

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**INVESTIGATING THE SOURCES OF ERROR IN THE SENTENCE
CONSTRUCTION OF FORM TWO STUDENTS OF MAMPONG SENIOR
HIGH SECONDARY SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF.**



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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, FAUSTINA TENI ABUDU, declare that this thesis 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 any other degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE :

DATE :

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. KWEKU OFORI

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

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DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this study to the honor of my Father Mr John T. Zoogah, who took me to school and, gave me sound morals. I am where I am today because you gave me a sound foundation. Your support, encouragement, motivation and prayers have helped me to this level.

May the Almighty God richly bless you.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	
DECLARATION	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	2
DEDICATION	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS	4
LIST OF TABLES	7
LIST OF FIGURES	8
Abstract	9
CHAPTER ONE	10
1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	10
1.1. The National Language Policy	12
1.2 Statement of the Problem	15
1.3 Objectives of the Study	16
1.4 Research Questions	16
1.5 Aims of the Study	16
1.6 Research Question	17
1.7 Significance of the study	17
1.8 Delimitations	17
1.9 Organization of the study	18
CHAPTER TWO:LITERATURE REVIEW	19
2.0 INTRODUCTION	19
2.1 The Behaviorist Theory	19
2.1.1 Skinner's View	19
2.1.2 Motivation	20
2.2 Contrastive Analysis	22
2.3 Error Analysis	23
2.4 The Meaning of Writing	24
2.4.1 The Purpose of Writing	24

2.5 The Meaning of Error	25
2.6 The English Sentence Structure	26
2.6.1 Clause Elements	27
2.7 The Syntax of Sign Language	27
2.7.1 Definite and Indefinite Articles (A, AN, THE)	29
2.7.2 Preposition (To)	29
2.7.3 Demonstrative (That)	29
2.7.4 WH-Word	30
2.7.5 Contractions used to form Negatives	30
2.7.6 Omitting the Auxiliary in Questions.	30
2.7.7 Finger Spelling	30
2.7.8 Selected Studies on Deaf Students' Written Texts	31
2.8 Conclusion	34
CHAPTER THREE	35
METHODOLOGY	35
3.0 Introduction	35
3.1 Research Design	35
3.2 Data Sources	37
3.3 Population and Sampling	37
3.4 Sample Size of the Study	38
3.5 Sampling Technique	38
3.6 Instruments for Data Collection	39
3.7 Data Analysis and Classification of Errors	40
3.8 Reliability and Validity	41
3.9 Conclusion	41
CHAPTER FOUR	43
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	43
4.0 INTRODUCTION	43
4.1 Categorization of Learners' errors	43

4.1.1 Spelling Errors due to additions.	43
4.1.2. Spelling errors due to omission of letters (Sp-O) letters.	44
4.1.1.3 Spelling due to substitution of letters (Sp – S)	45
4.1.2 Tense Error	47
4.1.2.1 Tense Exchange (Tn – E)	48
4.1.2.2 Wrong verb form used (Wr – V)	49
4.1.3 Capitalization Errors	51
4.1.3.1 Omission of capital letters (Om – C)	51
4.1.3.2 Addition of wrong use of capital letters (Ad – C)	52
4.1.4 Non-Sense Construction	54
4.1.5 Punctuation Errors	55
4.1.5.1 Wrong Use of Punctuation	56
4.1.5.2 Omission of Punctuations (Om – P)	57
4.1.6 Sign Language Transfer Errors	59
4.1.7 Errors in writing	62
4.2 Causes of learners errors	64
4.2.1 Errors caused by teachers	65
4.2.2 Errors caused by learners	67
4.2.3 Errors caused by learners L1 Transfer	68
4.2.4 Summary of causes of errors	69
4.3 Conclusion	70
CHAPTER FIVE	71
5.1 Summary	71
Recommendations	73
References.....	72

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE		PAGE
1	Summary of Spelling Errors	41
2	Summary of Tense Errors	45
3	Summary of Capitalization Errors	48
4	Summary of Punctuation Errors	54
6	L1 Transfer Errors / Transliteration Errors	59
6	Frequency of Errors in pupils' writings	63



LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE		PAGE
1	Summary of Spelling Errors	41
2	Summary of Tense Errors	45
3	Summary of Capitalization Errors	49
4	Summary of Punctuation Errors	51
5	Summary of Article Errors	55
6	Summary of L1 Transfer Errors	58
7	Error Types and their frequency of occurrence	60



ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study that investigates the sources of errors in the English sentence constructions of the deaf in the Senior High Secondary School for the deaf at Akuapim Mampong in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The instruments used for data collection were observation and test. The total number of instruments used were 30, these were randomly selected from the Home Economics, Visual Arts and the Technical Departments. From these a total of 310 errors were identified.

Sources of errors investigated were from the influence of the sign language, teachers not specially trained, overgeneralization of rules and concept, inappropriate textbooks and methods of teaching among others. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that, the English curriculum of the deaf schools in Ghana should be restructured and designed with lots of illustrations to compensate for the hearing disability. These innovations can ensure effective learning and teaching of English Language to the deaf and can yield positive results in the usage of English to enable them access higher education with ease.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In Ghana English language is the official language in the administration of academics, commerce politics and the mass media among others. In our Schools English is taught as a core subject across all levels of education. It is also the medium of instruction for all categories of people from basic school to tertiary institutions.

However, the study and use of English language continues to be problematic to deaf students. Giving the right learning atmosphere and conditions, (National Institute for the Deaf). But a marginal percentage are able to excel to the tertiary level with a majority of them stuck half way the academic ladder due to poor performance in the English language as a subject. Their sentences are characterized by poor expressions and grammatical errors. This has become a great concern to teachers of the Deaf and the Stakeholders.

Evidence through personal interaction, reports from both teachers and Headmaster of Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf indicate that the deaf students' sentences are full of errors.

According to Gadagbui (2007), the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) Chief Examiner's report since 1999 to the present were constantly on poor language expression, lack of comprehension, grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and lack of satisfying demands of the question.

It is therefore imperative that about (95%) of Deaf students and hearing impaired will need to be assisted in order to overcome the errors they make in sentence

constructions. This research is to therefore ascertain the sources of errors for remediation.

Since English is the only medium of instruction of all the other subjects in the Ghanaian educational curriculum as well as the medium allowing the possibility of exploring the internet and also communicating effectively, the Deaf's only probable medium is writing as in texting, emails, fax or even for evaluations as in essay and other write-ups. These apart from signing are the only medium of communication. This notwithstanding it is crucial for the deaf to attain an appreciable level of competence in written, English to enable them carry out their daily activities and derive benefits from the facilities and utilize opportunities available around them and beyond.

With my experience as an English Teacher in the Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf, I have observed the fruitless efforts students put in the study of English and the huge percentages of failure recorded in West Africa C CE that hinder their prospects of furthering their education, as a result of this, they resort to menial jobs or remains unemployed.

Even though the Ghanaian Sign Language (GSL) offers intelligibility among the deaf, it is devoid of speech. The deaf in the educational set up is taught rules with regard to grammatical usage unlike their hearing peers who complement formal education with environmental inputs.

There has been growing interest in the sign language in recent times. Despite the grammar rules learnt over the years and the vocabulary they have acquired, the errors

are still enormous. The researcher therefore seeks to find out the sources of these errors.

1.1.3 The National Language Policy

Typical of Africa, many nations have more than one speech form which poses a problem in many sectors of life such as in education, national development and in trans-cultural communications (Hymes 1967) To this effect, Gbedemah (1995) maintains that : ” in a country where many languages co-exist the difficulties of communication between and across ethnic boundaries are compounded, To this must be added the nation that receives modern education through a foreign language whose roots and operational systems are unrelated to any of their indigenous language, in effect uses English as its official language. Andoh-Kumi (1999) points out that Ghana uses English, a language she inherited from Britain, as the official language’.

In Ghanaian schools, English is learnt as L2 which is used for instruction and as a medium for school work and as a result demands a reasonable ability to understand, read and write it. It is therefore required, that every Ghanaian student be bilingual Andoh-Kumi (1999).

Even though English is the medium of instruction in all Ghanaian Schools, Deaf students tend to use sign language in school and at home for communication and use English only for academic work. Thus the Sign language dominates English in Schools for the Deaf.

As stated by Andoh-Kumi (1999) “language plays major roles in the education of the child, both formally and informally”. Bamgbose (1976) Cited in Andoh-Kumi (1999) contends that “in formal education the extent of mastery in the language of

instruction influences educational attainment quite significantly. He affirms that if a child is taught in another language other than the first language, that child is bound to have problems. However a child who is taught in his own tongue is bound to cope faster. In this vein, the international institute of African language and culture maintains that every child should receive instructions through his mother tongue. This ensures appreciation and respect for the mental heritage of his/her people because the natural and necessary expression of his heritage is the language.

The neglect of the L1 implies the student will not progress in his education. Thus forcing him to express himself in a language alien to himself and the genus of his race Boadi (1976). Consequently, the institute opted for instruction in L1 exclusively during the first three years of education.

