### Supervisor's Declaration

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

Supervisor's Name: Dr. Abraham Kwesi Bisilki

Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **DEDICATION**

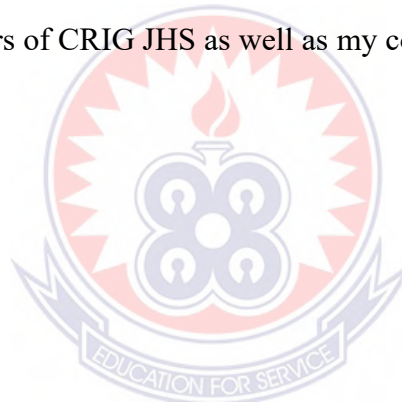
I dedicate this work to my entire family, especially my husband Joseph Asante Nsiah and my children Kofi Asante Nsiah and Maame Kyerewaa Asante Nsiah.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am very grateful to the Almighty God for His protection and mercies for seeing me throughout this programme. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Abraham Kwesi Bisilki for the invaluable guidance and constant advice throughout this work Doctor, I am so grateful I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to Dr. Kwaku Ofori and Professor Charlotte Fofu Lomotey for their insightful discussions and contributions during and after lectures.

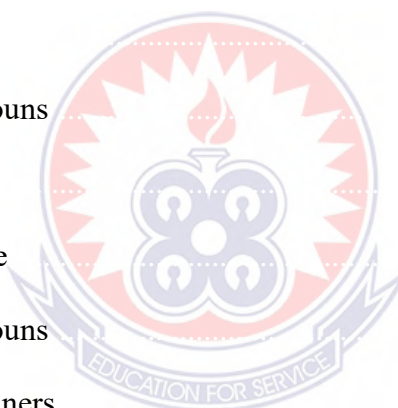
I am extremely thankful to my husband, Mr. Joseph Asante Nsiah, my children, Kofi Asante Nsiah and Maame Kyerewaa Asante Nsiah and other members of my family. I must also extend my sincere gratitude to my headteacher, Mr. Joseph Anhwere and colleague staff members of CRIG JHS as well as my course mates.



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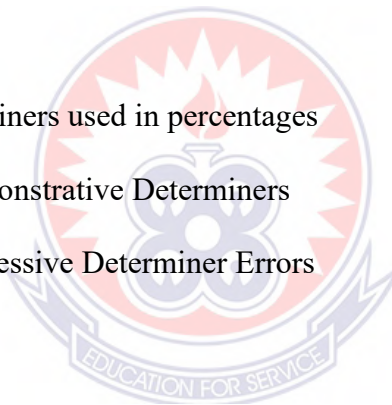


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## ABSTRACT

This case study investigates the usage of English determiners in the written compositions of learners of CRIG Junior High School (JHS) in the Abuakwa North Municipality of Ghana's Eastern Region. The study aimed to identify the types of English determiners most frequently used by learners in their written compositions, the common errors committed in their use, and the underlying causes of these errors. A total of 90 essays collected from six classes (form 1A, B and C and form 2A, B and C) of CRIG JHS learners were analyzed to determine the frequency and types of determiner errors. Additionally, interviews were conducted with two English teachers and six learners to explore the perceived causes of these errors. The findings revealed patterns in the frequency of determiners used and highlighted specific errors in their application. Insights from the interviews shed light on potential sources of these errors, including factors such as first language interference and the environment of the learners. The implications of this research highlight the importance of targeted pedagogical interventions to improve the accurate use of English determiners among Junior High School learners.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the study

Composition writing is one of the aspects of learning English in the Ghanaian school system. Learners are mostly asked to write compositions in order to help them learn to express ideas clearly and effectively. Writing compositions is not just about meeting course requirements, it is an investment in the personal growth, academic success and future career prospects of learner.

Literature on the teaching of composition in English as a second language class seems to suggest that there is a consensus as to how composition writing should be taught. While grammatical exercise is rejected as having little to do with the act of writing, studying the grammar of a language is an essential part of learning. It helps a learner to understand the structure of a language and how words are put together to form sentences. The Grammar of English has become one of the most important aspects in learning English as a language. According to Dewi (2014), grammar becomes one of the parts that is important when we study English; it cannot be separated from English itself. Some people are of the view that knowledge of grammar is not truly important to be mastered when we want to speak English. They explain that without knowing the grammar of the language we still might be able to speak English and that it is alright with our lack of grammar knowledge as long as we can speak and the listener understands communication is all about encoding and decoding.

That may be true to some extent, but being able to speak English fluently by using grammar accurately sounds better and more appreciated. Knowing the grammar of a language helps non- native speakers of that language give meaning to constructed sentences and how to use a word appropriately in context. For one to write a good

composition, one must consider the principles of composition writing which include clustering or brainstorming, outlining and organisation. These guide the teachers or examiners of what they should expect in a student's written composition and therefore evaluate the student's performance (Colman, 1977). Properly organised ideas help the writer see parts that need additional work or supporting details in order to boost the main ideas.

It would be quite difficult for a speaker or a writer to clearly express his or her ideas for audience or readers to understand without the right use of grammar according to Dalil (2013). In English language, determiners are used before a noun or a pronoun to introduce the noun or the pronoun and to provide more information about such a noun or pronoun. Determiners identify a nominal group referent by telling us which or what or whose it is, how much, how many, what part or degree of it we are referring to, how it is distributed in space or time (Downing & Locke, 2016).

This research seeks to explore how determiners are used in essay or composition writings of learners of M/A CRIG JHS learners.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

In the Ghanaian educational system, English is more than just a subject; it is the foundation upon which all other learning is built. For learners of M/A CRIG J.H.S. in the Abuakwa North Municipality, mastering English grammar is essential for both their daily lessons and their future success. "Grammar is a set of rules about how a natural language is structured, as revealed in speech forms of the native speaker" (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2018).

However, despite years of classroom instruction, a persistent issue remains visible in the students' written work. While these learners often have a good grasp of

basic vocabulary, they struggle significantly with the correct use of English determiners.

This problem is clearly seen in how learners build sentences. In their compositions, learners frequently struggle with the "small words"—articles, demonstratives, and quantifiers—that actually hold a sentence together. Through my observations of their compositions, I have noticed three specific, recurring patterns of error. First, students often leave out required articles, such as writing "I went to farm" instead of "I went to the farm." Second, they frequently mix up words like "this" and "these," showing confusion over whether a noun is singular or plural. Finally, they often misapply quantifiers, using words meant for things we can count with things we cannot. These are not just minor slips; they are fundamental errors that change the meaning of their writing and make it difficult for readers to follow their logic. In the context of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), these mistakes lead to a heavy loss of marks in the "Mechanical Accuracy" section, which can ultimately prevent a learner from progressing to Senior High School.

Currently, grammar is taught in a broad, general way, but the specific complexities of determiners are often overlooked. There is a critical need to move beyond general teaching and look closely at why these specific errors keep happening at CRIG J.H.S. Without a systematic study to identify and categorize these mistakes, teachers will continue to use general methods that do not address the learners' actual needs. This study therefore, aims to provide a clear analysis of how determiners are used and misused in learners' compositions, offering a practical path towards better results for the learners' in CRIG JHS.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The value of this research lies in its potential to transform how English is taught and learned within the Abuakwa North Municipality. By moving away from general grammar and focusing specifically on the "small but mighty" category of determiners, this study offers practical benefits for everyone involved in the educational process. For the teachers at M/A CRIG J.H.S., this study acts as a diagnostic tool. Often, teachers know that a student's writing "sounds wrong," but they may not have the time to sit down and pinpoint exactly why. This research provides that clarity. By highlighting exactly where students are tripping over articles or quantifiers, teachers can move away from one-size-fits-all lessons and instead create focused, high-impact exercises that tackle the students' actual weaknesses. It turns the English classroom into a more efficient space where energy is spent solving the most frequent problems first.

The students themselves stand to gain the most. In the Ghanaian school system, the ability to write clearly is the "key" that opens almost every door. When a student masters determiners, their writing becomes more precise and professional. This isn't just about following rules; it is about giving these learners the confidence to express their ideas without being held back by grammatical errors that lower their grades. Improving their "Mechanical Accuracy" in written compositions directly translates to higher scores in the BECE, which can change the trajectory of their academic lives as they transition to Senior High School.

Furthermore, this work has broader implications for the Ghana Education Service (GES) and the local community. It provides a local "case study" that can inform the development of better textbooks and teaching materials that reflect the real linguistic challenges of the Abuakwa North district. Finally, for the wider academic community, this study adds a vital piece to the puzzle of how Ghanaian students acquire

English as a second language. It invites other researchers to look deeper into the specific parts of speech that cause the most trouble, ensuring that our teaching methods continue to evolve along with our learners' needs.

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- i. Identifying the type of determiners frequently used by CRIG JHS learners in their composition writing
- ii. To analyse the types of determiner errors in the written compositions of learners of CRIG JHS
- iii. To identify the causes of errors in the usage of English determiners in the written compositions of learners of CRIG JHS.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions are used to guide the study:

- i. What type of English determiners are frequently used by CRIG JHS learners in their composition writing?
- ii. What types of errors are committed by CRIG JHS learners in using English determiners in their composition writing?
- iii. What are the causes of errors in using English determiners in the written composition of learners of CRIG JHS?

#### **1.6 Delimitation of the Study**

There are different issues or challenges English as a second language learners encounter as evidenced in their writing of compositions. This study is delimited to the usage of English determiners ignoring the other aspects of grammar usage.

## **1.7 Limitation**

The first limitation was related to the amount of time available to conduct this study. If this research work had had an extended time frame, I could find additional resources, including the coverage of other schools as the research sites. This could have provided a much more comprehensive view into the phenomenon investigated. . Apart from the interviews and the samples of learners' essays, observation could have been used for cross-validation of data, if there were sufficient time at my disposal.

## **1.8 Organisation of Study**

The study is organized as follows;

### **Chapter 1: Introduction**

An overview of the research is presented in this chapter, including the background of the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Here, literature related to the study is presented. A discussion on the following is made; the scope and development of English language in Ghana, importance of The English language, teaching English as a second language in Ghana, English determiners, predeterminers, central determiners, post determiners, article focused theory.

### **Chapter 3: Research Method**

This chapter seeks to explain the methodology employed in the research. To achieve this objective of the research, the following were outlined: research approach, research design, area of study, population, sampling technique, research instruments and method of data analysis.

#### Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

This Chapter explains how the data collected for this work was analyzed and interpreted. This chapter focuses on the analysis of data generated from the written composition and the interview of some learners and the two teachers of English in the school.

#### Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings, Considerations and Recommendations

This chapter presents the research findings of the data analyzed and interpreted in chapter four, the conclusions of the findings and measures been recommended to improve upon the findings.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the review of the theoretical and empirical literature related to English determiners. The sub-topics covered in the discussions in this chapter include: the meaning of determiners, the type of determiners in English language which includes, the articles (definite and indefinite) possessive, demonstratives indefinite pronouns, post determiners, usage of determiners, the article (the) and its uses, the use of demonstrative determiners, the use of possessive determiners and the definition of errors.

The use of determiners in learners written compositions particularly those that constitute the article systems, causes great difficulty among learners of CRIG J.H.S. This study will review the literature of English determiners and how they are used in written compositions. Determiners have limitations with certain non-countable nouns. Sometimes mass nouns such as sand, oil, furniture and sugar. When mass nouns are used as non-countable nouns, they cannot be plural, so they do not combine with determiners that have either the plural or countable features (Kolln, 2002).

#### **2.1 The scope and development of English language in Ghana**

English language in Ghana has gone through tremendous process over the years. Consequently, its nature, features and distinct identity have been meticulously defined and illuminated by various scholars, each drawing on their diverse academic backgrounds and research experiences.

Kropp and Mary (1988) in their book see English as the main language that people speak in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and some other countries. There are

different varieties of English, for example American English, British English and South African English. Also, English together with literature written in it, is studied as a subject. Also, English is an Indo-European language belonging to the West Germanic branch, the official language of British and United States and most of the commonwealth countries.

Ghana as a member of the Commonwealth and a British colony is one of such countries who speak the British English as their official language. The official language and lingua-franca of Ghana is English, which is predominately used in formal context, thus the educational system and media. Ghana is the second largest English-speaking nation in West Africa.

The main objective of Early Afro European contacts in Ghana then Gold Coast was trade. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the English established themselves on the coast of Ghana. The colonial era English in Ghana has taken various forms ranging along a continuum from pidgin English to British Standard English, with innumerable hybrids in between those two poles. Those common forms of English have always threatened to alter ideas of correct English in Ghana. Other scholars see the assistance to cultural modifications as futile and insist that a Ghanaian Standard be recognized as equally as legitimate as the British Standard English. These defenders of the Ghanaian Standard have made considerable progress in meeting the charge to systematically distinguish Ghanaian English as a New English. However, one impediment stands in their way, ethnic sensitivities.

Learners of the English language face a lot of challenges especially in writing and speaking, this therefore motivated the researcher to investigate into the usage of English determiners of learners of CRIG JHS written composition.

## **2.2 Importance of the English Language**

According to Manivanna (2006), English language can be used as a language in any part of the world. This is because at least a few people in each locality would know the language. Through these people might not have the same accent as others, the language at least will be understandable. There are various reasons for the importance of English language, these importance as a universal language in Ghana assumes importance in the fact that more and more people leave their place of stay not only for the sake of business and pleasure, but also for studies. Education has increased the role of English in Ghana. English language serves as a medium of instruction in Ghana. This is because almost all the subjects studied have English as its medium of instruction except the Ghanaian languages and French.

## **2.3 Teaching English as a second language and the acquisition of determiners in Ghana**

English language is the most flexible and expressive language in the world. English is famous for its diversity and inclination for change. This has resulted in a great spectrum of English variants in several circumstances. One such is English as a Second Language. Geographically, English is the most often used language; and is the second language of around 400 million educated people globally.

Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) in Ghana encompasses a variety of methods, challenges, and contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of English language instruction. As a former British colony, Ghana has adopted English as its official language, but the reality of teaching and learning English is complex, particularly in a multilingual society where various local languages coexist (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). Research indicates that many teachers in Ghana predominantly use traditional methods such as the Grammar-Translation Method. This approach focuses

on rote memorization and grammar rules rather than practical communication skills. A study conducted in the Bawku Municipality revealed that none of the teachers employed the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which emphasizes interaction and real-life communication.

The reliance on outdated methodologies limits students' ability to use English effectively in everyday situations. In many classrooms, especially at the Junior High School (JHS) level, teachers often resort to using local languages as the medium of instruction (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). This practice contradicts the official policy that mandates English as the sole language of instruction from Primary 4 onwards. Studies have shown that local language use can facilitate comprehension among students who struggle with English, but it also undermines their exposure to and practice of the target language (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015).

One of the significant challenges in TESL in Ghana is the scarcity of teaching and learning resources. Many schools lack adequate textbooks, multimedia tools, and language laboratories essential for effective language instruction. The absence of these resources hampers both teaching quality and student engagement.

The qualifications and training of teachers are critical factors affecting TESL. Many teachers lack sufficient pedagogical knowledge and content expertise in English language instruction. A study highlighted that inadequate in-service training for teachers contributes to poor teaching practices and ineffective classroom management. Moreover, teachers often face large class sizes, making individualized attention difficult.