Every nation's most fundamental aim of Education is to empower and improve the welfare of its citizens. The presumption is that Education is a major source of progress. The amount of access to education is one of the keys to the amount of mobility possible in a society. "For one reason or the other, if people do not get access to the type of education that will assure their social, economic and occupational mobility, they become very resentful". (Andoh-Kumi 1999). It is therefore the desire of government and stakeholders in education that all barriers to educational development of the child be removed. "One of the potential barriers is when the language of instruction in education is a "foreign" language" Andoh-Kumi (1999).

Ghanaian Languages, the L1 of many Ghanaian children, can be a powerful tool in teaching and learning especially at the very early stages of the school system. It is noted that a good grounding in the mother tongue of the child facilitates the proper

teaching and learning of foreign languages. Hence, the current language Education policy speaks that, the Ghanaian language, common in the local area should be used as the medium of instruction during the first three years of primary education, and while English is studied as a subject. From primary four, English replaces the Ghanaian language as a medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language then mentioned as another subject on the time table.

Often the dominant language of the area is chosen as the medium of instruction because it is spoken by almost everybody in that particular community, thus, it provided the necessary inputs for learning. It is assumed that children learn most concepts before entering school. So whatever is taught in the language would be understood easily. However, concerning the first language of the Deaf children, issues are different since the Ghanaian Sign Language, which is used as the medium of instruction in schools for the deaf is neither a dominant language of that community where the school is located, nor is the prevalent language of that community where the school comes from. Nonetheless, the Ghanaian Sign Language, used in schools for the Deaf is not the first language of as much as 90% of students because they come from hearing families. Also the Sign Language used by most parents of Deaf children in their various homes vary from background to background, and do not conform to the Ghanaian Sign Language. In effect, about 90% of Deaf children begin to learn the Ghanaian Sign Languages when they first enter school irrespective of their age. As a result of these distinguishing features, and the fact that the sign language has no written form, Deaf children tend to write English sentences which deviate from the norm. It should be noted that, though the policy applies to all Basic Schools in practicality, it does not apply to schools for the Deaf. This can point to the fact that

schools for the Deaf were not considered at the time of its formulation because they did not consider the issues concerning the linguistic background of the Deaf child.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Students of Senior High Secondary School for the deaf construct sentences that are full of errors, and this makes it difficult for a lot of them access higher education. The goal of the Ministry of Education is to provide relevant and quality education for all Ghanaians especially the disadvantaged to enable them acquire skills which will make them functional literates and also enable them promote the rapid socio-economic growth of the country.

Maslmkaer (2004) and Bamgbose (1976) assert that achievement in formal education requires mastery in the language of instruction. The Ghana Education Service, the Ministry of Education, and other Stakeholders have put in place some appropriate measures which include teaching all the aspects of English at the Basic and the Senior High School level to strengthen the skills, competence and proficiency of students. Despite of all these, Deaf students still struggle with writing correct English sentences. These observations are noted from students' assignments, class tests, class exercises, end of term examinations, and the results of their West Africa Senior Secondary Exams.

According to Gadagbui and Essel (1997), as cited in Gadagbui (2007), although the hearing impaired are motivated people, hardworking and honest, some employers shun them due to lack of effective verbal communicative skills and for fear that the progress of their businesses would be retarded.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- 1) To identify types of grammatical errors in the essays of deaf students.
- 2) To discuss the causes of such errors.
- 3) To discuss how errors could be minimized.

1.4 Research Questions

Three research questions were posed to investigate the sources of error in the deaf's sentence construction.

- 1) What are some of the common grammatical errors made by the Deaf students in Senior High Secondary for the Deaf?
- 2) What are the sources of these errors among students who are Deaf at Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf?
- 3) What strategies can be adapted to overcome errors in sentences construction of students who are Deaf at Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf?

1.5 Aims of the Study

The purpose of the study is to investigate the source of errors in the English sentences of the deaf students. At the Senior High School for the Deaf. The study will bring about intervention and also complement the efforts aimed at helping the students of the Senior High School for the Deaf. It would be pedagogically significant to teachers because it will offer them the opportunity to know their students' source of error and device language teaching strategies to help them. Parents who are also considered the first educators of their children will also seek approved ways to compliment the

school's effort to develop students academically .It will also add literature for relevant future reference in similar research.

1.6 Research Question

Two research questions are posed to investigate the sources of error in the Deafs' sentence construction.

1. What are some of the common grammatical errors made by Deaf students in their English sentence constructions
2. What are the sources these errors?

1.7 Significance of the study

Since this research is among the few that is centered on errors in deaf student's sentences, highlighting the sources of error will bring about interventions and also complement the efforts aimed at helping them. It is also pedagogically significant to teachers because it will offer them the opportunity to know their students' source of error and devise language teaching strategy to eliminate them.

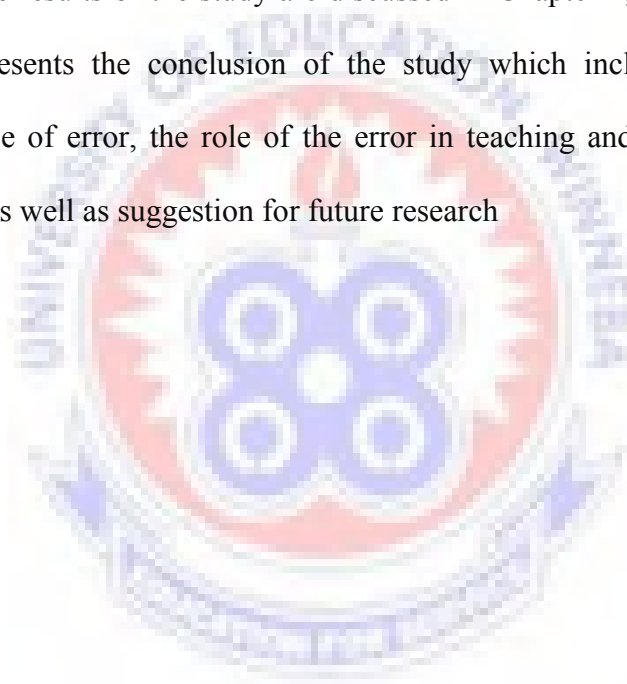
Parents who are considered the first educators of their children will also seek approved ways to compliment the schools' efforts to develop students academically. An additional significance is that it will add literature for relevant future reference in similar research.

1.8 Delimitations

Due to the limitation of resources such as time and money the researcher limited the scope of study to include 30 second year students of Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf from the Home Economics, Arts and Technical classes only.

1.9 Organization of the study

The study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews literature to study, this focuses on the theoretical views that are closely relevant to language acquisition, and includes the behaviorist theory, Skinner's view, motivation, constructive analysis, error analysis, the meaning of writing, the purpose of writing and the meaning of error. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology adopted for the study. The instruments and sampling population used for the research work and data are also discussed. The results of the study are discussed in Chapter 4, which entails : *Lastly, Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study which includes the summary of findings, cause of error, the role of the error in teaching and learning, pedagogical implications as well as suggestion for future research



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to review some theories relevant to second language acquisition and learning. The presentation includes; the behaviorism, contrastive analysis, and error analysis, the meaning of writing, and the purpose of writing. Since these theories illustrate the approaches and processes that direct successful Second Language Learning, they also aid comprehension.

2.1 The Behaviorist Theory

The behaviorist theory as stated in Elis (1994), regards language learning as activities that lead to habit formation. He claims that, language learning in the classroom situation involves straight forward process of response to stimuli. Thus instructions are direct and teacher centered.

2.1.1 Skinner's View

According to Skinner (1957), the behaviorists depend on the fundamental approaches of external factors where imitation supporting and rewards are seen as factors that improve learning. This entails the teacher providing models for the learner to imitate and practice for a period of time. If the learner is successful, he is rewarded. The pursuit for successive rewards makes the learner continue with the practicing input

With regard to a classroom situation, Skinner affirms that reinforcement greatly facilitates learning. Elis (1985) describes the behavioral theory as stimulus, presented in the form of activities and exercises and the learner is expected to study through miming, repetition and memorization. Once the learner masters these activities and

tasks and is rewarded adequately he forms habits. Hence subsequent tasks are performed spontaneously and correctly (Skinner 1957). This fosters constant interaction between the teacher and the learner. It also leads to continuous observation and evaluation of progress for reinforcement.

Although the behaviorist presents excellent information on pedagogical procedures which enhance effective second language learning, these approaches are achievable in second language classroom where a good deal of time is provided for practicing. In our schools system, the curriculum follows a time table which demands that a subject be taught within a stipulated time. This implies that a subject has to be completed before another starts. It is also expected that the scheme of work for the term has to be exhausted.

Due to the inability of the Deaf to hear spoken language much time is required. As a result, very little is achieved. This assertion that a student becomes competent when ample time is provided for practicing to enable one form desirable language habits is not practical. Consequently, implementing some aspects of this theory with regard to the Deaf is complicated.

2.1.2 Motivation

The Behaviorists maintain that motivation enhances the learning process (Elis 1994). Gardner (1985) also describes motivation as the extent to which the individual strives to learn a language as a result of a desire and the gratification experienced in this activity influences the rate of success in the second language. Gardner (1985) indicates that reinforcement and motivation minimize unnecessary interference of the other additional languages learners have already acquired. The teacher should

therefore reward the learner upon giving correct responses and give no reward for wrong responses.

Gardner asserts that, motivation as part of the behaviorist theory positively supports learners and exposes them to a platform that provides observable behaviors which are tested to reflect a true manifestation of learning taking place in a real situation. This therefore implies that until ample time is provided for frequent and successive practice, no habit can be formed; subsequently, no reward is given to motivate the learner to continue practicing. In the case of the Deaf, ample time is needed for teaching and learning due to their slow learning habits.

The Environmentalist theory assumes that the learner's environment shapes learning and behavior. Therefore comprehensive inputs adequately provided induce learning. However, one can conclude that if the environment is not learner friendly, the desire cannot be induced.

Schuman (1978) developed the Acculturation model in relation to the Environmentalist Theory and defines it as the Social and Psychological union of the learner with the target language. Therefore the extent to which a learner acculturates to the target language is vital to second language learning.

Schuman (1978) explains that acculturation is ``the blend of both social and psychological condign of the learner's first language``. He further indicated that, the inputs in both the classroom environment and the home environment facilitates learning .It is also beneficial when the distance between the learner's first and second language is closer. The implication is that the classroom environment within which

the student learns and the environment he lives in should be endowed with sufficient support that relate to the foreign language's culture and environment.

Even though, the environmentalist assumes that an environment with adequate input enhance learning. I have observed that unlike hearing students who have access to as much inputs as there are in their environment which include: spoken language from other students, adults, television, radio, environmental input newspapers, books, journals and magazines to improve learning. Deaf students, only have access to limited comprehensible input provided in the classroom by the teacher. For example, textbooks, written text provided by the teacher and other printed material from the library. The limited input contributes largely to the non- performance in English.

2.2 Contrastive Analysis

According to Ellis (1985) Contrastive Analysis requires conducting a contrastive analysis between the learner's L1 and L2 in order to anticipate areas of divergence that are likely to cause errors and those of convergence that will bring positive transfer. Contrastive Analysis was deeply established in Behaviorism which involves learning by Condition and Structuralism. The Behaviorist believed that the central difficulty of second language acquisition is the interference of the first language system with the second language structure. In this vain Lado, (1957) posits that if the learner becomes informed about the variation that exist between the learner's L1 and the target language, he can predict the areas of potential learning error that will occur in the course of learning, so that he can make provisions for teaching them Ellis (1985)

The Behaviorist considers errors as circumventing to prevent learners from making them in the first place and to make language teaching easier. The procedure of Contrastive Analysis is based on assumptions that language is a habit and its learning involves the establishment of a new set of habits. This hypothesis affirms that the L1 of the learner is the major source of L2 learners' errors. Hence the difficulty and ease of second language learning are determined by differences and similarities with regard to contrasting two languages. The underlying principle here is that the differences should be studied and similarities be ignored to make the learning process effective.

From the stance of the Contrastive Analysis, the most effective means is to implore a scientific description of the target language which is compared with parallel description of the native language of the learner. Criticism by Chomski, (1959) that language should be acquired without being explicitly taught or overly taught in a way that would be consistent with behavioral theory led to a reassertion of mentalist view of language.

2.3 Error Analysis

According to French (1949), Error Analysis involved a collection of repeated errors and their linguistic classification in order to provide information that can be used to sequence items for teaching and to device remedial lessons. Despite the enthusiasm of Contrastive Analysis, which grew in the 1950s and overshadowed the interest of error analysis Ellis (1985) through a series of circles, Corder, (1971) established the field of error analysis. This is significant in providing information to teachers about how much the learner has learnt, equipping the researcher with

evidence of how language was learnt and serving as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language.

The emergence of Error Analysis was as a result of a response to the discovery of the weakness of the assertion made by contrastive analyst which claim that the L2 learner's language accounts for its major source of L2 errors. Our understanding of the nature and the process of the second-language learning has been discovered through the knowledge of error analysis. One of the disclosures of error analysis is the idea that the L1 is not the only source of L2 learners' errors. They claim that other sources such as ``overgeneralization induced training, ignorance of rules restriction, language loyalty, the chaotic of the L2 orthography and perception blind spot causes L2 learners' error Ellis (1994).

2.4 The Meaning of Writing

Richards and Richard (2002) views writing as a result of a complex of planning, drafting, reviewing, revising and some approaches to the teaching of first and second language writing that teach students to use these processes.

As one of the four language skills, writing has always occupied a place in most English Language courses the reason being that most people need to learn to write in English for occupational or academic purposes.

2.4.1 The Purpose of Writing

Apart from writing being a communicative skill of vital importance, it is also a skill which enables the learner to plan and rethink the communicative process Murcia, (2001).

2.5 The Meaning of Error

Dulay et al (1982) defines error as “flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norm of mature language performance. From the above definition of an error is established if the text fails to comply with the sentence or language forms that are normally produced by mature proficient users of the language in specified communities or situations. These proficient users are natives or some instances referred to as research informant.

Another revelation is that there are two main types of linguistic deviations: mistakes and errors. Error analyst explain that mistakes are disorganized, unsystematic and do not represent the learners competence. However, errors are recurrent, systematic and reveal one’s level of competence Ellis (1985)

Furthermore, error analyst like Yankson (1989) explain that errors are useful to the second language learner, the language teacher, the text writer, the syllabus designer and the educational policy maker. When learners are alerted to their systematic and recurrent errors, they learn from them. Teachers use learners’ errors to assess the effectiveness of their teaching. Textbook writers and syllabus designers rely on errors to determine areas to emphasize. The policy maker brings innovations in national educational delivery. Another contribution is that it helps us ascertain how much effort the second language learner puts in the learning process.

Error analysts have established a procedure for conducting error analysis which involves; collection of samples of student language, error recognition, error description, error-explanation and error evaluation. Error analysts have also made us

aware that the L2 learner's language is a system in its own right. It is a continuum that lies somewhere between these two language systems. It is a language system that is structurally stable, it is systematic and dynamic Ellis (1985). Indeed, error analysis has made a massive input to our current understanding of the nature and the process of second language acquisition. All these have pertinent pedagogical implications to English language teaching in our schools for the Deaf in Ghana. The Error Analysis procedures have been beneficial, particularly to this research because it allows investigation of the research questions by explicitly providing the specific step to follow. The theory also enables analysis of the data. Furthermore, this review has pointed out the effects of the learning environment and the effects of motivation on the processes of second language acquisition. Also the importance of learner error is stated. Samples of my subject written text collected as data for this study will be analyzed with this theory.

2.6 The English Sentence Structure

O'Grady et al (2011) assert that thoughts and ideas are only expressed by coalescing words in a meticulous order into sentences which the native speakers of that language agree to as grammatically correct.

Also, Matthews (1982) maintains that the expression of a language involves a relationship between a sequence of sounds and meanings. According to him, syntax involves how words, with or without appropriate inflections are arranged to show connections of meaning within a sentence.

Van Valin and Lapollola (1997) state that this arrangement of words is a vital factor in determining the meaning of an utterance in English and many other

languages. On the contrary, sign language does not rely on the arrangement of words in order to make meaning of an utterance but rather depends on the context of the communication's situation. Thus, the environment of words relies on the signer's own choice.

2.6.1 Clause Elements

As crystal maintains, every English clause elements comprises a particular kind of meaning. Even though the construction of English sentences is based on two major elements called the subject and the predicate, the construction of sign language may allow free construction. These two major elements which are called subject and predicate become basis for sentence analysis. The predicate heading requires further examination in order to make out a number of different kinds of constructions. In this regard, Quirk and Greebaum,(1973) state that the point of reference in presenting the general sentence structure rules is the small units called parts of a sentence which comprises the subject and the predicate, whereas the predicate is further distinguished.

Quirk and Greenbaum, (1973) consider five components of the sentence called the elements of the structure which include: subject, verb, compliment object and adverbial. For instance,

The church /will make/ Lucy /the Administrator/ next week

S V O C A

2.7 The Syntax of Sign Language

Sign language is a unique and recognizable language with vocabulary which is conceptually based. It employs non-manual behaviors that make up the visual parts of

this type of communication. It has its own simplified grammatical patterns that make it extremely telegraphic Riekehof (1987)

The American sign- language vocabulary may be used in either the word order of the English Language or in a system having its own syntax and grammatical features which Moores, (1983) termed as the ASL. The language continuum moves from one that is a complete departure from English, and one that looks like English. The sign vocabulary is identical with a different grammatical rule.