The current curriculum (common core) tends to focus heavily on reading comprehension, grammar usage, and writing skills and the oral language, but most teachers do not have knowledge on the oral language and even how to teach it. This

imbalance results in students who may perform well on written tests but struggle with speaking and listening skills necessary for real-world communication.

To address these challenges, it is crucial to invest in professional development programs for teachers. Regular workshops and training sessions can enhance teachers' pedagogical skills and familiarize them with modern teaching methodologies like CLT, which promote active learning and student participation.

Government and educational stakeholders must prioritize resource allocation to ensure that schools are equipped with necessary teaching materials. This includes providing textbooks, digital tools, and access to language laboratories that facilitate interactive learning environments.

Revising the curriculum to incorporate more comprehensive oral communication skills training is essential. Integrating speaking and listening activities into daily lessons can help students develop confidence in using English conversationally.

Teaching English as a Second Language in Ghana faces several challenges rooted in pedagogical practices, resource availability and teacher preparedness. Addressing these issues through targeted interventions can significantly enhance the effectiveness of English language instruction in Ghanaian schools, ultimately equipping students with the necessary skills to thrive in an increasingly globalized world. By fostering an environment that prioritizes both linguistic competence and communicative ability, educators can better prepare students for future academic and professional success.

English was introduced in Ghana (formerly Gold Coast) during the colonial period when it became the official language of the British Empire. After independence

in 1957, English retained its status as the official language due to its central role in governance, education, and commerce.

Successive governments-maintained English as the medium of instruction, especially from upper primary through to tertiary education, reinforcing its significance in the country's development agenda. Ghana is a highly multilingual country with over 80 languages spoken. However, English serves as a unifying medium, often learned as a second language after local languages such as Akan, Ewe, Ga, Dagbani, Dagaare or others.

English is the medium of instruction from Primary 4 upwards. In lower primary, local languages are encouraged as the medium of instruction to help children develop cognitive and linguistic skills in their mother tongue before transitioning to English.

Many schools, especially in rural areas, face a shortage of qualified ESL teachers, textbooks, and learning materials. This often hampers students' ability to fully grasp English concepts.

While teacher training colleges emphasize teaching English, there is often a gap in specialized training for ESL. Many teachers struggle with effective methods for teaching English to students whose primary language is not English.

Ghanaian students often face interference from their native languages (example, in pronunciation, grammar, and syntax) when learning English. For instance, the absence of certain sounds in local languages leads to pronunciation difficulties.

In economically disadvantaged areas, parents may not speak English at home, making it difficult for children to practice and improve outside of school.

This traditional method is still common in Ghanaian classrooms, focusing on grammar rules and vocabulary with less emphasis on communicative skills. While this

method helps with passing exams, it may not develop students' speaking and listening abilities adequately.

Modern teaching strategies in urban areas emphasize CLT, which focuses on communication skills, practical language use, and interactive activities (Zou et al., 2022). This approach is more effective for developing fluency but is less frequently used due to the lack of training and resources. Some schools have adopted task-based methods, which involve using language through problem-solving activities. However, this approach is still in its early stages in many schools.

The advent of technology presents new opportunities for teaching English, especially in more developed areas. Digital tools such as language apps, multimedia resources, and online classes are becoming more popular. However, the digital divide between urban and rural areas limits the full implementation of such tools. In some rural communities, educational programs on television and radio play an essential role in teaching English, particularly during times like the COVID-19 pandemic, when in-person education was disrupted.

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has implemented national literacy programs aimed at improving English proficiency, particularly in early childhood and primary education. These initiatives aim to bridge the language gap between local languages and English. The government periodically reviews the curriculum to enhance English language teaching, introducing more practical language exercises and promoting literacy at the primary level (Yankson, 1994). A controversial policy that allows local languages to be used as the medium of instruction until Primary 3. While this policy helps strengthen cognitive skills in students' first language, transitioning to English in upper primary poses challenges for some students, leading to a disconnect in their learning process. Some private schools seem to have more resources, which

enhances ESL teaching compared to public schools. NGOs are also active in supporting English literacy, especially in underprivileged areas. Some organizations provide books, training and resource to improve the quality of English education in rural areas.

English in Ghana is often associated with prestige and upward mobility. Proficiency in English is viewed as essential for career success in fields such as law, education, business, and international relations. However, there are also concerns about linguistic imperialism, where English is prioritized over local languages (Awuah, 2022; Bukari, 2021; Owusu & Maomou, 2024).

It is common in Ghana for people to switch between English and their native languages in daily communication, especially in urban areas. This code-switching can sometimes hinder full proficiency in English, particularly when local languages dominate certain aspects of conversation.

Increasing specialized ESL training for teachers is essential for improving English language education. Workshops, in-service training, and continuous professional development are necessary to equip teachers with modern techniques (Owusu & Maomou, 2024). It is pedagogically prudent therefore, that more investment in textbooks, learning aids, and technology—particularly in rural schools—will go a long way in closing the gap between urban and rural students in English proficiency. It is also expedient to encourage a more balanced approach where students develop strong skills in both their native language and English is crucial for cognitive development and social identity preservation. Parents must be engaged, especially in rural areas, to help foster an English-friendly environment at home, such as encouraging reading, could significantly improve language acquisition outside the classroom.

Teaching English as a second language in Ghana presents both opportunities and challenges. While the country has made significant strides in ensuring English

remains an integral part of the educational system, more work is needed to address issues such as resource limitations, teacher training, and the urban-rural divide. By adopting a more comprehensive, inclusive approach, Ghana can better equip its students to thrive in an increasingly globalized world where English remains a dominant language of communication (Awuah, 2022; Bukari, 2021; Owusu & Maomou, 2024) communication (Awuah, 2022; Bukari, 2021; Owusu & Maomou, 2024).

While English remains the official language and medium of instruction in Ghana from Primary four onwards, the acquisition of its complex in grammatical structures specifically determiners remain a significant hurdle for Junior High School learners especially CRIG JHS learners. Determiners comprising articles (a, an, the), demonstratives (this, these, those, that) and quantifiers (some, each) serve as essential markers in English Syntax to clarify noun reference. However, the teaching and learning of these tools in the CRIG JHS and similar context are influenced by several linguistic and pedagogical factors.

#### **2.4 First language (L1) interference in determiner usage**

Teaching English as a Second Language and the Acquisition of Determiners in Ghana. The teaching of English as a Second Language (ESL) in Ghana is characterized by a complex interplay between official language policies and classroom realities. While English is the mandated medium of instruction from Primary 4 through Junior High School (JHS), studies indicate that this policy is often not strictly followed due to students' low proficiency levels (Owu-Ewie & Eshun, 2015). This lack of proficiency is particularly evident in the written compositions of JHS learners, where the mastery of determiners—essential components of the noun phrase—remains a significant grammatical challenge. The primary challenge in using determiners in Ghanaian written compositions is negative transfer or linguistic interference (Odumah, 2018).

This phenomenon occurs when learners apply knowledge from their native language to English, often resulting in errors. Local languages like Akan have different systems for marking definiteness, leading to difficulties in mastering English determiners (Amponsah, 2015).

One common issue is article omission, where learners omit indefinite articles (a/an) due to their absence in Ghanaian languages (Odumah, 2018). For instance, students might write "I saw boy" instead of "I saw a boy". Additionally, semantic confusion arises when learners struggle with the "zero article" (no determiner needed), often over-generalizing its use (Amponsah, 2015).

Negative transfer affects various linguistic levels, including phonological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic (Odumah, 2018). Factors contributing to interference include bilingualism, limited target language proficiency, and the need for synonyms (Amponsah, 2015). To address these challenges, educators recommend contextual teaching, needs analysis, and ample practice opportunities (Odumah, 2018).

The effects of negative transfer can be significant, hindering students' ability to engage with and understand English (Amponsah, 2015). Strategies to mitigate this include explicit instruction on language differences, examples of common errors, and varied practice exercises (Odumah, 2018).

In conclusion, negative transfer poses a significant challenge to Ghanaian students' mastery of English determiners. By understanding the sources of interference and implementing targeted strategies, educators can help students overcome these difficulties and improve their written compositions.

Language learning, like any kind of human learning, involves committing errors. It is important to note that researchers Gefen (1979) distinguish between mistakes which are lapses in performance and errors which reflect inadequate

competence. Lack of knowledge in linguistic competence can be described as errors. Learners who make fossilization errors are helpless as they do not know that they are making errors in their discourse (Lomotey, 2018). Errors are significant in three respects (Selinker, 1969; Touchie, 1989): (1) errors are important for the language teacher because they indicate the learner's progress in language learning; (2) errors are also important for the language researcher as they provide insights into how language is learnt; and (3) in fact, errors are significant to the language learner himself/herself as he/she gets involved in hypothesis testing.

Researchers in the field of applied linguistics usually distinguish between two types of errors: performance errors and competence errors (Touchie, 1989). Performance errors are those errors made by learners when they are tired or hurried. Normally, this type of error is not serious and can be overcome with little effort by the learner. Competence errors, on the other hand, are more serious than performance errors since competence errors reflect inadequate learning/teaching. Other researchers (such as Burt & Kiparsky, 1974) distinguish between local and global errors. Local errors do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of an utterance. Global errors, on the other hand, are more serious than local errors because global errors interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances. Local errors do not hinder communication and understanding the meaning of an utterance.

Global errors, on the other hand, are more serious than local errors because global errors interfere with communication and disrupt the meaning of utterances. Local errors involve noun and verb inflections, and the use of articles, prepositions, and auxiliaries. Global errors, for example, involve wrong word order in a sentence. There are two major sources of errors in second language learning. The first source is

interference from the native language while the second source can be attributed to intralingual and developmental factors (Kesmez, 2015, Owu-Ewie & Lomotey, 2016). The native language of learners plays a significant role in learning a second language.

Errors due to the influence of the native language are called interlingual errors. Interlingual errors are also called transfer or interference errors. The view that the native language plays a mostly negative role was emphasized as early as the forties and the fifties by Fries (1945) and Lado (1957). Intralingual and developmental errors are due to the difficulty of the second/target language. Intralingual and developmental factors include the following - simplification: Learners often choose simple forms and constructions instead of more complex ones. An example of simplification might involve the use of simple present instead of the present perfect continuous.

Other errors include: *overgeneralization* – This is the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply. Examples of overgeneralization include the use of *comed\** and *goed\** as the past tense forms of *come* and *go* and the omission of the third person singular *s* under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms as in. *go*. *Faulty teaching* – Sometimes it happens that learners' errors are teacher-induced ones, that is caused by the teacher, teaching materials, or the order of presentation. *Inadequate learning* – It is mainly caused by ignorance of rule restrictions or under differentiation and incomplete learning. An example is omission of the third person singular *s* as in: *He want\**.

Error analysis can be described as a means of documenting the errors that appear in learner language, determine whether those errors are systematic, and (if possible) explain what caused them (Rhalmi, 2009). Native speakers of the target language (TL) who listen to learner language probably find learners' errors very noticeable (Rhalmi, M. (2009). According to Green (2012), SLA research has given rise to several theories

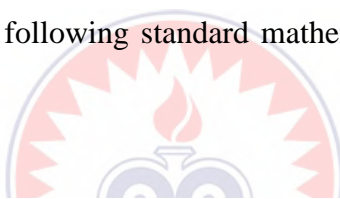
which have relevance to the development of effective and efficient teaching and learning of languages. The first is 'error analysis', which grew out of the work of Corder in 1967 and followed on from the CA theory which claimed to be able to predict learner errors by comparing the mother tongue with the second language (Lado, 1957). It is quite unreasonable to expect the learner of a second or third language not to exhibit such slips of the tongue (or pen) (Corder, 1967). It will be useful therefore hereafter to refer to errors of performance as *mistakes*, reserving the term *error* to refer to the systematic errors of the learner (Richards, 1974).

It is often claimed that there is a danger in paying too much attention to learners' errors. However, the reduction of errors is an important criterion for increasing language proficiency since the ultimate goal of second language learning is the attainment of communicative competence in the language. Scholars like Brown (1987), Josephson (1989) have observed that there has been a shift from preventing errors to learning from them (errors). According to Choon (1993) between 1950s and 1960s learning of language structures has moved from memorising correct models through the acknowledgement of the influence of psychology on the theories of language acquisition to the application of the communicative approach to language learning. This trend has aroused the interest of scholars in identifying, analysing and treating errors through error analysis in order to create techniques of effective teaching/learning of foreign languages.

The first step in the process of analysis of errors is the identification of errors. Corder (1973) provides a model for identifying erroneous utterances/expressions in a second language. According to Corder's model, any sentence uttered and subsequently transcribed can be analysed for error. Corder (1973) makes a major distinction between

‘overt’ and ‘covert’ errors. Overt erroneous expressions are unquestionably ungrammatical at the sentence level (Ojetunde, 2013).

Covert erroneous utterances/expressions are grammatically well formed at the sentence level but are not interpretable within the context of communication (Ojetunde, 2013). Covert errors, in other words, are not really covert at all if the surrounding discourse before and after the utterance is attended to. For example, “I have been around since morning” is grammatically correct at sentence level but as a response to: When did you come? It is obviously an error. A simpler and more straightforward set of items then would be sentencing level and discourse level errors rather than overt and covert errors. On a local level, errors can be described as errors of addition, omission, substitution and ordering following standard mathematical categories (Owu-Ewie & Lomotey, 2016).



## **2.5 The effects of English determiners on learners’ written compositions**

The usage of determiners is a fundamental part of writing because these words act as "signposts" that guide a reader through a story or an essay. In the context of Junior High School (JHS) learners in Ghana, the ability to use determiners like a, an, the, this, and some correctly has a direct impact on the clarity and professional tone of their written compositions. When students at CRIG JHS master these small but vital words, their writing becomes more cohesive, meaning the sentences link together smoothly to form a clear message. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), determiners are essential for "anaphoric reference," which is the process of linking a new sentence to a person or object mentioned earlier. Without these links, a student’s composition feels disjointed and difficult to follow, forcing the reader to guess which "boy" or "school" the writer is talking about (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

Beyond just linking sentences, determiners are responsible for "semantic clarity," which simply means making the meaning of a sentence clear to the reader. In many written compositions by Ghanaian ESL learners, the misuse or omission of determiners leads to "referential ambiguity," where it is unclear if a student is speaking about something specific or something in general (Lyons, 1999). For example, a student who omits an article may leave an examiner confused about the timing or the subjects of the narrative. Owusu (2022) points out that in the Ghanaian educational system, such errors often result in lower marks for "expression" in English exams, as the writing fails to communicate precise ideas. This is often caused by "language transfer," where students apply the grammar rules of their local languages—like Akan—to their English writing (Afriyie, 2014).

Furthermore, the presence or absence of determiners affects the overall "tone" of the composition. When students leave out determiners, their writing often sounds "telegraphic" or broken, similar to a text message rather than a formal essay. Ferris (2011) explains that this makes the learner's academic writing appear less sophisticated and can give the impression that the student lacks a strong command of the language. In schools like CRIG JHS, where students are preparing for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE), this "broken" style of writing can prevent them from achieving high scores. Additionally, Adjei (2014) notes that students who struggle with determiners often avoid using complex sentences altogether to avoid making mistakes. This results in very short, simple compositions that lack the depth and variety required for JHS-level writing. Ultimately, the correct usage of determiners does more than just fix grammar; it allows students to express complex thoughts clearly and professionally (Fenyi, 2023).