While the syntax of English generally follows a particular order, the subject predicate pattern, for example, a subject-verb-object-order, as in the following sentence: “The woman beat the girl”. The Ghanaian sign language maintains its own syntax which is different from the syntax of English. Riekehof, (1987: 13) states that with regard to the syntax of the ASL/GSL, “the theme of the conversation is stated first, so that the recipient becomes aware of what is to be talked about, then, the other information given about the subject is added”. GSL includes those systems in use throughout Ghana which has a high degree of mutual intelligibility Oppong, (2006).

The preference of the deaf person you are communicating with as well as the setting is also crucial instead of intonation, vocal cues, facial expressions, body language, or strength or force of the sign is used for clearer communication Riekehof, (1987). In this system, some words such as the definite and indefinite articles (“a”, “an”, and “the”) are omitted because they do not have any consequence on the meaning of the sentence. The context provides the information without using a sign. Facial expression and body language convey the meaning of the English word not

being signed. The items that are omitted “a, an, the, to, that, and how as well as contractions used to form the negative and omitting the auxiliary in a question.

2.7.1 Definite and Indefinite Articles (A, AN, THE)

These articles are spoken but not signed Riekehof (1987:326). A signer only makes an example, if he wishes to emphasize something that is best known or most important of its kind. For example: “Papaye” is the best place to eat in town. Becomes “Papaye”, town best eat place.

2.7.2 Preposition (To)

‘To’ is not signed when the verb is used in its infinitive form, because the sign for ‘to’ is unnecessary. Example: ‘Girls like to gossip’ becomes ‘Girls like gossip’

When the verb is used to indicate direction, it is a matter of choice whether ‘to’ is signed or not. Example: ‘Coming to America’ becomes - ‘Come America’, ‘Talk to me’ becomes - ‘Talk me’. Others omit it completely, relying on the signer’s lip movement to indicate that ‘to’ is being used. Showing action towards someone or something to could be signed or finger spelled. Example: ‘to my way of thinking’ ‘to my surprise’; ‘wet to the skin’. “To” is needed in these examples since omitting it would change the meaning of the phrase.

2.7.3 Demonstrative (That)

‘That’ is properly used as a demonstrative pronoun or adjective (Riekehof (1987). Example: that is not right: that book is torn. When “that” is used as a conjunctive, no sign is necessary. Example: “He said that he was going”. This sentence would equally be correct if “that” were omitted; “He said he was going”

2.7.4 WH-Word

When how is used in combination with “many” or “much”, it is not necessary to sign “how” Riekehof (1987) Example: How many children do you have? How much money do you spend? In both cases, the sign for “how many” or “how much” are spoken while only the second word is signed along with a questioning facial expression.

2.7.5 Contractions used to form Negatives

When contractions are used to form negatives in English, the signer simply signs “not” instead of signing two words that form the contraction Riekehof (1987:326). Example: haven’t, hasn’t, isn’t, aren’t, wouldn’t, won’t, don’t and didn’t. In these instances, the signer simply says any of the above words with a questioning facial expression while signing “not” or “not yet” as the case may be.

2.7.6 Omitting the Auxiliary in Questions.

In asking questions, the auxiliary is spoken but not always signed. Some prefer to either sign or finger-spell. If the question word is not signed, the face shows a questioning expression Riekehof (1987)

2.7.7 Finger Spelling

According to Riekehof (1987) finger spelling is a system used to sign concepts or phenomena for which no sign exists. Finger spelling has been employed to render proper names and words for which there are no standardized signs. It is used for presenting precise English and for expressing shades and nuances of meaning in the more limited sign language.

Based on the above Deaf students sentence constructions are devoid of certain words that adds meaning or extra information but are omitted because of the sign language influence.

2.7.8 Selected Studies on Deaf Students' Written Texts

Power and Quigley (1973) ; Wilbur and Quigley (1975) ; Quigley et al (1977) ; Quigley and King (1980) who reviewed studies on Deaf students' writing found that the Deaf have difficulty with morphology and syntax. Quigley and King (1980) who focused on several syntactic structures, report that Deaf students make errors in word order, use of pronouns, conjunctions and verb inflections. Taechner et al. (1988) and Tur Kaspas and Dromi (2001), who conducted studies in language other than English reveal that the difficulties in morpho-syntax observed in Deaf learner's writing are not language specific.

Marschark et al, who did a causal network discourse analysis in written narratives of Deaf students, point out that they are aware of discourse rules but lack the appropriate linguistic skills necessary for a written text production Marschark, et al (1994). Taechner (1988), Wilbur, (2000) and Yoshinaga-Hano et al.(1996) maintain that Deaf students encounter challenges when they use pronouns, determiners, conjunctions, passives constructions and conditional verbs such as “could”, “shall” or “might”. Many Deaf students face challenges in writing comprehensible English due to surrounding issues that affect them.

These students find it much easier, at expressing themselves in Ghanaian sign language or a variant than in written English. Although English is the language of instruction Oppong, (2006). By the time these students get to Senior High School,

they have spent years struggling with the grammatical intricacies of English. Demands, placed on these students at this educational level to produce a variety of written work is great.

According to Marschark and Halas (1994), Deaf students' writing has been characterized by disfluent and such disfluency is to a large extent due to two types of errors: developmental errors produced by students who are learning English as a second language, that are similar to those made by young children learning English.

Dulay et al. (1982) and Yoshinaga-Hano et al. (1996) identified six developmental error categories in Deaf students written text which include a) omitting grammatical morphemes which do not contribute meaning .For example; ' She beat boy': b) double marking a feature when only one marker is needed, for example; ' He didn't walked home' c) generalizing rules e.g.' fungus for funguses' ; d) arch forms or using one form in place of several, e.g.' Him buy for me' ; e) using two or more forms in random alternation e.g., using he and she randomly regardless of the gender of the person in question; and f) misordering items in construction, e.g.' Who you are talking?'

It may be worth noting here that the above kinds of errors occur because the students probably have an incomplete second language rule system. As the student builds his rule system, he is able to correct these developmental errors.

In addition to developmental errors, Deaf students' written texts are described as shorter Bochner and Albertini (1988). Such brevity occurs perhaps most intuitively obvious because Deaf students simply use fewer words and clauses per unit T-unit

Klecan-Aker and Blondeau (1990), “where a T-unit is taken to mean a group of words that can function as a sentence” Yoshinaga-Hano et al-(1996).

Maxwell and Falick (1992) describe Deaf students as using fewer clauses because they have difficulties understanding relationships between major prepositions within a text. Also, Albertini Schley (2003) asserts that “Deaf students have a small vocabulary, generally one lexical item per referent”. A second reason for this brevity is sparse use of minor prepositions. A minor preposition can be defined as “being composed of a relation that can be a modifier or connective and an argument that is usually an action or agent” Yoshinaga-Hano et al (1996). This means that Deaf students employ unembellished agent /action forms when they express themselves in writing.

Besides the inclusion of fewer minor propositions, Deaf students’ text cohesion differs significantly from that of their hearing counterparts. Cohesion is a system of connective devices that help the reader follow the progression of the text. Yoshinaga-Hano et al.(1996) have identified five kinds of cohesive devices: a) reference, b) substitution, c) ellipsis, d) conjunction and e) lexical. De Villiers (1991) found that in general, Deaf students used fewer cohesive devices than their hearing counterparts. They almost exclusively use and, then, because to conjoin ideas while hearing students use as much greater variety. Maxwell and Falick (1992) attribute this finding to the manner in which Deaf children are taught English.

According to these researchers, Deaf students are traditionally taught grammatical structure out of context. Although students can reproduce the particular structure, they lack understanding of how that structure functions in a text. Deaf

students tend to limit their use of connectives to the few with which they feel confident, frequently using them incorrectly. They then, face problem in terms of their written English. They make developmental errors because they are learning English in more formal settings, much as many second language learners do Maxwell and Falick (1992)

The discussions above represent information about the behaviorist view of the processes of second language acquisition and the appropriate procedure of Error Analysis and its role in second language research, as well as its benefit to pedagogy. The discussions also reveal that the syntactic structure of sign language differs from that of the English language. This clearly ensures our understanding of the way Deaf students write English sentences.

2.8 Conclusion

The structures of the two languages indicate that there are considerable disparities between the syntactic structures of these two languages. The fact that all interactions in the School for the Deaf are mainly through the Ghanaian sign language and the student is expected to write English, there is the tendency of these students deviating as they write. This is because they receive very limited input which stem to deviant structures in their writing and requires some analysis for pedagogical interventions to be instituted.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a review of literature on error analysis and interpretation of terms and review of related studies. This chapter will outline the methodology and research design adopted in carrying out the entire research. The chapter discusses the sources of data, population and sampling, sampling size of the study and the factors that informed the researcher's choice of the sample population. It will also present the procedures used in the collection of the data. This study is descriptive in nature and the analysis will employ mainly qualitative measures.

The reliability and validity of the research instruments are also addressed. Finally, ethical consideration pertaining to the research will also be discussed.