## 2.6 Related topics on English determiners

The study of English determiners is a vital part of linguistics because these small words act as the steering wheel for a sentence; they tell the reader exactly where to look and what to focus on. In the Ghanaian classroom, mastering these words is a major milestone for any student. However, as many researchers have pointed out, learning how to use determiners correctly is much more difficult than it appears. To understand why students at the Junior High School level struggle, we must look at how these words work and the various hurdles that stand in a learner's way.

A major theme in existing research is the mental challenge of "definiteness." According to Lyons (1999), choosing between "a" and "the" is not just about following a grammar rule; it is a cognitive task. A writer must constantly step into the shoes of their reader to ask, "Does my reader know which specific thing I am talking about?" For many learners, this is an abstract and confusing process. This often leads to "referential ambiguity," where a student might use the wrong word and leave the reader wondering which person or object they are describing. Because the rules are so complex, many students fall into the habit of using "the" as a "safety net" for every noun, regardless of whether it is a specific or a general reference.

Another significant hurdle explored in the literature is the way English categorizes objects as either countable or uncountable. This is a notorious "danger zone" for students (Abukari, 2017). For example, while it is correct to say "a chair," it is grammatically incorrect in English to say "a furniture." This distinction is hard for many ESL learners because the logic of their native language might categorize these objects differently. In many Ghanaian languages, the boundaries for what can be counted do not always match English rules. As a result, students often naturally apply

the logic of their mother tongue to their English writing, leading to errors where they add determiners to nouns that should actually be left alone.

The influence of the mother tongue is perhaps the most human element of this grammatical struggle. This is often called "language transfer," and it happens because our brains are wired to use the patterns we learned first. Afriyie (2014) explains that in languages like Akan, the markers that act like articles often come after the noun. In English, however, the determiner must come before it. This creates a "tug-of-war" in the student's mind. They might omit the determiner entirely or place it in the wrong spot because they are mentally translating from their first language. Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) also note that when students do not have enough opportunities to speak English outside of class, these native language patterns stay strong, making it even harder to master the English word order.

Finally, we must consider how these small words affect the "soul" of a student's composition—its cohesion and flow. Halliday and Hasan (1976) famously described determiners as the "glue" of a text. They are the pointers that help a reader follow a story from one sentence to the next. When a student uses them correctly, their writing flows smoothly. When they do not, the writing can sound "telegraphic" or "broken," as if the sentences are not talking to each other (Ferris, 2011; Adjei, 2014). This is not just a grammar problem; it affects the tone and the "voice" of the student's work. If the grammar feels fragmented, an examiner might unfairly judge the student's actual intelligence. Ultimately, the literature shows that mastering determiners is about more than just passing a test; it is about giving students the tools to express themselves clearly and confidently in a global language.

## 2.7 English determiner

The term determiner is used to describe a type of grammatical element that may come at the beginning of a noun phrase, a noun or a pronoun. Determiners show the type of reference the noun phrase, noun or pronoun make in a given sentence. Noun phrases are one of the constituents of sentence. The determiner can be used to clarify what a noun refers to.

The determiners in English constitute a relatively new class of grammatical items in the history of English linguistics. Determiner as a grammatical category is not defined at all in Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1960) and the words that constitute determiners are still referred to as adjectives in many modern dictionaries. The Grammar Book (1999) defines determiners as "that special class of words that limit the nouns that follow them" (Celce- Murcia Larsen-freeman, p-19) determiners are distinct from adjectives because they are relatively fixed category of words that are usually followed by a noun, as opposed to adjectives, which are frequently coined or invented and need not precede a noun.

According to Swan (1996), determiners are words that precede nouns, but are not adjectives. They are words such as the, this every and as a part of the nominal, they have their own specialized meaning; they can identify or qualify the nouns they modify. "Determiners specify more precisely the meaning of nouns they precede" (Aarts,2008, p27). Borjars and Burridge (2010) agrees to this by stating that determiners are functional words within noun phrases like *a book, an elephant, the girl* or *this man*. They went on to say that, the job of a determiner is related to the details of how a noun phrase is used to refer to something in some world (real or imagined). It can be deduced from Aarts, Borjars and Burridge and Swan that determiners are functional words that precede the noun and they modify or identify, quantify or specify but they are not

adjectives. They also give more precise meaning to the noun they modify. Whereas Aarts and Swan concentrated on the position and function of a determiner, Borjars and Burridge concentrated on the functions of the determiner without stating the position of a determiner in any given noun phrase.

Cobuild (1990) states that, there are two main ways in which you can use a noun group in English. You can use it to refer to someone or something knowing that the person you are speaking to understand which person or thing you are talking about. This can be called the specific way of referring to someone or something. Alternatively, you can use a noun group to refer to someone or something particular type, without saying which person or thing you mean. This can be called the general way of referring to someone or something.

In order to distinguish between these two ways of using a noun group, one needs to use a special class of words called determiners. There are two types of determiners, specific determiners and general determiners.

Cobuild did not state exactly what determiners are but he instead talked about the distinction between determiners based on their usage. He also said the determiners are put at the beginning of a noun group which I believe it is entirely the case. This is because a pronoun belongs to the noun group but you cannot precede a pronoun with a determiner. Huddleston and Pullum (2005 p.84) support that, “the three major subclass of noun are pronouns, proper nouns and common nouns.... Pronouns constitute a fairly small class of words distinguished from other nouns most clearly by their ability to combine determiners,”

Example *\*The he came here yesterday.*

According to Afreh, (2006) an important role in English grammar is played by determiner – words or phrases that precedes a noun or a noun phrase and serve to

express its reference in the context. The most common of these are the definite and indefinite articles, the and a(n). Other determiners in English include demonstratives such as this, that, those, these, possessives such as my and the boy's, and quantifiers such as all, many and three.

Annan (2014) states that, the term “determiner” is used in grammatical analysis to refer to a class of items whose main role is to concur with nouns to express a wide range of semantic contrast such as quantity or number. In English words that can occur in position occupied by the words the, an, my, a, our, your, their, in utterances like: *A man died, the man died; and an old man died;* are normally considered as determiners.

He goes on to say that the articles “a” and “the” are the most common determiners. Determiners come at the beginning of noun phrases, but they are not adjectives. Structurally (often) when determiners co-occur with nouns, they serve as markers (function as modifiers) of the noun which they co-occur; they make it clear, for example, which particular thing(s) we are referring to or how much of a substance we are talking about (Annan 2014).

Both Afreh and Annan believe that determiners are important in grammar. They also support that determiner come at the beginning of nouns or noun phrases and Annan went further to emphasised that “determiners are not adjectives”. Both Afreh and Annan agree that articles are the most common determiners.

In the English language, there are multiple linguistics elements used in sentences to perform different functions and make the sentences sound and look meaningful. Determiners are one of the linguistics components that are used to determine the noun in the sentence. The use of determiners is incredibly important in the English language, this is because determiners provide context and specificity to nouns since they are words that come before a noun and serve to modify the noun. The

use of determiners comes with knowing the kinds of nouns since every noun requires a right choice to use *a/an*. There is the need to identify first which nouns are countable and which nouns are uncountable and also, which are generic or specific. Because determiners have built in restriction other problems arise in their use. Some determiners have limitations with certain imagined uncountable nouns.

Sometimes mass nouns such as sand, oil, furniture and sugar. When mass nouns are used as countable; they cannot be plural so they do not combine with determiners that have either the plural or countable features (Kolln, 2002).

The Grammar Book (1999) defines determiners as “that special class of words that limit the nouns that follow them” (Celce- Murcia Larsen-freeman, p-19) determiners are distinct form adjectives because they are relatively fixed category of words.

Also, the term “determiner” is an element in the syntactic or logical structure of the noun group (Downing & Locke, 2006; Master, 2013). The basic function of a determiner is to particularize and help to identify the noun group referent in the context of the speech situation. “Determiners identify a nominal group referent by telling us which or what or whose it is, how much, how many, what part or degree of it we are referring to, how big or frequent it is, how it is distributed in space or time” (Downing & Locke, 2006, p. 424). It can be deduced from the above quotation that a person or thing that determines or decides something is a determiner. That is to say, a determiner is a modifying word that determines the kind of reference a noun or noun group has (*Learn English Grammar*, 2016). Master (2013) posits that determiner is used to describe the grammatical element that comes at the beginning of a noun phrase.

In the Cobuild frequency count, the most frequent form in the language is *the*, the fifth most frequent is *a*, and the top 100 forms include twelve central determiners

(Sinclair, 1990). The determiners in English constitute a relatively new class of grammatical items in the history of English linguistics (Master, 2013). When the noun has become so restricted morphologically as in English, it seems natural to turn to the existing specialized items at hand to provide the necessary signals for it. This new and important function of deictics and quantifiers has been recognised by distinguishing a new class of grammatical items: *determiners*. Therefore, determiners have roles to play in English.

The function of determiners in general is to "pick out a certain element or certain elements from a certain set . . . of entities over which the hearer intends to quantify" (Platteau, 1980, p. 114) or to "modify the scope of the set designated by the noun that follows" (Stephanides, 1978, p. 79), that is, to "restrict or widen, to specify or generalize the meaning of the modified noun" (p. 84). Barrie (1971, p. 331) describes the determiners as: "aspectual and or modal particles [that give] a particular colouring to the nouns they introduce, in much the same way as the different forms or auxiliaries of the English verb serve to convey aspectual or modal information, and enjoying a semi-autonomous existence, in the sense that they sometimes modify strongly the value of the noun they preface and sometimes merely reinforce it in a way that is possibly redundant."

Klegr (1987, p. 31) concludes that "the function of determiners appears to be to provide grammatical status combined with specific semantic reference." This implies that both specific and general meanings are exemplified through the use of the English determiner system. For instance, why should a speaker use *a* instead of *the*? *In other words*, "I know a boy" and "I know the boy", do both sentences convey the same meaning semantically and pragmatically in context communication or in a natural or real linguistic environment? It is for this reason that one may agree with Klegr (1987)

that the function of determiners appears to be to give grammatical status coupled with combined specific semantic reference.

According to Abney (1987) a phrase that is headed by a determiner is called a determiner phrase. The head of a DP is a determiner, just as the head of a noun phrase is a noun in English. For example, in the phrase *the boy*, “*the*” is a determiner and “*boy*” is a noun; the two combine to form a phrase. The only grammatical form that can function as the determiner phrase head in English grammar is the determiner (The Linguistics Librarian, 2018). Determiners are grouped based on their positions in the determiner phrase. All determiners can be grouped into two, namely specific determiners and general determiners (Downing & Locke, 2006). The two types of these determiners can be subdivided as pre-determiners, central determiners and post-determiners (Downing and Locke, 2006; Master, 2013). In other words, because of co-occurrence restrictions, the determiners are divided into the three separate groups (predeterminers, central determiners and post determiners).

A determiner is a term for any kind of (mostly) non-lexical elements (e.g., *the*, *that*, *two*, *a*, *many*, *all*, etc.) preceding a noun in a noun phrase (Master, 2013). A distinction is made between definite and indefinite determiners. Intuitively, a definite determiner makes the reference of the noun phrase it 'determines' definite, whereas an indefinite determiner does not. The class of definite determiners is taken to include the definite article *the*, demonstratives (*this*, *those*, etc.), possessives (*his*, *John's*), question words (*which*), and quantifiers (*all*, etc.) The indefinite article *a(n)* and numerals like *two*, *many*, etc. are examples of indefinite determiners. Also, determiners have been analysed as functional heads (Downing & Locke, 2006; Master, 2013). In other words, the determiner phrase is the functional projection of a determiner.

The definiteness of the determiners in English is typically conveyed through the use of the definite article *the*, but other determiners can also mark the noun phrase as definite. The definite determiners are therefore the following: the, the demonstratives *this, these* and *that, those'*, the possessives *my, your, his, her, its, our* and *their* and the quantifier *both* (Spinillo, 2004). For example, in a sentence like *All boys walk*, the determiner *all* is interpreted as the inclusion-relation between the set of boys and the set of things that walk.

A noun phrase is a referential expression that can serve as an argument of a verb or an adposition and generally consist of a noun plus (in some languages determiners are obligatory) determiners plus optional modifiers (Huddleston & Geoffrey, 2022). According to Master (2013; Downing & Locke, 2006), because of co-occurrence restrictions, English determiners are divided according to their position in a sentence or phrase and it is divided into three separate groups: (a) predeterminers, (b) central determiners, and (c) post determiners (Leech & Svartvik, 1975), although "whether the pre- and post-determiners are to be seen as an integral part (subsets) of the determiner class or as a separate, transitional class between determiners and modifiers (Duskova, 1985) . . . is still far from clear" (Klegr, 1987, p. 29).

The three groups are shown in Table 2.1. Master (2013) emphasises that the central determiners are the most important of the three groups, because they include the articles. Their formal features are that (1) they constitute a separate element within the noun phrase (Master, 2013; Duskova, 1985), (2) determiners in English are obligatory elements in noun phrases, (3) they are mutually exclusive (i.e., there can only be one at a time), (4) they occupy the initial position within the premodification structure (determiner-modifier-head noun), and (5) they form a closed system of items (Klegr, 1978).

The predeterminers and post determiners, on the other hand, are not obligatory and are not mutually exclusive with the articles. There are some co-occurrence restrictions, usually based on quantification (e.g., \*all some people), but several subgroups may combine (e.g., the other two candidates). Furthermore, these determiners do not form a universally accepted closed class (e.g., if both is a predeterminer, why not two of; if many is a post determiner, why not numerous?). Kennedy (1980) has dealt with quantifiers, to which the post determiners clearly belong. The governing principle of placement of multiple determinatives is the same as that of a whole noun group, that is, a gradual process of dependency selection from right to left, as in: Pre-determinatives Central Post- HEAD and partitives determinatives (Table 1).

**Table 1: Groups/divisions of English determiner system**

<b>Pre determiners</b>	<b>Central determiners</b>	<b>Post determiners</b>
quantifiers (e.g., all)	articles (a, the, Ø)	cardinal numerals (e.g.,
multipliers (e.g., both,	demonstratives (e.g., this)	two)
twice, double)	possessives (e.g., my,	ordinal numerals (e.g.,
fractions (e.g., half, one-	John's)	first)
third)	assertive/non-assertive	general ordinals (e.g.,
intensifiers (e.g. what,	(e.g., some)	next)
such)	negative (i.e., no)	quantifiers (e.g., many,
	universal (e.g., each)	few, several, little)
	non-assertive dual (i.e.,	
	either) negative dual (i.e.,	
	neither) wh-determiners	
	(e.g., which)	

Adapted from Downing et al. (2006) and Master (2013)

**Table 2: Pre-determinatives, Central Post- Head and Partitives Determinatives**

Pre determiners	Central determiners	Post determiners	Head
<b>All</b>	<b><i>His</i></b>	<b><i>Many</i></b>	Wives
<b>I met <i>all</i></b>	<b><i>my</i></b>	<b><i>many</i></b>	Friends
<b>They visited <i>all</i></b>	<b><i>the</i></b>	<b><i>three former</i></b>	Vice-Chancellors
<b>We saw <i>all</i></b>	<b><i>His</i></b>	<b><i>Many</i></b>	Friends
<b><i>Half</i></b>	<b><i>His</i></b>	<b><i>last sixty</i></b>	Dollars
<b><i>A few of</i></b>	<b><i>My</i></b>	<b><i>many other</i></b>	Friends
<b><i>Some of</i></b>	<b><i>the</i> lecturer's</b>	<b><i>Former</i></b>	Students
<b><i>None of</i></b>	<b><i>Those</i></b>	<b><i>several</i></b>	Options

Adapted from Downing et al. (2006) and Master (2013)

In Table 2, the examples (*Half his last sixty dollars, a few of my many other friends, some of the lecturer's former students, and none of those several options*) illustrate the positions of the determiners in phrases and clauses. The positionings of the underlined determiners according to Master (2013) fit into the classification of determiners. Downing and Locke (2006) illustrate the various classifications in these structures as *What an idea! Here, from all dollars, we first select sixty; these are particularised as his last sixty dollars and of these we select half and say: 'He paid only half his last sixty dollars for his seat.'*

A determiner is a word that goes before a noun and describes how we are referring to it in the sentence (Master, 2013). The term determiner is also used to describe the grammatical element that comes at the beginning of a noun phrase. A determiner is an obligatory element of a compound and complex noun phrase, the only other obligatory member of which is the noun itself. Noun phrases are one of the constituents of a sentence. A singular count noun cannot appear by itself in English: it must minimally be preceded by a determiner (Master, 2013).

### 2.7.1 Pre-determiners

A pre-determiner is a word that is used before the central and post-determiner, but it is still part of the noun group (*Collins Dictionary*, 2023). For example: **All** his many friends have disappointed him. Here, “all” is a predeterminer, “his” is a central determiner and “many” is a post-determiner, based on their positions in the above sentence.

All pre-determiners can be divided into separate groups, such as: multipliers, fractions, intensifiers and others (Pupa, 2020). Multipliers are the type of pre-determiners used to specify the number of objects mentioned in the noun phrase. These are used before central determiners, mainly referring to quantity. Examples of multipliers are twice, three times, four times, ten times, etc. Examples of multipliers in a sentence are as follows:

1. We meet Dr Kwasi *twice* a month.
2. I see a dentist *two times* a year.
3. In just a week, she spent *ten times* my monthly budget.

Fractions are pre-determiners that are used to talk about part of a whole. These include words such as: half, one-third, two-fourth. Some illustrations are as follows:

1. Add **one-third** the water to his food.
2. I spent **half** my salary on Grammar books.
3. She used **two-fourth** that thread to knit a scarf.

Intensifiers are the most emotional of all pre-determiners, because they are used to add certain emotional coloration to a noun phrase and a determiner before it. They can express disappointment, surprise, pleasure and other emotions. Intensifiers include words: such, what, rather, quiet, etc. Below are some examples of intensifiers:

1. Look, **what** a beautiful morning!

2. That man is **such** a gossip.
3. **What** a lively day!
4. My friend is **such** a beautiful woman!

Words like “rather” and “quite” deserve special attention. They are considered to be commenting words, which are able to intensify a certain quality of a noun phrase. They do not have any stable positive or negative characteristic, because the emotion depends on the adjective or determiner that stands before a noun phrase. For example:

1. She was **quite** a charming lady;
2. He told us **quite** a sad a story;
3. It was **rather** a chilly morning;
4. They gave me **rather** a sweet present.

Two or more pre-determiners cannot co-occur in the structure of the same noun phrase.

Example, it is wrong to say,

1. **All both** countries.
2. **Double half** the price.

However, in some cases, we may have some of them co-occurring. For example, *all and such*, *all and the*, *double and the* can co-occur.

1. **All such** books.
2. **All the** books
3. **Double the** amount.

### 2.7.2 Central determiners

According to Halliday in Kies (2016), central determiners are classified into three components (articles, demonstratives and possessives). Articles (definite and

indefinite) are part of function words in English and they are used to determine the headword in the noun phrase (Fitriani & Agung, 2019; Hilde & Hasselgard, 2012).

### **2.7.2.1 Articles in English**

English features three types of articles: the indefinite article (a/an), the definite article (the), and the zero article (where no article is used). According to Downing (2015) and Quirk et al. (1985), the selection of an article is determined by the type of noun being referenced. Biber et al. (1999) elaborate on this by noting that the indefinite and definite articles are the most frequently used. They further observe that articles are most prevalent in academic prose compared to news or conversational contexts. This makes sense, as Biber et al. (1999) explain, since conversations often involve proper nouns, possessive determiners, and genitives, which either replace the article or do not require one at all. In other words, conversational language often revolves around familiar topics and is generally more repetitive, reducing the need for articles.

#### **2.7.2.1.1 The definite article**

The definite article in English is represented by the word "the." It is a crucial grammatical element that indicates specificity and familiarity regarding the noun it precedes. Understanding the usage of "the" is essential for effective communication in English, as it helps convey precise meanings and contexts.

The definite article "the" is used to refer to a specific noun that is known to both the speaker and the listener. It signals that the noun has been previously mentioned, is unique, or is identifiable within the context. For example, in the sentence "I saw the dog," "the" implies that both the speaker and listener are aware of which dog is being referred to.

In English, "the" always precedes a noun or noun phrase. It can be used with both singular and plural nouns:

- Singular: "the book"

- Plural: "the books"

When dealing with noun phrases, "the" precedes the entire phrase rather than just the noun:

- Example: "the red car" or "the very first book."

The definite article has several key uses:

Referring to Something Mentioned Before:

- Example: "I bought a car. The car is red." Here, "the car" refers to the specific car mentioned earlier.

Example: "The sun rises in the east." This indicates that there is only one sun relevant to our context.

The definite article is used to identify a specific item in context. For example: "Can you pass me the salt?" This assumes that there is a particular salt container known to both speaker and listener.

The definite article is used to show superlatives and ordinals (Nordquist, 2018)

- Example: "She is the best student in class." or "This is the first time I've been here."

It is used for generalizing about a group. For example: "The tiger is an endangered species." Here, it refers to all tigers as a group.

6. With Geographical Features

- Example: "The Amazon River flows through South America."

7. **\*\*With Specific Institutions or Services\*\***:

- Example: "I heard it on the radio." This refers to a specific service known to both parties.

8. **\*\*Before Names of Certain Countries and Organizations\*\***:

- Example: "The United States," "The Netherlands," or "The United Nations."

While "the" is widely used, there are exceptions based on context:

Generally, proper nouns do not take an article (e.g., Paris, John). However, some exceptions exist (e.g., The Hague).

Most country names do not use an article (e.g., France), but some do (e.g., The United Kingdom).

The definite article "the" plays a vital role in English grammar by providing clarity and specificity in communication. Its correct usage helps avoid ambiguity and ensures that listeners understand exactly what nouns refer to in conversation or writing. Mastery of the definite article enhances overall language proficiency and effectiveness in conveying meaning. Understanding its various applications allows speakers and writers to communicate more precisely and effectively within different contexts.

**2.7.2.1.2 The Indefinite Article**

The indefinite article (a/an) is typically used with singular countable nouns, as Biber et al. (1999) note. It narrows the reference of the noun to a single member of a class and is often used to introduce a new specific entity into discourse. The indefinite article a/an is employed when something is not common ground—meaning the listener or reader is not yet familiar with the specific circumstance (Downing, 2015; Master, 2013). This indicates that there is no shared knowledge between the speaker and the listener. As discourse continues, if the speaker initially uses an indefinite article, subsequent references to that entity usually appear as definite noun phrases or personal pronouns (Biber et al., 1999).

For example, consider the following sentences:

"A cat was the victim of a cruel attack when *she* was shot in the neck by a pellet. *The* tortoise shell cat was found wounded and frightened in Grangetown, Middlesbrough, and brought to an animal sanctuary" (Biber et al., 1999, 260). Initially, the cat is unknown, leading the writer to use the indefinite article. Later, the writer uses a personal pronoun instead of repeating the article, signalling that the same cat is being referred to. By the second sentence, the definite article is used because the story is continuing about the same cat.

Their usage depends on whether the preceding word is a consonant or a vowel sound (Fitriani & Agung, 2019). There is no plural indefinite article in English (Hilde, 2012). It means that an indefinite article only occurs with countable nouns in the singular form as can be seen in the following examples:

- a) Jerry John Rawlings was *a* former President of the Republic of Ghana.
- b) He was *a* national hero.

#### 2.7.2.1.3 The Zero Article

The zero article refers to instances where no article is used before a common noun. Leech notes that the zero article can be contrasted with the definite and indefinite articles. Downing et al. (2006, 422) add that the zero article expresses the "loosest and therefore most frequent type of generic statement." It is typically used to introduce a general idea or when referring to plural countable nouns or uncountable (mass) nouns (Downing, 2015). For example, in the sentence "Mosquitoes are common in Africa," "mosquitoes" is a plural countable noun. In "Beans is one of this country's major exports," "beans" is an uncountable noun (Downing et al., 2006, 422).

For plural countable nouns, the reference can be either generic or indefinite, depending on the predication. For instance, "Frogs have long hind legs" refers generically to all frogs, while "He catches frogs" refers to an indefinite number of frogs

(Downing, 2015). In other words, the articles in English—indefinite, definite, and zero—serve essential functions in conveying specificity and definiteness in communication. Understanding their usage is critical for effective expression in both spoken and written forms.

Arifin and Farida (2020) state that grammar is important to write cohesively. Thus, the definite and indefinite articles were considerably crucial to write the definiteness dimension of a statement or description. On the other hand, the study of Aoyama and Takahashi (2020) reported that the native and non-native writers of English language experienced a difficulty to use articles properly in their writings.

#### **2.7.2.2 Demonstratives**

Demonstrative determiners are used to indicate specific items in relation to the speaker's context. The primary demonstratives in English are "this," "that," "these," and "those" (Downing, 2015).

*This* and *these* refer to items that are close to the speaker, while *that* and *those* refer to items that are farther away. For example, "This book is interesting" indicates a book that is nearby, whereas "Those books on the shelf are mine" refers to books that are not immediately present (Biber et al., 1999).

Demonstratives help to clarify which specific items are being discussed, making them crucial for effective communication.

#### **2.7.2.3 Possessives**

Possessive determiners express ownership or belonging. Common possessive determiners include "my," "your," "his," "her," "its," "our," and "their." These words precede nouns to indicate to whom the noun belongs. For example, in the sentence "Her

car is parked outside," "her" specifies that the car belongs to the person being referred to (Leech, 2006).

Possessive determiners provide essential context and help to establish relationships between entities in a sentence. They can also follow the noun, as in "That pizza is ours," where "ours" indicates possession (Betts, 2024).

#### 2.7.2.4 Indefinite Pronouns

Indefinite pronouns are used to refer to non-specific items or quantities. Common examples include "some," "any," "each," and "every." These pronouns can function as determiners when they precede nouns.

*Some* is often used in affirmative sentences, as in "I bought some apples," indicating an unspecified quantity of apples. Conversely, *any* is typically used in negative sentences or questions, such as "Do you have any apples?" (Byjus, 2023).

*Each* and *every* refer to individual items within a group, with "each" emphasising individuality and "every" emphasising the totality of the group. For example, "Each student must submit their assignment" focuses on individual students, while "Every student must submit their assignment" refers to all students collectively (EF, 2024).

Central determiners that come before post determiners, consist of the articles *the, a/an*, demonstratives, possessives, indefinite pronouns like *some, any, each*.

For examples:

- a) I know all *his* many friends.
- b) All *the* several attempts have proved futile.

It can be deduced from the examples above that; the determiners ‘*his*’ and ‘*the*’ are central determiners based on their positions in the two sentences (Downing, 2015; Master, 2013).

Central determiners, including articles, demonstratives, possessives, and indefinite pronouns, are fundamental to the structure and clarity of English noun phrases. They specify, quantify, and clarify the nouns they modify, playing a critical role in effective communication. Understanding their usage is essential for mastering English grammar and enhancing both written and spoken expression.

### 2.7.3 Post determiners

Post determiners are used after central determiners and include numbers (*two, first in those two problems, my first job*) and some quantifiers (*many, several in your many kindnesses, his several attempts*) (Master, 2013; Nordquist, 2019; Sideeg, 2016).

- All the **three** students (cardinal numeral).
- All the **three** former presidents were there.
- I met all my **many** students.
- We saw all his **many** children.

In English grammar, post determiners are a type of determiner that appear after the central determiner in a noun phrase. Post determiners function to provide additional information about the quantity or quality of the noun being referred to (Nordquist, 2019). Some common examples of post determiners in English include "many," "several," "few," "numerous," "certain," "other," "same," "former," and "latter." For instance, in the noun phrase "all his many books," "many" is a post determiner. Post determiners can also function in combination with other determiners, such as articles or possessives, to modify the meaning of the noun phrase. For example, in the noun

phrase "my three favourite movies," "my" is a possessive determiner, "three" is a central determiner indicating the number of movies being referred to, and "favourite" is a modifier indicating the quality of the movies. In short, post determiners provide a way to add specificity and nuance to the meaning of noun phrases in English (Sideeg, 2016).

### **2.7.3.1 The Zero Article**

The zero article occurs when no article precedes a common noun. It contrasts with definite and indefinite articles and is often used for general statements involving plural countable nouns or uncountable nouns (Leech; Downing et al., 2006). For example, "Kangaroos are common in Australia" uses the zero article for the plural noun "kangaroos," while "Wine is one of this country's major exports" refers to an uncountable noun. The zero article can indicate generic references or indefinite quantities, as seen in sentences like "Frogs have long hind legs" versus "He catches frogs" (Downing, 2015). Understanding articles is vital for clarity in both written and spoken communication.

### **2.7.3.2 Indefinite Pronouns**

Indefinite pronouns refer to non-specific items or quantities, including terms like "some," "any," "each," and "every." These pronouns can function as determiners preceding nouns. For instance, "I bought some apples" uses "some" for an unspecified quantity, while "Do you have any apples?" employs "any" in a question. Each and every emphasize different aspects of groups; "each" highlights individuality while "every" indicates totality (Byjus, 2023; EF, 2024).

### 2.7.3.3 Central Determiners

Central determiners encompass articles, demonstratives, possessives, and indefinite pronouns that precede post determiners in noun phrases. They specify and clarify nouns, playing a critical role in effective communication. For example:

“I know all his many friends,” where “his” and “all” are central determiners.

### 2.7.3.4 Post Determiners

Post determiners follow central determiners and provide additional information about quantity or quality. Examples include numbers ("two") and quantifiers ("many"). In phrases like “all his many books,” “many” acts as a post determiner that adds specificity. Post determiners can combine with other determiners to modify noun phrases further (Nordquist, 2019; Sideeg, 2016).

Understanding the roles of various types of determiners—indefinite articles, zero articles, demonstratives, possessives, indefinite pronouns, central determiners, and post determiners—is essential for mastering English grammar. These elements significantly contribute to clarity and precision in communication by specifying and quantifying nouns effectively.

## 2.8 Determiners and adjectives

According to Close (1990), in traditional English grammar, determiners were not considered as a separate part of speech – most determiners have been traditionally classed along with adjectives, and this still occurs; for example, demonstrative and possessives determiners are sometimes described as *demonstratives adjectives* and *possessive adjectives* respectively.