3.1 Research Design

This study which is to be carried out is to investigate the sources of error in the sentence construction of the deaf. Creswell (1994) cited in Kyere, K. G. (2012) describes research as a master plan specifying the research methods and procedures. Also, Kothari (2004) as cited in Kyere K. G. (2012) claims that research design as a detailed plan which the researchers use to guide the research. Here, the researcher is much concerned with why they collect certain data, what in order to answer the research questions of study.

Baines, Grove and Burns (2003, p. 195) also defines a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”.

Parahoo (1997, p. 142) also describes a research design as “a plan that describes how, when and where data are to be collected and analyzed”. Finally, Owu – Ewie (2012) observes that a research design provides the most valid and accurate answers possible to the research questions stated.

In this study, qualitative research will be used. According to Owu – Ewie (2012) “Ordinarily, qualitative research involves detailed verbal descriptions of characteristics, case and setting by using interviews, observations and documents as the data collecting procedure”. In the Ghana Education Service (GES) (2001) IEC Training Manual on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) strategy of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme, ‘qualitative research is an unstructured and behavior patterns’. Creswell (1998) also observes that qualitative research design is an enquiry of process of understanding, based on a clear methodological process that uses a social or human problem by building a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, report detailed views of informants, and conducted in the natural setting.

Research designs provide the most valid and accurate answer possible to the research questions stated. Bailey, Pillard, Dawood, Miller, Farrer, Trivedi and Murphy (1999) state that since validity is an essential element, the researcher should attempt to accurately represent findings. To this end, different data sources will be employed to identify errors in the written essays of students and thus the necessity to expand the data scope to the greater proportion of the population of the school. The researcher will follow the analytical descriptive method. The analytical method involves the identification and interpretation of errors in the written essays of the pupils.

3.2 Data Sources

Theories on research have indicated that research is a movement from the known to the unknown. Therefore data sources will help the researcher to know where to collect his/her data. All research students involve data collection and are designed to either test hypotheses or answer research questions (Creswell, 2013). This study aims at answering research questions with data from the basic source thus, students written essays and responses from both students and teachers. Written work will be given to students because they are considered to be the outcome of planned language production. On the basis of ethical grounds, the researcher will duly inform the school authorities and the students involved will be fully informed about the study. This will ensure some level of co-operation of the people involved with the researcher from start to the end of the data collection period.

3.3 Population and Sampling

A population is a group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common and of interest to the researcher Best and Kahn, (2006). It also refers to the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which he or she would like the results of the study to be generalized Creswell (2013). The entire school has a population of about 410 deaf and hard of hearing students. The researcher will limit the scope of the study to second year students drawn from the Home Economic, Arts and Technical classes. A good sample determines the generalizability of results and represents the population of the study. The target population for the study will be form two students.

These learners are aged between 20-24 years and have been introduced to the study of English Language for about eight (8) to ten (10) years. It can be said that the form two students have acquired the necessary basic writing skills needed in writing academic

essays. This is because it is assumed that the form two students have had much exposure to English Language at school where this research will be carried out. The researcher will also seek the views of teachers in the school through interviews.

Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf will be selected because that is where the researcher teaches and identified the problem in the course of marking students' class exercises. Most of the students in the school were taught in their basic school in L1 and for that matter face a lot of challenges when it comes to their writing. Hence, errors in students writing depict their knowledge or lack of it in the use of the language.

3.4 Sample Size of the Study

The process of selecting portion of the population to represent the entire population is known as sampling Polit, Beck and Hungler, (2001). Baines, Grove and Burns, (2003) also refer to sampling as a process selecting a group of people, events or behavior with which to conduct a study. The sample size of the research will comprise 30 out of the 108 students in the Form 2 classes.

It is said that the size of the population depends on factors such as the research topic and the type of data Seliger and Shohamy, (1989). The size of the study demands the use of a fairly large number of samples to represent students' writings.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) confirm that in sampling, a portion that represents the whole population is selected. Time and money will be considered in selecting a sample to be studied rather than attempting to study the entire population. In this study, the sampling will be purposive. A purposive sampling was used in this research

work to select upper primary pupils. Parahoo (1997, p. 232) describes purposive sampling as “a method of sampling where the researcher deliberately chooses who to include in the study based on their ability to provide necessary data”. These classes will be targeted because they have students of various intellectual abilities that serve as a better representative sample of the form two students. The target population will involve 30 students out of a population of 410 students.

3.6 Instruments for Data Collection

According to Parahoo (1997), a research instrument is “a tool used to collect data”. An instrument is a tool designed to measure knowledge attitude and skills. He argues that a research instrument “is a systematically prepared form or document purposely designed through compilation of questions to elicit responses from respondents with the aim of collecting data. The researcher used written essays for the study. The written essays as an instrument for conducting this study are discussed as follows;

3.7 The Written Essays

The written essays will be the major instrument of this study because the analysis of the students’ writing errors is the central objective of the study. The writing test will be in the form of an open essay question where students will be given guidance on how much to write (at least 120 words). The time limit which will be set for the essay will be 60 minutes, as the deaf require half more time than their hearing colleagues who would have used 40 minutes. The questions will be standard or in accordance to WACCE guidelines.

The purpose of the essay is to identify the types of errors students commit and group them. The topics to be written shall be; “A day I will never forget”, “How can we maintain discipline in the school”.

This will be a class test and the researcher will follow the West African Examination Council marking scheme in the scoring. The breakdown of marks is given as Content (10 marks), Organization (5 marks), Expression (10 marks) and Mechanical Accuracy (5 Marks)

3.7 Data Analysis and Classification of Errors

Data analysis involves working to uncover patterns and trends in data sets, and data interpretation involves explaining those patterns and trends. Error analysis is used both as a theory and method of analyzing data. It is a technique for identifying, classifying, and systematically interpreting the forms of language writing and speaking (Richards and Schmidt, 2002). Based on the guidelines of selecting a corpus of language by Ellis (1995), written essays will be collected from 30 pupils as a test. Various research on error analysis including Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 67) and Huang (2001) informed the processes used to analyze the data. The following steps will be followed: *Data Collection, Identification of Errors, Classification of Errors and A Statement of Error Frequency.*

In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998, p. 304), categories and sub – categories such as the following would be used for this research to record all the occurrence of errors which would be made by the students: grammatical (prepositions, articles, reported speech, singular and plural, adjectives, irregular verbs, tenses, concord and possessive cases); syntactic (nouns and pronouns

and word order); lexical (word choice); semantic and substance (capitalization and spelling). The written essays to be conducted in this study will be read, marked and analyzed using the SPSS. Every error will be recorded only once from each participant even if it reoccurs. The errors will be categorized into verb tense, subject – verb agreement, spellings, capitalization, Non-sense expressions, sentence fragment and prepositions.

3.8 Reliability and Validity

Polit, Beck and Hungler (2001) refer to reliability as the degree of consistency with which an instrument measures the attribute it is designed to measure. The researcher will use a test – retest device to measure the reliability of the instrument. The researcher will conduct a pilot study by randomly selecting 5 students from the target population. These students will not take part in the actual study. The students will be asked to write on the topic twice within a two – week interval. The results will definitely show consistency in the answers.

Validity, on the other hand is the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure Polit, Beck and Hungler,(2001). To ensure the face and content of the study instrument, three (3) colleague teachers will be asked to evaluate the given topic. This will approve that the topics have been taken from materials appropriate to students' standard and suit their ages, and that the rubric set was very clear.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the procedure to be adopted for the study. It highlighted the sources of data, the population and sample size, the instrument of the data

collection, the technique to be used in analyzing and interpreting the data in order to better explain the phenomena. The next chapter will discuss the result to be obtained from the data to be collected to show the type and sources of errors in students' written essays.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents details of result obtained from the analysis of the data collected. It analyzes results of written essays of students of Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf. The section is structured into two (2) main parts. The first section presents an analysis of common errors committed by students in their written essays. Such errors included punctuation errors, errors in the use of capital letters, spelling errors, L1 induced transfer errors, tenses errors and the use of non-sense expressions. From this, spelling errors topped the list of errors with L1 transfer errors being the lowest. These are all discussed and illustrated with examples. The second section presents a discussion of the causes of these errors based on the findings. This was made in line with the first two research questions.

4.1 Categorization of Learners' errors

After data was collected and analyzed, several errors were identified in the learners' writings. These are punctuation errors, errors in the use of capital letters, spelling errors, L1 transfer errors and tense errors. These errors are discussed below.

4.1.1 Spelling Errors due to additions.

In writing, spelling is very essential because, a wrongly spelt word may obscure the meaning of the message a writer intends to convey. Spelling is the art of forming words from letters. It has to do with the process of writing words by using the letters which are conventionally accepted for their formation. The common spelling errors

identified in the data collected are spelling errors due to addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters.

4.1.2 Errors due to addition of Letters

An addition is an act, process or results of adding or joining something to another thing. In this case, it is the inappropriate addition of letters to words that result in the word being misspelt. Below are examples of words wrongly spelt in their essays.