However, modern theorists of grammar prefer to distinguish determiners as separate word class from adjectives, which are simple modifiers of nouns, expressing

attributes of the thing referred to. The distinction applies particularly in languages like English that use definite and indefinite articles, frequently as a necessary component of noun phrases – the determiners may be taken to be a class of words that includes the articles as well as other words that function in the place of articles.

There are however certain differences between determiners and ordinary adjectives. Determiners take the place (or can take the place) of articles in noun phrases, whereas adjectives do not. For example, *my house* (not *\*the my house*) but *the big house*. Adjectives can generally be used in combination without restriction, whereas only certain combinations of determiners are allowable. Most adjectives have comparative and superlative forms (happier, happiest, more beautiful, most beautiful) whereas determiners generally are not (expect much/many, few, little) determiners often have corresponding pronouns, while adjectives do not. Adjectives can modify singular or plural nouns., while determiners are sometimes restricted to one or the other (as with much and many). All determiners are closed-class words while adjectives are open-class words (Swan 1996).

When determiners and adjectives (or other modifiers) occur in the same noun phrase, the determiner generally comes first; *the big book*, not *big the book*. However, there are certain exceptions when the determiner is the indefinite article a(n): that article normally comes after an adjective modified with so, as, too, or how but this is due to stylistics. For example:

- *It was so terrible a disease that..... Can alternatively be:*
- *It was such a terrible disease that.....*

From the discussion on determiners so far, we can say that determiners are functional words that form part of a noun phrase precede the noun in the noun phrase. The types of determiners accepted by most researchers are the articles (a, an, the),

demonstratives (this, that, those, these), interrogatives (what, which, whose), negative (no), indefinites (some any, all, few, both many, each, either, neither, enough) and quantifiers such as cardinals ( one, two, three, four ) and ordinals ( first, second third, fourth). The determiners make the head word of the noun phrase specific or generic. Determiners are not adjectives but they can co-occur with adjectives in a noun phrase and when they do, the determiners precede the adjectives (Thakur 2011).

Adjectives belong to the open class words whereas determiners belong to the closed class words and therefore cannot be added to (Quirk and Greenbaum 2000).

## **2.9 Usage of determiners**

Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman (1991: 19) describes determiner as a special class of words that limits (or determines) the nouns that follow them. These words could be in the form of articles (the, a(n)), demonstratives (this, that, these, those), and possessive determiners (my, your, his, her, its, our, their). Structurally, determiner precedes an adjective if there are adjectives in the noun phrase. In cases where no adjectives are present, they are positioned directly in front of a noun. Where the sentence “I put my backpack on the front porch, and now I can’t find it.” Is concerned, two determiners can be detected. The first is my, a possessive determiner that precedes the noun backpack while the second is the, a definite article that precedes the adjective front. In both cases, both my backpack and the front porch are noun phrases. Where the English structure is concerned, we can say that a determiner is an optional element in the noun phrase that occurs at the front most position in the noun phrase. It can be in a form of definite or indefinite articles, demonstrative or possessive determiners and course of quantifiers.

Since determiners are modifiers of nouns, where the English structure is concerned, they are often restricted with respect to the number and / or countability of

the head nouns with which they can co-occur. In other words, there are some determiners that occur only with singular count nouns like a, one, another and there are also determiners that occur only with plural count nouns: these, those, many, both, two, three, and so on.

There are a few determiners that occur only with uncountable nouns and they are the quantifiers much, and (a) little while there are also some determiners that occur with either singular or uncountable nouns such as this and that. Determiners like some, all, no, and other occur with either plural nouns or uncountable nouns, while determiners such as the, my, his, and other possessive determiners, can occur with any kind of common noun and thus are not restricted with regard to the number and countability of the head noun. These agreement features are useful information about determiners and nouns that are unique to a language like the English language (Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman 1999: 83).

### 2.9.1 The Article ‘The’ As A Determiner and Its Uses

Determiner classes include the indefinite ‘a’ or ‘an,’ which signals only countable nouns, and the definite ‘the’, which can signal all classes of nouns (San Miguel, Barraquio, & Revilla, 2010). ‘The’ is included among the central determiners (McArthur, 1992). ‘*The*’ is the definite article used to indicate a specific class of nouns or pronouns or a specific member of a class of nouns or pronouns. The definite article is omitted in case there is no specified amount or quantity of the noun, for example, Teachers assign homework (an indefinite number of teachers assign an indefinite amount of homework) (Ehrlich, 2011). Determiners as the signaler or marker in a noun phrase indicates whether it is definite, indefinite, or limiting it in some other way, such as through negation. In addition, determiners may identify the noun as specific or general and quantify it specifically or refer to quantity in general (Mateyak, 2000).

Moreover, both determiners and nouns are elements required of a noun phrase. The former is used to describe the grammatical element that comes at the beginning of a noun phrase and characterizes the noun phrase that co-occurs with it. These, likewise, help define the relationship of the noun to the speaker or listener or reader. Since noun phrases, not nouns, are one of the constituents of a sentence, it follows that a noun cannot appear by itself in an English sentence: it must minimally be preceded by a determiner (Master, 1993). Likewise, Azar (1992), in his book, explicitly mentioned that the article ‘the’ is used in front of singular and plural count nouns as well as the noncount nouns. Also, it is used to refer to the same specific thing or person. Generally, article ‘the’ functions as a definite determiner which is placed before a noun or noun phrase when a person or thing has already been mentioned in the preceding statements. Likewise, ‘the’ is used when a person or thing is known to both the writer and the reader.

### **2.9.2 The use of demonstrative determiners**

Demonstratives are words that are used to determine what the nouns are referring to. For example, “this problem” in the example above, refers to a problem that was just talked about in the discourse. This is called deictic reference, which can be spatial, temporal, for real-world objects for example, but also for language elements within the discourse. The distance referred to can have two values, such as the English “this” and “that”, which correspond to proximal and distal reference.

### **2.9.3 The use of possessive determiners**

Possessives are words that indicate the people whom an object, a quality, or a property, belongs to. Possessives can take all the persons that are found in verbs and personal pronouns: 1st person singular or plural (the speaker(s)), 2nd person singular or plural (the person(s) the speaker is talking to), 3rd person singular or plural (can refer

to anything but the speaker and the interaction partner). For example, in English, the singular possessives are “my” (1st person), “your” (2nd person), “his”, “her”, “its” (3rd person).

## 2.10 Definition of Error

Learning a second language requires much more effort compared to learning a native language. Learning a native language is easier because learners have been exposed to it since they were born. Additionally, the people and the environment use the native language to communicate among themselves. Hence when children are able to speak, their first word will be what they imitate from their environment (native language). However, English is being taught only in schools and moreover, few hours are only allotted for English teaching and. Unless students have special interest and effort in learning English, it will not be learnt easily. Most of the students memorize everything but do not practice sentence formation regularly.

Triestari, et al (2012) says that, errors in grammar can be found in sentences when the sentences are not in the correct structure.

Chomsky said that the theory of genetic component of the language faculty is planted partly in the human brain which he named as Universal Grammar. He said that certain set of structural rules are innate to humans and independent sensory experience.

When a second or foreign language is learnt, the first language that is the mother tongue interferes without the knowledge of the learner. This is called “interlingual or intralingual” which will lead to error. Therefore, it needs more effort to learn because their prior knowledge of language is planted partly in their brain and interferes their second or foreign language learning.

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete

learning. In another study, an error was seen to be a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from norms of the target language (Eun-pyo, 2002). Brown (2002) and Ellis (2003) differentiate between covert and overt errors. They define covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to obviously ungrammatical utterances. Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 67) also defines error as red flags, that means they are warning signals, that provide evidence of the learner's knowledge of second language. Carson (2001)), suggests different reasons errors occur. First, learners may translate from L1, or may try out what they assume as legitimate structure of the target language. Secondly, they tend to over-generalised the rules for stylistic feature when acquiring new discourse structures.

Error is a systematic deviation, when a learner has not learned something and consistently gets it wrong. Errors are deviation that are made by a second language learner without realizing and it is not due to carelessness (Kwok 1998).

#### Error and mistake

Error and mistake are considered to be synonymous. However, Corder (1967) considers „performance slip“ as „mistake“ and the term „error (competence)“ for the „semantic ones“ for L2 learning. Brown (1941) agrees with Corder by indicating that a mistake is a performance error that is either a random guess or a „slip“ in that, it is a failure to correctly utilize a known system. Corder (1967) throws more light on his definition by saying that an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker and it reflects the competence of the learner. And to Habibullah (2010) mistake can be self-corrected by a native speaker, but errors cannot be self-corrected. Errors are the result of incomplete knowledge and mistakes are made by a learner when they are writing or speaking and are caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness,

or some other aspect performance (Botley, 2015, p. 83). The distinction between errors and mistakes was summed up by James (1998) cited in Botley (2015) which says that errors can be defined as systematic deviations from the rules of a target language, as they are believed to occur because a learner does not know a given rule or feature, such as subject-verb agreement or noun plurality in English.

Errors might arise from little or no input on a given language feature during language lessons. Mistakes, on the other hand, are usually seen as unintentional, accidental slips resulting from simple laziness or forgetting, or insufficiently internalized rules. If a learner makes a mistake, he or she will normally be capable of correcting it, because of awareness of the rule that has been broken. On the other hand, errors cannot be self-corrected by the learner because the rule being broken is not part of the learner's knowledge of the target language. From the various explanations given, one can conclude that errors are grammatically incorrect forms that occur in writing or speaking because of the incomplete learning or knowledge of grammatical rules of language and cannot be self-corrected, but mistakes or lapses are socially inappropriate forms that happen because of lack of attention, fatigue and carelessness and can be self-corrected.

Botley (2015) indicates that the difficulty in clearly defining and delineating errors and mistakes provides a challenge for those who aim to investigate both Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and how effectively language educators teach a new language, because understanding what goes wrong when learners communicate in a target language reflects not only their nascent knowledge of the language's rules, but also offers direct evidence of how well they have learned, and how well they have been taught.

## **Causes of Error**

A lot of factors come into play when it comes to committing errors. Some of the factors are explicit, while others are implicit. Linguists have presented a lot of causes of some of these errors. These causes form the main reasons behind some of the errors committed by learners of second language. James (1998 as cited in Heydari et al, 2012:1585)) states that there are four causes of errors: They are:

### **2.10.1 Interlingual causes**

These kinds of errors are influenced by the native languages which interfere with target language learning.

### **2.10.2 Intralingual cause**

These types of errors are caused by the target language itself like: false analogy, misanalysis (learners form a wrong hypothesis), incomplete rule application, (this is the converse of overgeneralization or one might call it under generalization as the learners do not use all the rules), exploiting redundancy (this error occurs by carrying considerable redundancy). This is shown throughout the system in the form of unnecessary morphology and double signalling), overlooking co-occurrence restrictions (caused by overlooking the exceptional rules), hypercorrection or monitor overuse (due to learners' over cautious and strict observance of rules) and overgeneralization or system simplification (caused by the misuse of words or grammatical rules). 2.3.3 Communication strategy-based errors These errors are subdivided into the holistic strategies or approximation and analytic strategies.

#### 4 Context of learning

These errors are the result of being misled by the way in which the teachers give definitions, examples, explanations and arrange practice opportunities. These errors are mostly caused by the teaching and learning process. Touchie (1986, pp. 77-78) also discusses the following as the causes of some errors:

##### Simplification

This is where second language learners choose simple forms and constructions instead of more complex ones. He gave an example of simplification as the use of simple present instead of the present perfect continuous.

##### 6 Overgeneralization

This is the use of one form or construction in one context and extending its application to other contexts where it should not apply. He states that overgeneralization include the use of *comed* and *goed* as the past tense forms of *come* and *go* and the omission of the third person singular *s* under the heavy pressure of all other endless forms. He indicates that simplification and overgeneralization are used by learners in order to reduce their linguistic burden.

##### Hypercorrection

This is where the zealous efforts of teachers in correcting their students' errors induce the students to make errors in otherwise correct forms.

##### Faulty teaching

These errors are teacher-induced ones; thus, they are caused by the teacher, teaching materials, or the order of presentation. That notwithstanding, some teachers are also influenced by their pupils' errors in the course of long teaching.

## 9 Avoidance

This happens when some syntactic structures are difficult to produce by some learners which consequently make these second language learners avoid these structures and use simpler structures instead.

## Importance of Errors in Teaching and Learning of English Language

Different views exist on what constitutes a linguistic error and on how it should be treated within an L2 learning or usage frame. As previously discussed, language transfer has always been a central issue in applied linguistics. Language transfer may occur either in the acquisition procedure or during language use between speakers who do not share the same language but need to communicate effectively. Language transfer should necessarily be viewed through the perspective of an error. Two types of transfer exist; positive and negative. Positive transfer takes place when the speaker's mother tongue and the L2 have similarities in structure and other elements that gradually lead to socio-linguistically "correct" language use, both written and spoken, and comprehension. Negative transfer is the transfer of structures from the mother tongue to the target language in a way that does not conform to the latter's rules.

In this case, the influence of the mother tongue on the L2 of the speaker is often considered as a source of errors. In negative transfer, speakers may or may not be aware of the fact that they mix language structures and elements as a result of mother tongue transfer effects. Conscious transfer is mostly related to the lack of certain linguistic skills. It may also be the result of the speaker having forgotten or falsely understood structure, form and certain concepts. Unconscious transfer takes place when non-native speakers cannot distinguish clearly the difference between structures and rules of the two languages, mother tongue and L2. In both cases, the so-called "errors" may result to misconceptions in communication. However, if communication is effectively

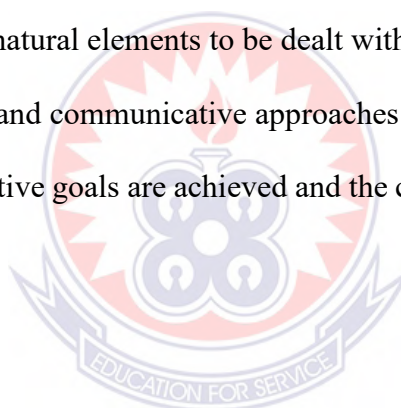
achieved transfer effects may be overlooked. Throughout the years, the importance attributed to language follows the historical trends and theories on L2 teaching and learning. In the 1950s it was considered as an important factor of the learning process. Negative transfer was mostly highlighted.

According to Kesharvaz (1994), language learners' errors were severely criticized by well-known linguists of that era and it was strictly emphasized that L2 errors should be avoided and, in case of occurrence, corrected at all costs as they were considered dire. In the 1960s they had already lost much of their importance and impact since newer L2 approaches regarded learners' errors as fully acceptable and treated them as part of a creative process towards the achievement of linguistic perfection and communicative meaning. In relation to the communicate approach in language learning, a more balanced perspective has emerged according to which language transfer and the respective errors are seriously considered as important linguistic elements that can't be avoided nor criticized.

Errors are no longer seen as signs of failure that have to be prevented and eradicated, but are rather considered as signs of developmental processes involved in the learning of language and Corder (1967) adds to this: Errors are significant in three different ways. Firstly, to the teacher, in that they tell him, if he undertakes a systematic analysis, how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. Secondly, they provide to the researcher evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in his discovery of the language. Thirdly, they are indispensable to the learner himself, because we can regard the making of errors as a device the learner uses in order to learn. It is a way the learner has for testing his/her hypotheses about the nature of the language he/she is learning. According to Richards (1971) the study of errors made by language

learners is significant in the following principles: Linguistics, because the study of human language can lead to discoveries on what constitutes human intelligence. ♣ Psycholinguistics, because the study of children's speech and its comparison with that of adults can reveal mental processes involved in language.

Teaching, because it enables the discovery, identification, and analysis of learner mistakes as well as the design of appropriate methods for their mitigation. Corder (1967) argues that errors provide evidence of how language is learnt. They serve as tools through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language. In summary, it may be argued that learners' errors should not necessarily be considered significant problems and obstacles in the context of learning a second language; rather they can be viewed as natural elements to be dealt with through appropriate processes. In light of recent open and communicative approaches to language learning, errors are tolerated if communicative goals are achieved and the central points of communication are not altered.



## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

Good academic research depends on good methodological application. Research methodology is one of the important aspects of academic researches that determines a successful research work. A methodology is simply the processes and procedures that one employed in collecting and analyzing data of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). This chapter is therefore devoted to the procedure used in data collection and analysis for this study.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

The study was rooted in the qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative methodology is interpretative. This type of research refers to inductive, emic, holistic, subjective and process-oriented methods used to understand, interpret, describe and develop theory on a phenomenon or a setting (Morse & Field, 1995). The process of qualitative research approach is, as Burns and Grove (1999, p.35) define it “as a systematic, subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning.” It is, therefore the methods and techniques of observing, documenting, analysing and interpreting attributes, patterns, characteristics and meanings of specific, contextual or gestalt features of a phenomenon. This means that the description of qualitative research as modes of systematic inquiry is concerned with understanding human beings and the nature of their transactions with themselves and with their surroundings (Benoliel, 1984 as cited in Brink & Wood, 1998).

According to Dornyei (2007), qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which is then

analyzed primarily by non-statistical methods. Typical example: document analysis, interview research, with the transcribed recordings analyzed by qualitative content analysis.

There are several advantages to qualitative research in academic discourse studies: First, there are fewer restrictions for the form or amount of data in qualitative research, with the transcribed recordings analyzed by qualitative content analysis. Second, qualitative research enables us to study the context of the data, which is essential for academic discourse analysis. Third, qualitative research allows us to study a great variety of data in terms of differences. Four, the qualitative research admits the researchers to discover the participants' inner experience, and to figure out how meanings are shaped through and in culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The qualitative analysis in this study refers to the usage of English determiners in learners of CRIG Junior High School in their written compositions. By drawing on the qualitative research design, the researcher was able to give a detailed account of types of determiners used or found in learners' written compositions. The design also enabled the researcher to carry out an in-depth analysis and discussion on types of errors learners commit in the use of English determiners.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The qualitative research approach has different types of design: phenomenological, ethnographic, grounded theory, historical, case study, and action research. For the purpose of this research, a case study type of design was used. Gerings (2007) argues that traditionally, the case study has been associated with the qualitative method of analysis. Creswell (2003, p.15) defines case study as "a type of design where researcher explores an in-depth program, an event, an activity, a process or one or more

individuals.” Also, Leedy and Ormrod (2001) further require a case study to have a defined time frame.

According to Walsh (2001), a case study is defined as an investigation or in-depth examinations of people, groups of people or institutions. Content analysis is the term used to indicate the examination of communication messages obtained in case studies. Walsh outlines the following advantages of case study: firstly, various data collection method may be used in case study, such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, document analysis etc. secondly, it ensures in-depth examinations of people, groups of people, institutions or phenomenon. Furthermore, it seeks to understand individuals’ views or perception of people as well as to highlight the special or typical events related to the case.

As stated above, a case study approach was employed for this study because, it helped me to achieve the purpose of the study which was to find out how learners of CRIG Junior High School use English determiners in their written compositions. Also, the design allowed the use of multiple data collection methods such as interview and document analysis for the achievement of the purpose and objective for the study.

Furthermore, the design helped the researcher understands the most frequently or commonly used English determiners in the written composition of learners of CRIG JHS use in their written compositions. Finally, the design assisted the researcher to give a detailed and in-depth description about which English determiners learners of CRIG JHS have problem with in their written compositions.

### **3.3 Study Area of the Research**

CRIG Junior High School is the study site for this research. CRIG JHS is one ninety-seven (97) schools in the Abuakwa North Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The school is the most populated school in the municipality. The school has

three streams A, B and C. With the high population of learners in the school, the classes have been segregated according to the academic performance and abilities of learners. The A's are above average, the B's average and the C's below average. CRIG JHS is classified as one of the best schools in the region. Therefore, it is expected by the standard that the learners in the school will be able to use the English language fluently and correctly, especially in writing. This again, motivated me to conduct this study about the usage of English determiners in their written compositions.

### **3.4 Population for the study**

Population consists of the entire membership of the group from which the researcher is interested in soliciting information (Ellis, 2018). Entities in the general population must share at least a single characteristic of interest (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). It is this characteristic that makes the entities eligible to be part of the population. The population for this study is learners of CRIG JHS.

A population can also refer to a set of people with a composed set of characteristics that are of interest to a researcher. Now, the population used by the researcher to get the required information has a large impact on the quality of any good research work. These beliefs guided me in the selection of the various participants for the study. According to Bartlett et al. (2001) and Creswell (2003), the part of the general population left after its refinement is termed target population, which is defined as the group or individuals or participants with specific attributes of interest and relevance.

#### **3.4.1 Target Population**

The target population of the study consisted of all the learners of CRIG JHS. It has total population of four-hundred and eighty (480), comprising of two-hundred and fifty-six (256) girls and two-hundred and twenty-four (224) boys. Out of the total

number, one-hundred and eighty (180) are in form 1, one-hundred and fifty-five (155) are in form 2 and one-hundred and forty-five (145) are in form 3. Their ages ranged between 11-16 years old. Most of the learners come from Tafo and a few from different geographical background.

### **3.4.2 Accessible Population**

The accessible population for the present study was all learners in form one and form two. The first reason or purpose for choosing these learners is that, the third-year learners were not accessible or could not take participate due to the fact that during the period of the study, their English curriculum emphasized on examination preparation and test-taking strategies and revision of previous covered content rather than the concepts. Reflects current instruction and learner introduction of new grammatical interaction with the topic participants were selected from the lower classes (form one and form two) where determiners are actively taught and assessed as part of the English language curriculum a result these learners are likely to be actively engaged in lessons that explores determiners in depth.

### **3.5 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Dornyei (2007) argues that we cannot examine all the people whose responses would be important to our research, so we must be aware that the final picture of our research will be a reflection of the result we would have expected to obtain from the entire target population. Dornyei again points out that “the main aim of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insight into the phenomenon under study or investigation as to maximize what we can learn; this goal is best achieved by means of some sort of “purposeful” or “purposive” sampling” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 125).

Also, according to Creswell (2003, p. 148), “the aim of purposive sampling is to purposively select documents that will best answer the research question.” The choice of purposive sampling for this study was pertinent because according to Afful (2005), it has the potential in achieving the research purpose. The first reason or purpose for choosing the first- and second-year learners is that, the third-year learners could not take participate due to the fact that during the period of the study, their English curriculum emphasized on examination preparation and test-taking strategies and revision of previous covered content rather than the concepts. For this reason, the researcher purposively sampled the data considering form one’s and form two’s learners of CRIG JHS.

Thus, fifteen learners were selected from each class (form one and form two A, B and C) making ninety learners, representing forty-eight (48) girls and forty-two (42) boys. Additionally, two (2) teachers who teach English language and six learners from each class were interviewed. The purpose of this interview was to find out which English determiner that learners of CRIG JHS have problem with.

**Table 3: Breakdown of the participants of the study.**

<b>CLASS</b>	<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF LEARNERS</b>	<b>NUMBER SAMPLED</b>
1A	63	15
1B	65	15
1C	52	15
2A	53	15
2B	50	15
2C	52	15
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>90</b>

**Table 3: Breakdown of participants that were interviewed**

<b>CATEGORY OF PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>NUMBER OF PARTICIPANT(S)</b>
Teachers	2
One learner from the six classes	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>

### 3.5.1 Data Collection Instruments

According to Cohen and Manion (1994), there are various data instruments that a researcher may use when using qualitative approach, and these are interviews, questionnaire, observation, field notes, audio recordings and document analysis. For the purpose of this study, document analysis and interview methods were used.

### 3.5.2 Document

According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents-both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material which requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge.

This study focused on document where learners' essays were analyzed to elicit meaning and gain understanding about the learners' use of English determiners in their composition writing. There are many reasons why the researcher chose to use document analysis.

Firstly, document analysis is an efficient and effective way of gathering data because documents are manageable and practical resources. Also, documents come in a variety of forms, making documents a very accessible and reliable source of data.

Obtaining and analyzing documents is often far more cost efficient and time efficient (Bowen, 2009).

Also, documents are stable “non-reactive” data sources, meaning that they can be read and reviewed multiple times and remain unchanged by the researcher’s influence or research process (Bowen, 2009, p.31).

Furthermore, document analysis is often used because of the many different ways it can support and strengthen research. Document can provide supplementary research data, making document analysis a useful and beneficial method for most research, as it also provides background information and broad coverage of data and are therefore helpful in contextualizing one’s research within its subject or field (Bowen, 2009).

Finally, document analysis can also point to questions that need to be asked and answered or to a situation that needs to be observed. Making use of document analysis is a way to ensure that your research is critical and comprehensive (Bowen, 2009).

As stated earlier, ninety (90) written documents from form one and two learners from CRIG JHS were consulted for data.

### **3.6 Interview**

The second instrument that was used for collecting data for this study was interview. The interview method of data collection involves face to face contact with respondent. The interview is roughly defined as an interaction between two people on a particular occasion, where one acts as an interviewer and another as an interviewee. Thus, the interview is defined as an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme or a topic of mutual interest (Kvale, 1996).

Kvale stresses that a qualitative interview is based on a conversation in which a researcher asks questions and listens to interviewees at the same time, while respondents (interviewees) answer questions. From this perspective, Kvale implicitly puts a researcher and interviewee in an equal position. Meanwhile, Sewell (2009) points out that in some professional interviews, such as job interviews or legal interrogation, the power of the questioner is much greater than that of the interviewee. Rubin and Rubin (2005) regard qualitative interviews as conversation in which a researcher gently guides a conversational partner in an extended discussion. In this context, the position of researchers is clear because they drive the conversation. For Rubin and Rubin (2005), the direction of a conversation in an interview is in the hands of a researcher and not interviewee. The job of a researcher is only to uncover in-depth information from research participants; therefore, the information is presumed to be uncontaminated (Kvale, 1996).

There are three basic types of interviews in research. These are: structured interview, semi-structured and unstructured interview. For the purpose of this study, semi structured interview was used. Semi-structured interviews are widely used in qualitative research. They are typically used as research strategy to gather information about participants' experiences, views and beliefs concerning a specific research questions or phenomenon of interest (Lambert and Loissele, 2007). Sandelowski (2002) purports that one-to-one interviews are the most commonly used data collection tool in qualitative research.

Magaldi and Berler (2020) define semi-structured interview as an exploratory interview. They further explain that the semi-structured interview is generally based on a guide that it is typically focused on the main topic that provides a general pattern. In addition, they argue that the semi-structured interview provides the opportunity for

respondents to answer questions without restriction as compared to structured interview. The premise is that it is interrelated to the expectation that the viewpoints of interviewees are more likely to be expressed in a reasonably openly designed situation rather than in a standardized type of conversation, as in questionnaires (Flick, 2002).

The purpose of using semi-structured interview for this study is that, the semi-structured interviews are practical for undertaking in-depth conversation. In other words, the semi-structured interview is more powerful in the sense that it allows the researcher, especially in qualitative research, to acquire in-depth information from informants compared to structured interviews. Usually, the researcher can critically scrutinize the conversations and varied initially superficial responses to arrive at multilayered conclusions. A researcher can further follow up most of the times, all verbal and non-verbal responses, such as hunches, laughter and silence, to reveal hidden information that may turn out to be helpful in the final data analysis of different themes extracted from the conversation (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003).

Furthermore, the interviewers can synthesize different themes to bring about flexibility. A researcher can discuss various topics with multiple themes in semi-structured interview. Therefore, it is flexible and adaptable. At the same time, it holds its direction, especially when compared to the unstructured type of interviews, where its direction is not carefully taken into account. Hence, the semi-structured interview might provide room for researchers to adjust it with their research questions if there is a possible change yet still maintains its directive sense since the main topics to discuss have been prescribed beforehand.

Moreover, this interactive nature of semi-structured interview provides room for free responses from the interviewee, that is, the semi-structured interview provides

opportunity for respondents to answer questions freely without restrictions as compared to structured interview.

In conclusion, this data collection instrument was used by the researcher to ascertain how learners use English determiners in their composition writing.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Creswell (2014) explains data analysis as a process used for gathering data, making interpretations and writing reports. It is the process of assigning meaning to the collected information and determining the conclusions, significance and implications of the findings. Both the data collected through interviews and document were analyzed qualitatively in this study. The researcher analysed the data in accordance with the order of the research questions. As the first objective of the study seeks to identify the type of determiners used or found in the written compositions of learners of CRIG JHS, the data sourced through document analysis and interview were analysed. Questions on various writing topics such as article writing, simple argument and report were given to learners to write on. At the end, ninety essays were obtained. In sampling the data, scripts of learners' written compositions were photocopied and the sentences that made use of English determiners were selected.

A frequency distribution table was used to depict how often and frequently learners of CRIG JHS use English determiners in their written compositions. In addition, based on the sentences containing those determiners the article focused theory was used to analyse the meaning of the used determiners in the context used. Also, semi-structured interview was used to find out from the teachers and the selected six learners about which of the determiner's learners have problem with and what are the causes of such problems.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

It is expected that in conducting research that involves human participants, the researcher follows certain procedures during the study so that ethical issues of the research are not contravened. Bowen (2009) opines those ethical issues in research concerns personal disclosure, authenticity, and credibility of a research report by demonstrating a high level of objectivity and sensitivity in the protection of research participants. In agreement with Bowen's assertion above, Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) also state that confidentiality and anonymity are closely linked to the rights of generosity and respect for dignity of participants.

Participant's agreement to participate in this study was obtained only after a thorough explanation of the research process. The potential participants were approached individually and given an appropriate time to ask questions and address any concerns. The anonymity and confidentiality of the participants were preserved by not revealing their names and identity in the data collection, analysis and reporting of study findings. Privacy and confidentiality of the interview environment were managed carefully during the interview session, data analysis and dissemination of the findings. The participants were tactfully treated by respecting their beliefs, habits, culture and lifestyle.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the result and discussions of the data. The researcher interviewed two teachers of English language and six learners from each class (form 1 to form 2) of the school and also used samples of essays written by learner. The following are the discussions and analysis of data as guided by each of the research questions.

#### 4.1 Research question 1: What are type of English determiners are frequently used by CRIG JHS learners in their composition writing.