- 1) I left every* sad. (very)
- 2) We had planned and alart* to play football. (a lot).
- 3) We went the game's* venue. (venue of the game).
- 4) Breathing become very difficults*. (difficult).
- 5) When my parents got wind for* the our plights*. (of our plight).
- 6) It was not the suspected* who took it. (Suspect)
- 7) I was not a thievf. (thief)

These errors are due to the fact that they cannot hear speech sound and so cannot associate the spelling of the word to their sounds and also as a result of poor reading habits. The deaf enjoy reading text that has a lot of illustrations to aid understanding, but the books prescribed for the Senior High School course does not take the deaf's special needs into consideration.

4.1.2. Spelling errors due to omission of letters (Sp-O) letters.

In this category, they omitted some of the letters that make up the words. Examples are found in the following sentences.

- (a) While studing* (studying)
- (b) Dus* to its lowest charges (due)
- (c) I am therefore a very delight* child. (delightful)
- (d) My friend Okpoti Kiki* house. (Okpoti Kiki's)
- (e) Twenty minuts* into the game. (minutes)

From example (a) – (e), it is seen that some letters were omitted from certain words which led to those words being misspelt. This can be attributed to the fact that their interactions with words are minimal due to their poor reading habits.

4.1.1.3 Spelling due to substitution of letters (Sp – S)

Substitution in general has to do with the replacement of one thing by another, in this case, a word with another word. The investigation revealed that spelling errors under this category occurred when certain letters were replaced by others to change their word classes. Below are some examples in example one below:

- (a) The third term academy* year. (academic)
- (b) Mr Bady was so ruined* that... (furious)
- (c) When my parents were deliberation* about the issue. (delibrating)
- (d) It was not the suspected* who took it.. (suspect)
- (e) My parents did not letter* a word. (utter)
- (d) On that day I because* very sad. (became)
- (e) The policemen gave us fifteen canes*. (Lashes)
- (f) Stop talkertive* in the school. (talking)
- (g) He said for being disobeyed* from Elmina to Cape Coast (disobedient and travelling)

The analysis here suggests that substitution come about as a result of limited exposure to the English vocabulary, this could also be attributed to the fact that the concept of one word used for many things in sign language has been applied to usage in English.

A summary of the spelling errors found in the data are presented in Table 1

Table 1 Summary of Spelling Error

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Sp – O	39	44.8
Sp – A	18	20.7
Sp – S	30	34.5
Total	87	100

The table represents the sub -categorization of the spelling errors discussed in this section. This information is illustrated in Figure 1.

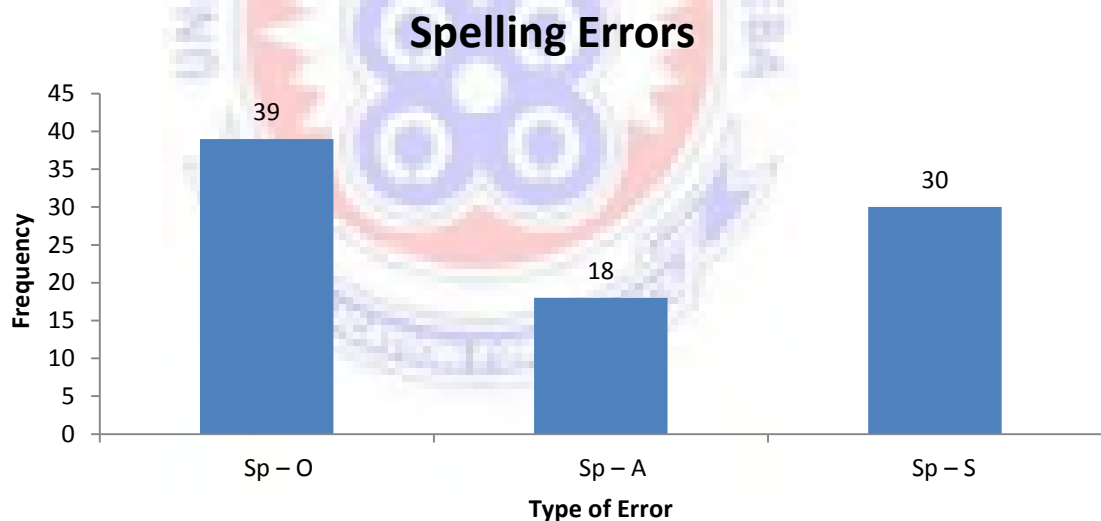


Figure 1: Summary of Spelling Errors

From Figure 1, it is evident that spelling errors due to omission (Sp – O) are the highest recorded in this category with 39 out of 87 case accounting for 44.8% of total number while spelling errors due to addition (Sp – A) recorded the lowest with 18 out of 87 cases representing 20.7% of errors found in the data.

Jordan (2002) explains that people usually tend to spell as if they try to write what they hear. In his opinion, spelling involves a whole lot of guessing and this leads to errors. Hassan (2014) also argues that the way learners of a language pronounce words to a great extent influences how such words are written. Thus, it is seen that there is a considerable effect of phonetics on writing. In effect, second language learners mostly have difficulty producing certain sounds in the L2, especially when those sounds do not exist in their native language. These error types found in the data are worrying in the sense that the spelling eventually goes a long way to affect meaning of text.

In a related study, Benyo (2014) examined spelling errors made by students of Dongola University, Sudan. From the writings of the students, the author identified error of omission, addition and substitution.

4.1.2 Tense Errors

In language learning, knowledge of grammar, particularly tense, is considered the crucial part for non-native learners to master (Muftah & Rafik – Galea, 2013). Verb tense refers to the way a verb is formed to communicate when an action or an occurrence takes place. Many verbs give the idea of action of *doing* something. For example, *sing, jump, fold* and *walk* all convey action. However, some verbs do not give the idea of action, they express the idea of existence state of *being*. For example, verbs *like be, being, seem* and *exist* all convey state.

In simple terms therefore, we can say that verbs are words that tell us what a subject does or is. They describe action and state of being. Verb errors are commonly committed by learners of English and more especially the deaf.

Verb tense errors occur when one uses the wrong verb tense. From the data analysis, it is evident that though students had some tense construction right, a majority of them had problems in the selection of the right verb to express distinction of time. These are of two kinds. Some used the present tense where the past was to be used while others used wrong form of the verb.

4.1.2.1 Tense Exchange (Tn – E)

In this category, some students used the present tense where they were expected to use the past. This was mainly because they have difficulty distinguishing when to use either of them. Examples of such errors are presented in the example two below

Example Two

- (a) When I wake* up from bed that day. (woke up)
- (b) When we got there our friends have* dressed up. (had)
- (c) The game start at 10;00 am. (started)
- (d) He request* them to come us till we tell the truth. (requested)
- (e) When my parents were deliberation* about the issues (deliberating)
I did not paid* heed to what he said.
- (f) When I arrived home,I will greet my parents.
- (g) We were on vacation so when. I wake up from bed that day.

From the above sentences, the simple past tense, which is used to talk about an action or a situation – an event – in the past, was represented by the simple present tense. In another instance the noun form of a word is used instead of the verb form. This error changes the meaning of the message to be conveyed to the reader. According to Richards and Renadya (2002), such errors could be from faulty comprehension of

distinctions in the target language arising from the poor graduation of teaching items. Here the form is interpreted as a marker of the past tense.

4.1.2.2 Wrong verb form used (Wr – V)

The investigation revealed that most of the learners had difficulty determining which verb tense was appropriate in a sentence at a particular moment. Wiredu (2005) states that the present tense can be used to express an action that is regular or habitual. He further notes that the simple present tense uses infinitive forms of the verb such *as go, see, come* and *sit* and only changes with the third person singular. He added that the verb is inflected with *-s* when the third person singular pronoun like *he, she* and *it* is used. For instance, in “*I go to school*” and “*She goes to school*”, the verb *go* is inflected with *-s* in the second sentence because *she* is a third person singular pronoun. This exceptional rule in the simple present tense was seen to be a problem for most of the students in this study. This is seen in examples three below:

Example Three

- (a) We were on vacation so when I wake up* from bed that day. (woke up)
- (b) When we got there our friends have* dressed up. (had)
- (c) They complains to the teacher (complain)
- (d) He *come** to school every day. (comes)

From the examples, it is evident that learners chose the verb form they assumed was right because they over – generalized forms learnt. They also appear not to have a clearer understanding to determine when to use which form. This is due to a lack of adequate exposure and practice in the case of L2 leaning. These findings are similar to the findings made by Thomas (2014) in his study which aimed at analyzing the

English language proficiency of first year Indian Engineering students. The study covered the types of errors in using tenses and remedial suggestions to improve their proficiency. Common errors made by these students were wrong usage of present tense and past tense, wrong usage of present continuous and present perfect continuous tense errors in the use of future tense and errors in using sequence of tense. He concluded that the students made such errors in tense due to inadequate exposure to the L2. Table 2 shows the sub -categorization of tense errors made by learners in this study.

Table 2 Summary of Tense errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Tn – E	53	71.6
Wr – V	21	28.4
Total	74	100

The table presents the sub -categorization of tense errors, with the total of 74 errors. Its frequency chart is shown in Figure 2

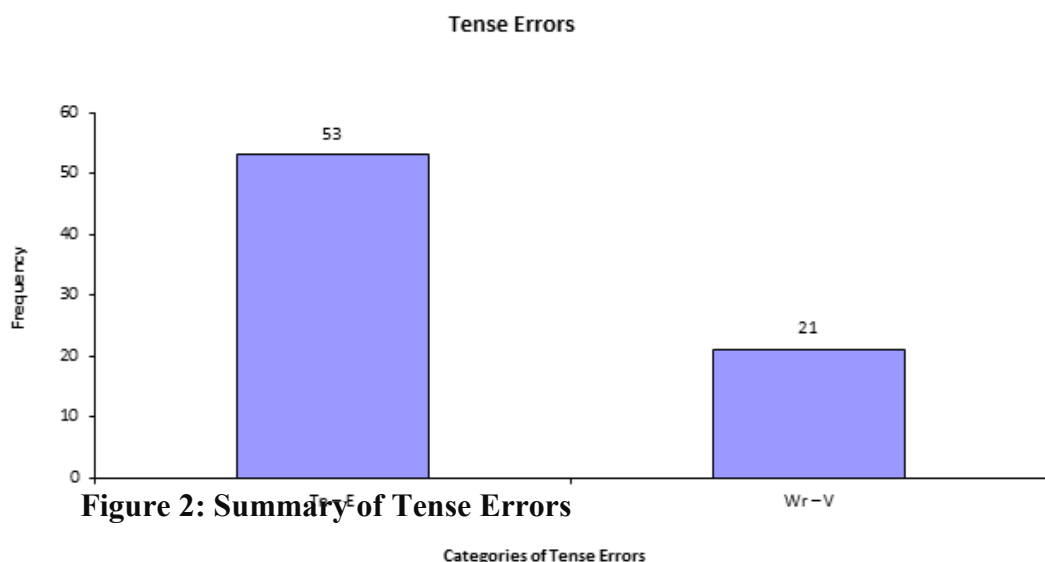


Figure 2 indicates the distribution of tense errors made by learners in this study. From this, it is evident that most of the tense errors committed were due to wrong verb form used. These results are in line with those found by Lin (2002) in her study which

examined 26 essays from Taiwanese EFL College students. The results indicated that wrong verb forms formed the highest percentage of 66% of the total errors committed.

Subject – verb Agreement (Concord)

Agreement is the correspondence of a verb with its subject in person, number and gender, in other words it is also termed as concord Sorenson, (2010). Therefore, in writing a sentence the subject must always match the verb in correspondence with 1st, 2nd , 3rd and number, In the data below are some of the sentences the students constructed:

Example Four

- 1) Seniors in authority has* to punish. - Seniors in authority (have) to punish.
- 2) In any school each school have* its own discipline. - Every school (has) its own way of disciplining.
- 3) If a students* breaks the rule. If a student breaks the rule.

4.1.3 Capitalization Errors

Lowercase and uppercase letter refers to how a letter is written – as a capital letter (A) for example or as a small letter (a). The uppercase letters are used to begin sentences and for proper nouns such as names of *persons, places or towns* etc. From the errors made by learners in this study, errors on capitalization were third highest recorded. These are further classified into two main groups. These are omissions of uppercase (capital letters) and addition or use of capitals where lowercase letters are to be used.

4.1.3.1 Omission of capital letters (Om – C)

A critical look at the learners' text revealed that a basic sentence which must mandatory begin with an uppercase or capital letter, was mostly written omitting the

uppercase letter. Some of the errors that are in this group are seen in example five (a) – (e).

Example Five

- a) I will travel to pankrono in Kumasi. (Pankrono)
- b) A jorney I have made *BEforE**. (before)
- c) Later on *december** 2015. (December)
- d) Senior High Technical School in mampong*-Akwapem (Mampong)

From the examples, **pankrono, and mampong** in sentence (a ,d and e) are the names of places and ‘december’ the name of a month and these are spelt with lowercase letters instead of uppercase letter as Pankroni, Mampong and December. This is wrong because proper nouns must begin with a capital letter. The correct use of capitalization is a basic requirement for every written sentence. Its omission therefore distorts its meaning since the reader will not know where a thought being expressed begins or ends.

Also, in sentence (b), *before is a preposition* and is written with both upper and lower case letters. This problem may be due to the fact that learners are not able to make a proper distinction between proper and improper nouns.

4.1.3.2 Addition of wrong use of capital letters (Ad – C)

In this group of errors, some students used uppercase letters where they were not required. Examples are shown in example 6 below:

- (a) School will vacate on the 19th of july* 2017 for the Third* term academy year.
Our school will vacate on the 19th of July, 2017 for the third term academic year.
I was Examined*. I was examined,

From the examples, Third, and Examined are all written beginning with a capital letter which is grammatically wrong. This may be attributed partly to learners' bad hand writing. The capitalization errors are subcategorized in Table 3.

Table 3 Summary of Capitalization errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Om – C	33	66
Ad – C	17	34
Total	50	100

The table above shows the sub-categorization of the capitalization errors earlier discussed in this study. Its frequency chart has been drawn below.

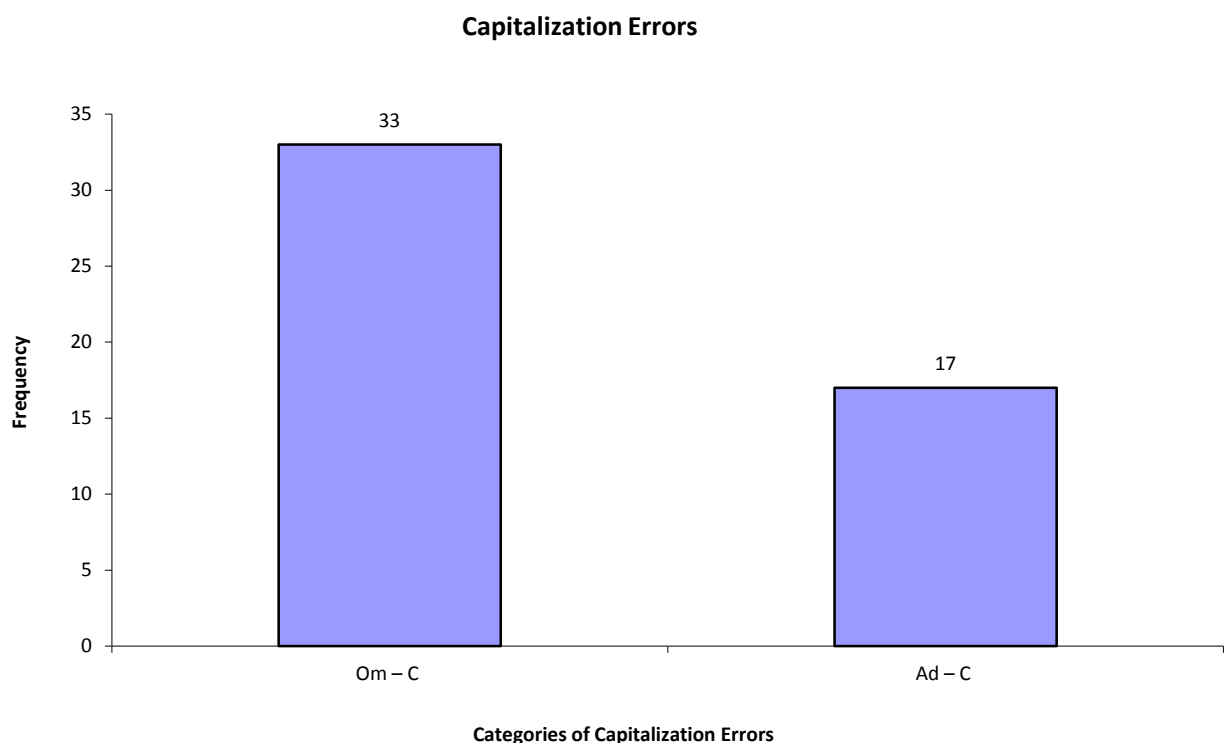


Figure 3: Summary of Capitalization Errors

Figure 3 shows the distribution of capitalization errors made by the learners in this study. The sum of errors under this type were representative of errors made under this

category were due to omission of capital letters and the rest were due to the addition or wrong use of capital letters where lower case letters were to be used.

A related study was conducted by Tahaineh (2010) among Arab university students in the appropriate use of case letters. It was found that, subjects of his study made 2,290 errors which came under three subcategories of errors of omission, substitution and addition.