Counting the number of English determiners used in the sampled written essays of learners, the tables below give much explanation to the different types of determiners (articles, demonstratives and possessives) used in the learners' essays.

**Table 4: Learners in 1A class**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives</b>	<b>Number of possessives</b>
1	12	4	4
2	7	5	5
3	6	5	3
4	7	3	4
5	6	3	4
6	10	4	6
7	5	4	7
8	5	5	6
9	9	5	6
10	7	4	5
11	9	3	6
12	7	4	7
13	9	4	7
14	9	6	6
15	10	5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>87</b>

**Table 5: Learners in 1B**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives</b>	<b>Number of possessives</b>
1	10	3	6
2	6	2	6
3	9	4	5
4	7	3	4
5	6	4	5
6	6	3	4
7	8	4	5
8	8	6	5
9	7	7	4
10	9	3	3
11	13	4	3
12	10	4	4
13	12	3	4
14	8	4	4
15	9	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>66</b>

**Table 6: Learners in 1C**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles used</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives used</b>	<b>Number of possessives used</b>
1	10	5	5
2	13	4	6
3	12	5	5
4	11	4	5
5	7	3	5
6	9	3	6
7	13	5	4
8	10	4	3
9	9	6	4
10	8	5	6
11	10	4	5
12	11	5	4
13	7	6	5
14	8	6	5
15	9	7	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>72</b>

**Table 7: Learners in 2A**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles used</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives used</b>	<b>Number of possessives used</b>
1	10	5	5
2	9	4	6
3	8	3	6
4	8	3	7
5	7	4	4
6	6	4	5
7	7	3	4
8	7	3	6
9	8	4	5
10	8	4	4
11	7	3	4
12	8	3	4
13	6	3	6
14	6	4	5
15	6	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>76</b>

**Table 8: Learners in 2B**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles used</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives used</b>	<b>Number of possessives used</b>
1	11	4	3
2	12	4	4
3	12	5	3
4	10	3	3
5	12	3	3
6	11	3	4
7	12	4	4
8	14	5	4
9	12	7	3
10	10	4	4
11	11	3	2
12	13	6	2
13	12	3	2
14	12	5	2
15	12	3	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>54</b>

**Table 9: Learners in 2C**

<b>Learner</b>	<b>Number of articles used</b>	<b>Number of demonstratives used</b>	<b>Number of possessives used</b>
1	10	4	4
2	7	4	4
3	8	3	5
4	9	3	5
5	9	3	6
6	8	4	5
7	6	5	5
8	7	4	6
9	8	3	4
10	9	3	6
11	10	3	5
12	11	3	5
13	12	4	5
14	12	4	5
15	10	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>75</b>

**Table 10: Summary of determiners used in percentages**

<b>Determiner</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Article (definite and indefinite)	823	51.2
Demonstratives	365	22.1
Possessives	430	26.7
Total number of occurrence	1609	

From table 4, it was revealed that a total number of one thousand six hundred and nine (1609) were used by the ninety (90) students. The most frequently used English determiners in learners written composition are the articles (definite and indefinite), followed by possessives and then demonstratives. Among these determiners, articles (definite and indefinite) occur with the highest frequency of 823,

representing 51.2%. Possessives follow with the frequency of 430, representing 26.7% and demonstratives with frequency of 365, representing 22.1%. These findings about the frequency distribution of determiners in the written compositions of learners of CRIG JHS conforms to the findings reported by other researchers in similar studies. For instance, Goodman, (1987, p. 33) and Sinclair, (1990, p. 143) agree that article (definite) is the most frequently used word in the English language.

#### **4.2 Research question 2: What are the common errors made by CRIG JHS learners in the use of English determiners in their composition writing.**

This question was targeted at identifying the common errors made by learners of CRIG JHS in the use of English determiners in their written compositions. The analysis was based on the identification of the common errors learners made in the use of English determiners. In order to make the analysis simple and easy to understand the errors were grouped into themes, that is errors committed under articles, errors committed under possessives and errors committed under demonstratives.

##### **4.2.1 Errors committed under articles**

It is striking to note that out of 823 articles identified in the learners' compositions, 431 were used incorrectly. This 51.6% error rate shows that learners of CRIG JHS are fundamentally struggling with English determiners, which are the words use to introduce and specify nouns. Looking closely at their writing, I see that these are not just random slips; they are systematic errors that reveal how learners of CRIG JHS are processing a second language.

One of the most frequent issues is the overgeneralization of the definite article. Below are some examples of errors made by learners of in their written compositions;

1. *You must stop talking and be the good boy.*
2. *Talking in class is the bad attitude*
3. *How to control a talking*

Students are using the determiner "the" where "a" is required. Linguistically, they are over-specifying a general quality. As Owusu (2022) points out in his study of Ghanaian learners, many students view the word "the" as being more formal or "correct" than "a." They tend to lean on it as a default marker whenever they want to sound academic, even when the noun they are describing is indefinite. This shows a "rule-stretching" behavior where a learner takes a partially understood rule and applies it to every situation.

Another significant hurdle involves category errors with uncountable nouns, specifically gerunds. A learner writing "How to control a talking" is treating the act of talking as a countable object that can be counted like a book or a chair. In English, determiners are sensitive to whether a noun is countable or not. Gerunds (verbs acting as nouns) are uncountable and generally do not take the indefinite article "a." This type of error is often a result of "language transfer." Abukari (2017) explains that since many Ghanaian local languages do not make the same strict grammatical distinction between count and mass nouns as English does, students often default to treating everything as countable. They "import" the logic of their mother tongue into their English compositions, leading to phrases like "a talking" or "a water" which sound perfectly logical in their heads but are grammatically incorrect in English.

Ultimately, these errors show that for more than half of the determiners used, students are caught between the grammar of their first language and the rigid, often

confusing rules of English. Because determiners like a, an, and *the* are small, low-stress words, they are often overlooked in the classroom, but as these results show, they represent a massive gap in the students' written proficiency. This high error rate suggests that these patterns are becoming "fossilized"—habits that are so deeply ingrained that the students no longer realize they are making them (Ferris, 2011).

#### 4.2.2 Omission of the definite Article “the”

The highest error committed by learners in the use of the articles is “omission of article” the. Out of the total of 431 errors made in terms of article used in learners written compositions, 141 were recorded as omission of definite article “the” representing 33% of the articles used errors. This recorded one-hundred and twenty-five (125) errors representing thirty-three percent (33%).

Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written composition;

1. *Put my tomato paste in pot*
2. *After eating I wash bowls*
3. *Add rice for six minutes*

#### 4.2.3 Omission of the indefinite Articles “a/an”

Next to the “omission of article the” was “omission of indefinite articles a and an”. This subcategory recorded one hundred and twelve (112) errors representing twenty-six percent (26%). This had the second highest of errors. Learners omitted the article “a/an” where it was necessary to use to bring out the intended meaning. Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written composition;

1. Most people live in dirty environment and they fail to clean them often.
2. Being a prefect in our school is prestigious position in our school.
3. In our school, we have big gutter that breeds mosquitoes.

#### 4.2.4 Wrong use of “an”

With the wrong use the indefinite article “an”, it was realised that learners got confused with the use of “an”. Ninety-one errors were committed representing twenty-one (21%) of the total article errors.

Below are some examples of the wrong use of the indefinite article “an”

1. My mother bought *an* big umbrella for us
2. .2. She told him she needs *an* house before buying a car.

#### 4.2.5 Wrong use of the indefinite article “a”

This was the least of the errors committed by learners in the use of articles, with eighty-seven (87) errors representing twenty percent (20%) of the errors.

Below are some examples of the wrong use of the indefinite article “a”

1. Afia ate *a* apple on our way home.
2. While we were waiting for our uncle my father bought *a* ice cream for us.
3. The man told Mr. Adjei that he is *a* honest man.

Based on the analysis of learners’ compositions, it was revealed that most of the learners use articles frequently and most of the errors committed in relation to the use of determiners in their written compositions were articles. In these examples, it was realised that learners got confused with the use of a, an, the. Based on all (omission of definite and indefinite articles, wrong use “an” and “a”) the above sentences, it can be explained that the learners might wrongly apply the rule of the target language. This can be the results of the interlingual interference where learners of an L2 confuse the rules of their L1 with that of their L2.

### 4.3 Demonstratives errors

From the analysis of the frequency of demonstrative determiners used in learners written composition a total number of 356 demonstratives were used by learners representing 22.1% of the whole determiners used in the sampled learners written composition. Out of the total of 365 determiners used in the learners' written compositions, 185 were errors committed by the learners in using demonstratives, which represents 51% of the total number of demonstratives used. These errors were further categorised into groups for analysis. There were grouped under the following sub-headings m wrong use of this, wrong use of these, wrong use of that and wrong use of those.

#### 4.3.1 Wrong use of “this”

In the count of errors in learners' written composition, this sub-category was sixty-six (66) errors representing 36% of the total 185 errors committed under demonstratives. Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written composition.

1. *This are* the items we use in preparing my favourite food.
2. *This men* were dressed in white clothes
3. *This houses* over there belongs to Mr. uncle

#### 4.3.2 Wrong use of “these”

Incorrect use of “these” was the second subcategory of errors analyzed under the category of demonstrative determiners. It recorded the second highest error after the incorrect use of “this”. There were fifty (50) errors recoded out of the one hundred and eighty-five (185) demonstrative errors. This represents twenty-seven percent

(27%) demonstrative errors. Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written composition.

1. *These man* lives close to the gutter
2. I have been reading *these book* when I was in primary four.
3. Since I came to *these school*, I have been praying to .....

#### 4.3.3 Wrong use of “that”

Incorrect use of “that” was one of the errors which was analyzed under demonstrative determiners. It recorded thirty-six (36) errors out of the total 185 demonstrative errors representing twenty percent (19%). Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written compositions

1. *That are* my friends.....
2. *That items* are used for preparing.....

#### 4.3.4 Incorrect use of “those”

Least of errors recorded under demonstrative determiners was the “incorrect use of “those”, there were thirty-three (33) errors counted out of the total 185 errors under demonstrative errors, representing 18%. Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their composition writing.

1. *Those boy* came in tired and decided to.....
2. My father told me *those school bag* is mine and I was.....

**Table 11: A Summary of Demonstrative Determiners**

<b>Subcategory of errors</b>	<b>Number of errors</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Wrong use of “this”	66	36
Wrong use of “these”	50	27
Wrong use of “that”	36	19
Wrong use of “those”	33	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>100</b>

After analyzing demonstrative determiners in learners written essay, it was clear that CRIG JHS learners find it difficult to use demonstrative determiners in their essays. Out of the 365 demonstratives used in learners’ compositions, 185 were used wrongly representing 51%. They find it difficult in determining what type of demonstrative determiner should be used at a particular time. As to what determiner to use to indicate specific nouns in relation to their distance from the speaker or either the noun is singular or plural.

After analyzing the frequency of determiners in learners written composition, the use of possessive determiners recorded the second highest frequency of 430 after articles, represent 27% of the determiners used. In addition, out of the 430 possessive determiners used two hundred and eighty-six (286) were errors use by learners representing sixty-seven percent (67%) of possessive determiners errors. These errors were categorised into wrong use of apostrophe (‘s), wrong use of possessive determiners with plural nouns, wrong use of possessive determiners with uncountable nouns and omitting of possessive nouns.

#### **4.4 Wrong use of apostrophe (‘s)**

The result of analyzing learners written composition indicates that the highest committed errors with regards to the possessive determiner usage is the wrong use of

apostrophe ('s) with ninety-two (92) errors out of the total four hundred and thirty representing thirty-two percent (32%) of possessive sub categories of errors.

Below are some examples of errors made by learners in their written composition.

1. *It's* beak looks like yellow plastic
2. *It's* colour is special
3. *Your's* friend came here yesterday

#### 4.4.1 Wrong use of possessive determiners with plural nouns

Next to the wrong use of apostrophe ('s) was wrong use of possessive determiners with plural nouns. This subcategory recorded seventy-two errors out the total of two hundred and eighty-six errors of possessive determiners errors representing twenty-five percent (25%). Below are some examples of errors by learners in their written composition;

1. *The childrens's* came there too to witness the programme.
2. *My friends's* bag was beautiful
3. *Some students's* were late to the programme.

#### 4.4.2 Wrong use of possessive determiners with uncountable nouns

Wrong use of possessive determiners with uncountable nouns was the third highest error among the possessive error category. This sub category recorded sixty-eight (68) errors representing twenty-four percent (24%) of the errors. Below are some examples made by learners.

1. *My time* is running out (general statement)
2. *Our freedom* is precious
3. *My water* is cold

#### 4.4.3 Omission of possessive determiners

Least of errors recorded under possessive determiner is “omission of possessive determiner” there were fifty-four (54) errors counted representing nineteen percent (19%) of the total possessive determiner errors.

**Table 12: A Summary of Possessive Determiner Errors**

<b>Subcategory of Error</b>	<b>Number of Errors</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Wrong use of apostrophe('s)	40	29
Wrong use possessives with plural nouns	38	27
Wrong use of possessives with uncountable nouns	35	24
Omission of possessives	28	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100</b>

After analyzing possessive determiner errors in learners written composition, it was clear that CRIG JHS learners commit errors when they use possessive determiners in their written composition. From the data collected, 430 possessive determiners were used and out of that 286 were errors representing 67% of the errors committed by learners with regards to the use of possessive determiners.

#### 4.4 Research question 3: What are the causes of errors in using English determiners in the written composition of learners of CRIG JHS?

To understand why learners of CRIG JHS struggle with English determiners, the researcher had to look at what is happening inside and outside the classroom. As the researcher Patton (2002) explains, to truly fix a student's mistakes, you first have to understand why they are making them in the first place. By talking to two teachers (T1 and T2) and six students (L1 to L6), It was found that these errors come from a mix of

school rules, the local environment, and the way the learners think in their native language.

One big reason for these mistakes is that students simply are not being taught the full list of determiners. Both teachers, T1 and T2, admitted that they do not cover every determiner in class. T1 explained that they follow the Ghana Education Service (GES) curriculum very closely, and since the curriculum doesn't list every single determiner, they do not include them in their teaching plans. The learner agreed; all six of them (L1–L6) said they have not had a proper lesson on this topic since they started Junior High School. One student, L3, even said the last time they remember learning about words like "a," "an," or "the" was back in primary school. This means that as the writing gets harder in JHS, the learners are not getting the updated grammar tools they need.

The environment outside the classroom also makes things difficult. T2 noted that *"the environment is another factor, because a language is best acquired when one is exposed to it."* In the Abuakwa North Municipality, English is not used much in daily conversation. When I asked why they do not speak English with their friends, L1 said they just do not feel confident enough to translate their thoughts from Twi to English. Another student, L4, shared a sad truth: *"we are often afraid of being teased. If you try to speak English on campus, others might mock you and call you 'too known.'"* This fear of being laughed at stops some learners from practicing, which is the only way to get better at using the language well.

There is also a "mental tug-of-war" happening between English and the students' local language. T1 noticed that learners often do "direct translation." Because Twi and English use different rules for where to put markers like "the," students often translate a Twi sentence word-for-word into English, which leads to errors. T2 also said that

students "over-apply" rules. For example, because they are told "*the*" is important, they might start putting it in front of every single word just to be safe, even when it doesn't belong there.

Lastly, the size of the classes at the school makes it hard for teachers to help. Both T1 and T2 complained that their classes are just too large. T1 said it is almost impossible to give every student the attention they need. With so many students in one room, teachers can't grade every assignment deeply or sit down one-on-one with a student to explain why they used the wrong word. Because these small mistakes aren't corrected immediately, they become "fossilized"—meaning the students keep making the same errors over and over until they become a habit that is very hard to break.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY AND IMPLICATION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter serves as the concluding chapter of this dissertation. It provides a summary of the findings of the study, draws the pedagogical implications arising from the study and makes suggestions for future research.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

The objectives of the research were to identify the type of determiners frequently used by learners in their written composition and to analyse the types of errors in the written composition of learners. Data for the research were gathered from CRIG JHS in the Abuakwa North Municipal in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The data were gathered from learners' written compositions and interview of teachers of English in the school. The first research question sought to find out the most frequently used determiners in learners' written composition. In line with this a frequency table was used to identify all the types of determiners in learners written composition of which the percentages were also calculated to get the frequency and the corresponding percentages each represents in the use of determiners in their written composition. Based on the discussion of the findings and examples given, it is concluded that the most frequently used determiner in learners written composition is the articles (definite and indefinite).

The highest number of articles in learners written composition was eight hundred and twenty-three (823) representing fifty-one-point two percent (51.2%). Most of the learners also have problem in the use of all the determiners especially the articles. These also implies that teachers need to emphasize and inculcate reading habits in

students to overcome the challenges of the use of determiners. The result of the study indicates that, teachers do not pay much attention to the use of determiners in learners work, and so teachers need to adopt different strategies when responding to errors found in learners' written composition (Ferris, 2002).

Also, learners' errors which are repetitive should be used as samples in class and then learners should be asked to correct the errors rather than using the class size as an excuse. The alarming thing about the result is that learners do not appear to have enough knowledge in how to use determiners appropriately in their writing. This phenomenon is equivalent to what Pomeyiesuggestions for remedial teaching. The analyzed data indicated the following us factors or causes that militated against the correct use of English determiners in the written composition of CRIG JHS learners. One major cause of errors in the use of determiners is that, teachers of English do not teach all the English determiners.

All the two teachers interviewed stated emphatically that they do not teach all the English determiners. They further indicated that they use the GES curriculum to prepare the scheme of work for every term and because some of the determiners are not captured in the GES curriculum, they also do not capture all in their scheme of work. All the six learners interviewed also indicated that they have not been taught all the English determiners as a topic in English grammar since they came to CRIG JHS. Three of the learners told the researcher that, they learnt English determiners in the primary school.

Another causes of errors in the use of English determinate according to the two teachers is that the environment is a contributing factor. One of the teachers commented by saying "*the environment is another factor, this is because a language is best acquired when one is exposed to it.*" This shows that once the learner does not

communicate in the English language it could affect them in what they write. Four of the learners were asked why they use the local dialect to communicate with their colleagues in the school compound. One of them said *“I am comfortable with the use of my local dialect again. I don’t know how to express some Twi words in English.”* Another learner also said that, *“if I make a mistake in speaking English, my colleagues will laugh at me other students will also say I am too known they would ask are you the only student who can speak English?”*

These are some of the causes of errors in the use of English determiners in the written compositions for remedial teaching. The analyzed data indicated the following factors or causes that militated against the correct use of English determiners in the written composition of CRIG JHS learners.

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These are some of the causes of errors in the use of English determiners in the written co (2007) study on tense says that indeed learners in Junior High Schools have serious problems with tense and surprisingly, many teachers are not aware of it. This means that these problems have occurred for a long time. Something has to be done about this and one way of solving the problem is to teach grammar explicitly. This suggestion is affirmed by Hedge (2000) who claims that there is no way that one can know a language without knowing its grammatical basis. The benefits of teaching grammar explicitly have been forgotten by many English teachers. The teachers mainly concentrate on trying to teach the learners to communicate, but communication requires knowledge of grammar. It is of great importance that the message is grammatically correct, otherwise both the messenger and the message run the risk of being misunderstood and not being taken seriously.

There must also be a balance between grammar and the other skills. A balance between the different skills would be the most ultimate way of teaching English as a second language. The learners’ needs must be the central point in the teaching and tendencies from the study indicate that the learners need more grammar teaching.

### **5.1.1 Pedagogical implications**

Language learning is a gradual process during which errors or mistakes are to be expected. Visibility of errors attests to the fact that learning is taking place. Error

Analysis is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. Candling (2001, p. 69) considers English language learners' errors as potentially important for the understanding of the processes of language learning. Findings on error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. They provide the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence.

The findings of this study point out the significance of learners' determiner usage errors as they provide evidence of how language is learned and what strategies the learners are employing in learning the different language. For instance, this study shows that article (definite and indefinite) errors are the most common for the learners in the study. It was realized that some learners still have difficulties in using them in their essays. Since grammar plays an important role in writing, teachers should pay attention to this problem. With these results, teachers should assist learners to become more aware by establishing "a comprehensive taxonomy of learners' errors" (Husada, 2007. P. 103) and their sources. Therefore, teachers should train and guide the learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users.

Findings from this study have provided feedback and they also tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of their teaching. Error Analysis serves as reliable feedback to design remedial teaching methods and materials. Michaud (2019) observes that teachers need to view learners' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures of English, but they should view the errors as a process of learning. Errors, if studied systematically, can provide significantly insights into how a second language is actually learned. Through Error Analysis, educators are informed about devising appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques, and constructing tests suitable for different levels and needs of

learners. If language teachers /instructors know about all these, there is likelihood that the learning of English language will be enhanced in this country.

To help learners overcome determiner errors and improve their writing in English language, the classroom teacher should adopt specific teaching and learning strategies that will assist learners. Teacher intervention in this instance is crucial because it can provide learners with specific information and strategies aimed at overcoming these challenges. In order to minimize the learners' determiner errors in producing sentences, teachers need to give feedback and consultation, especially in grammar for the learners when they are writing. By giving feedback and providing consultation for the learners, it will make them notice whether they are committing errors in their writing. After knowing the error and getting feedback from the teacher, they would correct their errors and improve on their writing.

Teaching writing needs devoted and selfless teachers. Teachers must commit sufficient time to reading and writing. In this case, teachers should train and guide learners to apply the right strategies to become better English language users. As much as possible, teachers should organise enough class exercises and assignments on essays in order to identify learners' errors in their written compositions.

Also, measures should be taken to improve writing instruction in schools such as the provision of better-equipped libraries, relevant textbooks and materials for teaching English language. An important aim of literacy is to develop individual abilities to communicate effectively in national and global contexts. Gyasi (1990) counts among these causes as; scarcity of qualified teachers, textbooks and the absence of a reading culture.

Finally, in order to improve learners' knowledge in the use of determiners in their written compositions, learners of CRIG JHS cannot only focus on the context of their writing because when they want to write something, grammar is very important as it guide them to use the language at the appropriate time.

## **5.2 Suggestions for Future Research**

Considering the result of this study, a number of recommendations for future research are suggested.

First it is suggested that a more comprehensive study of the English language writings of learners may be conducted by other researchers to extend the results of the study. This is to investigate the causes of errors in the use of determiners committed by learners in other Junior High Schools across the country and compare these errors in the various schools. Again, the study focused on the most frequent used determiners and types of errors made by learners when using English determiners in their written composition, but in the process of analyzing the data, the researcher found out that errors also occurred in other types of grammatical errors.

The researcher also found out that most of the learners arrange their sentences with a lot of syntactic errors. Considering this, further investigations of other types of errors in learners written composition is strongly recommended. Thus, future researchers may enlarge the focus analysis by analysing all the error types in learners' written composition, not only focusing on determiner errors so that other types of errors can be revealed and both teachers and learners can cooperate with one another to improve learners' skill in producing correct grammar, especially in writing.

Finally, learners' determiner errors are also influenced by poor reading habits and communication deficiencies. This affects their application of appropriate determiners in their verbal and written communication. The researcher therefore

suggests that potential should delve into the errors caused by poor reading habits in learners writing and the way forward.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The primary aim of this research work was to evaluate the use of English determiners in the written composition of learners' of CRIG JHS. The field notes made during the interviews and examination of learners written essays and learners exercise books were drawn for discussion and recommendations. The study identified errors committed in the writing were limited to only determiners and were categorised into the different types of determiners. The study also revealed that the most frequently used English determiners in the written composition of learners of CRIG JHS and lastly the causes of errors in using English determiners in their written compositions.

Based on the results, teachers are encouraged to lay more emphasis on reading, written exercises and enforce the speaking of English language in school to minimise determiner errors in their writing. Efficient grammar instruction, especially for adult learners helps ESL learners learn English more effectively (Valette, 1991). Therefore, understanding learners' learning difficulties and providing appropriate grammar instruction is the key to effective teaching for ESL teachers.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS**

1. Do you think learners first language (L1) interference plays a role in English learning?
2. Do you observe instances where the structure of Twi (or other Ghanaian languages spoken by learners) seems to influence their incorrect use of English determiners?
3. Does the curriculum capture English determiners at all levels?
4. How much attention do you give to correcting determiner errors in learners' written compositions?
5. Are there any external factors such as class size, or limited resources that you believe contribute to learners' difficulties with determiners?

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR LEARNERS**

1. Have you been taught English determiners?
2. When you write composition in English do you pay attention to the determiners you use?
3. Do you notice mistakes in your use of determiners when you re-read your own work? If yes, which ones?
4. Which type of determiners do you find most challenging to use correctly?
5. Have your teachers or others pointed out errors in your use of determiners in your composition?

OFERI AKOI KAYCE

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1. A REPORT ON HOW I CELEBRATED  
THE RECENT CRISTMAS HOLIDAYS WITH MY  
FAMILY

On ~~the~~ 24th December, 2024, ~~as the~~  
eve of christmas, My siblings, parent and  
I woke up early and did some work as  
usual. At 11:20am, My parent and I went  
to the Kotodua market to buy clothes  
and shoes. At that time, I saved some  
money so that I can buy anything I  
want. I bought hats, spectacles and toy  
cars for my little brother. After buying  
we went home.

At exactly 5:00pm, we dressed  
in our christmas clothes to ~~the~~ carols  
service at our church. We sang, danced and  
listened to ~~the~~ word of God and we  
closed at 8:30pm.

On the 25th of December, 2025  
we went to church very early and  
thank God for this day. After ~~the~~ service,  
we had a big party for our church.  
We ate food, drank and played. My  
friends and I ate too much food but  
we were not satisfied. We played games  
on TV and after ~~the~~ enjoyment,  
we went home. On ~~the~~ 26th December,

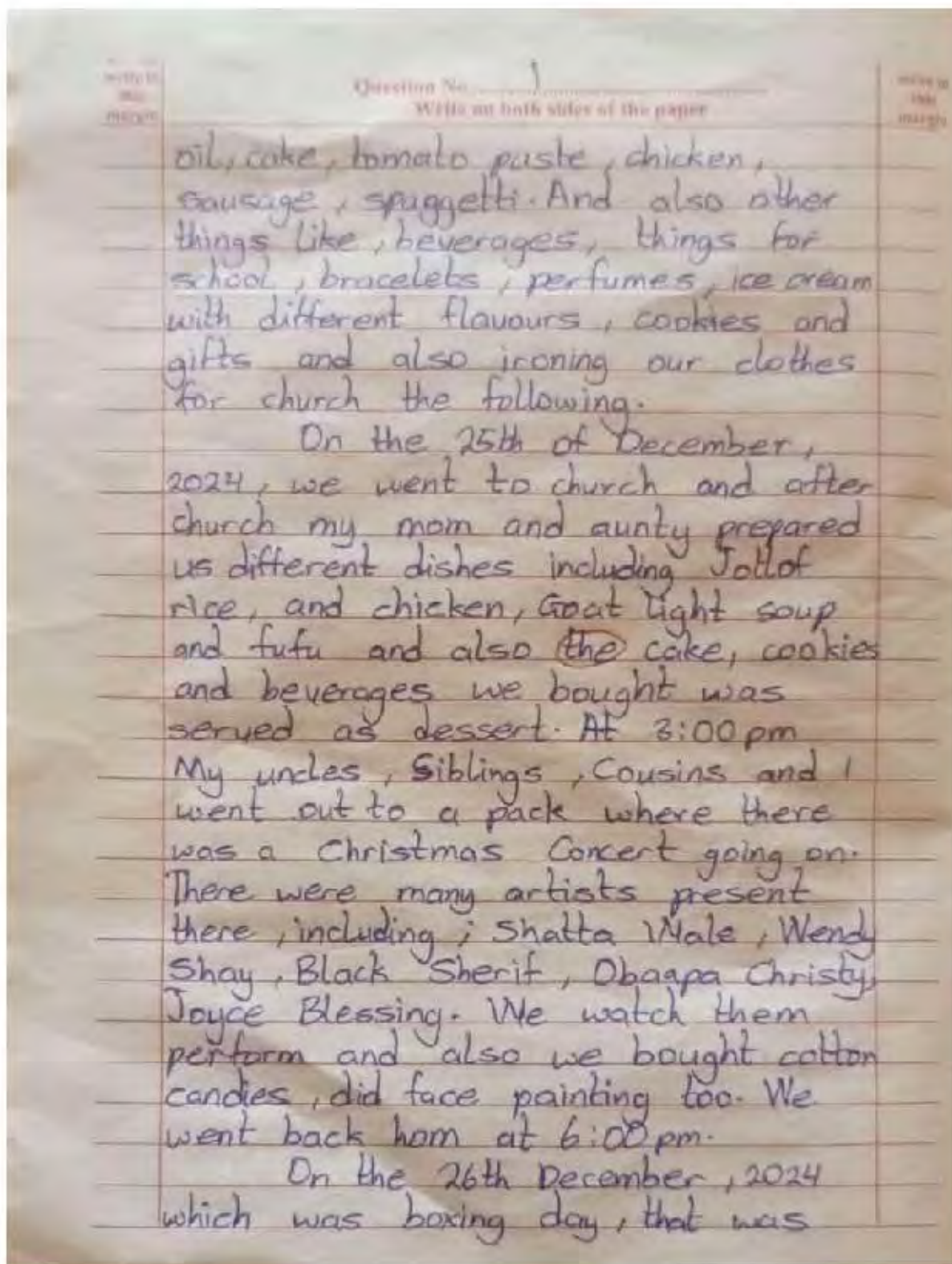
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## A REPORT ON HOW I CELEBRATED THE RECENT CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS WITH MY FAMILY

Christmas festivals are celebrated by Christians to remember the birth of Jesus Christ. It was a quiet short holidays but it was marvellous. It was a great days full of excited activities. My recent Christmas holidays with my family full of activities started on Monday 24th December 2024 to 26th December 2024.

On Monday 24th December 2024, My Family and I decided to share the Gospel of God to people and shared some relevant materials to the ~~the~~ needy and poor. Such things were clothes, food and money. Many people assembled there and later turn into a mist. Even though the items were few but it was easily distributed. For anyone to encounter some. After the process we went home and dressed to prepare for church. At church I shared some toffees and biscuits to my fellow church members and friends. Also my family and I came out and donated a project, speakers and clocks to support the work of God. We then closed from church and went home



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