4.1.4 Non-Sense Construction

Another feature in their essay was meaningless constructions. These sentences were merely a group of words put together, and they lack coherence and are generally meaningless. Below are some of these sentences:

Example Six

- a) When I come to this school have never because my parents do not come to the because is for distance for the addition.
- b) I want out country reasons why occasion when someone go to spend time in a place to see a family.
- c) I like a school because about another formal the school.
- d) I before visit how to on way learn my house.
- e) Arrived since may be friend visit with my house.
- f) My family are woman death in country Asu will probably never be known happen.
- g) On our and foremost, my invited Give not less, raise the school fees and boarding to charge is one coma.
- h) Whatever, I opened my eyes and to be realized.

Sixty percent of the data contained non-sense constructions. The most probable reason is that students do not understand the question, and also due to their limited vocabulary they are not able to use the appropriate words to construct meaningful sentences. Its frequency chart has been drawn below.

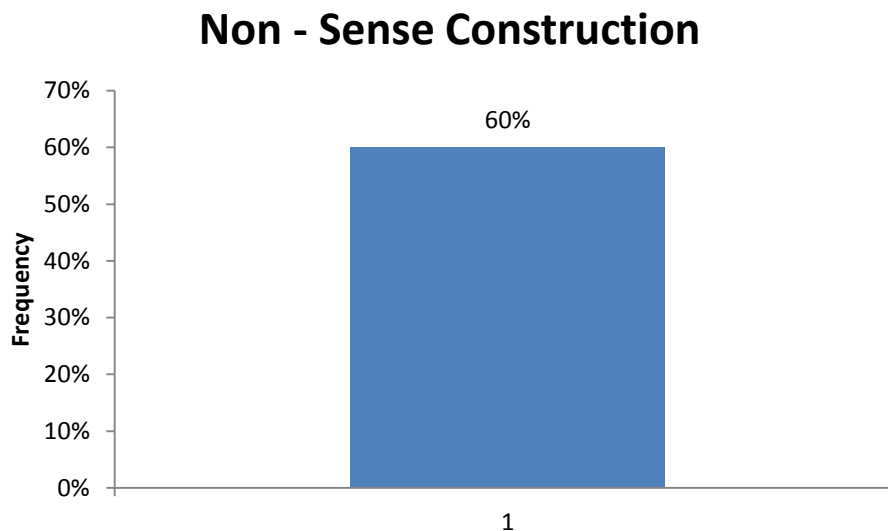


Figure 4: Summary of Non – Sense Construction

4.1.5 Punctuation Errors

Punctuation, according to Sekyi – Baidoo (2013), constitutes a set of symbols and marks which are used to clarify meaning in text by separating strings of words into clauses, phrases and sentences. They communicate the author’s intentions and show how a sentence is constructed and it should be read. The investigation showed errors made on punctuation.

Learners errors in punctuations centered on wrong usage of punctuations and omissions which are further explained and discussed as follows.

4.1.5.1 Wrong Use of Punctuation

This occurs when a learner inappropriately uses a punctuation mark in a written text. Some of the errors which fall under the group are seen in the following sentences in example seven:

Example Seven

- (a) We went to the *game's venue.* (venue of the game)
- (b) Then I heard his word.* I brought it to him.* (I heard his word, and brought it to him.)
- (c) But learn what the lord wants you to do."*You don't even knows what will happen tomorrow. ("But learn what the Lord wants you to do")
- (d) *"It is best to prepare for the days of necessity. Study hard to get an opportunity of your life. Work hard don't be lazy-lazy can kill you in your life.** ("It is best to prepare for the day of necessity, so study hard to get an opportunity of your life")
- (e) When I read,* and I become dull when he points me.* I decide to change myself.

When am tired of reading and am idling, he prompts me and I sit up.

- e) The next day I will wake up early to wash my clothes and that of my usual household chores which include cleaning the luvres* sweeping the compound, washing of utensils among others.

The next day, I will wake up early to wash my clothes and do my usual household chores which include cleaning the louvers, sweeping the compound, and washing the utensils among others.

- f) So when.* I wake up from bed.

In sentences (a), the apostrophe which is usually used to indicate the omission of a letter or letters from a word, the possessive case or the plurals of numbers, letters and abbreviations was wrongly used by most of the students. In (b) The comma (,) which should always be used in sentences to indicate discussion in items, showing a sudden pause in sentences and indicating displeasure was used wrongly. Full stops were used instead of comma. A wrong use of the quotation marks (“ “) was demonstrated in sentence (d). The quotation marks which are used to indicate the direct utterance in a text was inappropriately and incompletely used. Another indiscriminate use of the comma was demonstrated in (e), Students punctuated incomplete thoughts with full stop which rendered the sentences choppy and meaningless.

4.1.5.2 Omission of Punctuations (Om – P)

An omission occurs when an item which must be present in a well formed sentence or utterance is absent. The sentences in example eight (a) – (e) illustrate instances in which such errors were made by learners.

Example Eight

- a) Early in the *morning** the following day (,)
- b) At *8:00am** we went to the town (,)
- c) After the *assembly** we all went to classroom (,)
- d) To begin *with** on 4th June *2016** (, .)
- e) That day we ended the *Christmas** (.)

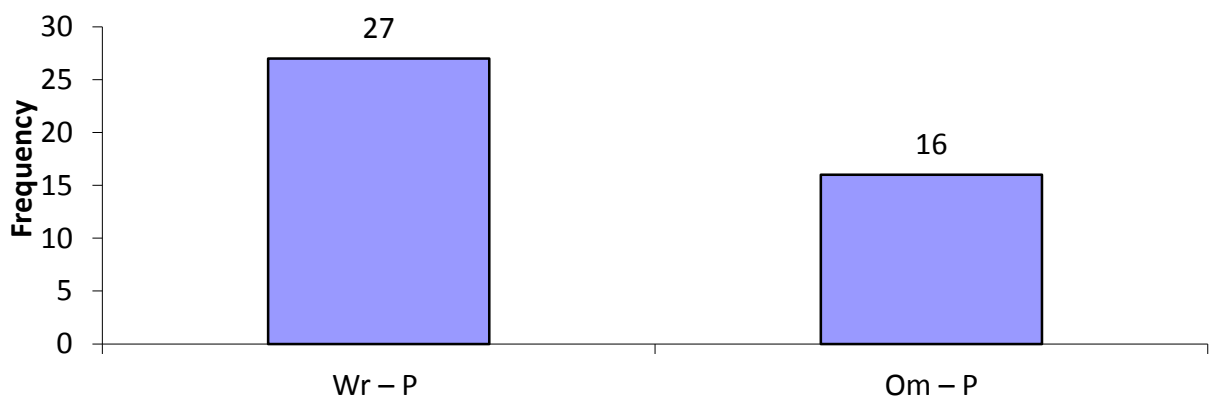
In sentences (a) and (b), the comma (,) which indicates a sudden pause after the next day and cleaning the louvers were omitted. In sentence (e), the full stop (.) which

marks the end of a sentence is also omitted. These are all errors because they do not indicate completion of the sentence in the case of omission of the full stop while those that omitted the comma did not also indicate the tone and the pause in the sentence. A possible reason or explanation for the errors on punctuations may be due to the ignorance of rule restrictions. In such cases, learners tend to transfer the concept of what has been learnt to new situations which they feel are appropriate. Table 4 shows the sub-categorization of punctuation errors discussed.

Table 4 Summary of Punctuation Errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Percentage
Wr – P	27	62.8
Om – P	16	37.2
Total	43	100

Punctuation Errors



Category of Punctuation Errors

The table shows the sub categorization and summary of punctuation errors made by study samples in their written texts. Its frequency chart is shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Summary of Punctuation Errors

Figure 5 shows the distribution of punctuation errors made by learners in this study. These errors sum up to 43, with 27 representing 62.8% were due to wrong use of punctuation and 16 also representing 37.2% were due to omission of punctuation.

4.1.6 Sign Language Transfer Errors

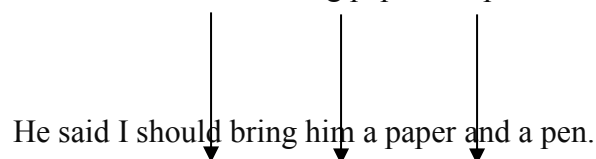
Selinker (1974; cited in Brown, 2000, Adiko, 2016) identifies four different strategies adopted by learners in inter- language building as potential sources of errors. For the purposes of this study, focus is on only two types of errors that come about as a result of the sign language being the deaf's native language (interlingual transfer). The deaf tend to rely heavily on the structures of their L1 and end up transferring some of the features from it to the target language. The second type of errors is the one that occurs as a result of a clear overgeneralization of the rules and semantic features of the target language. These are especially prominent in the case of negative intralingual transfer committed later in the learning process. In the essays, some students appeared to have transferred some (sign language) terms into their English Writing.

Transliteration, according to Crystal (2003); cited in Owu – Ewie, & Lomotey (2016), is the conversion of one writing system into another. Crystal adds that each item in the source language is given an equivalent item in the target language. For example,

Example Nine

a) He said me should bring paper and pen for him.

He said I should bring him a paper and a pen.



- b) Then I heard his words
Then I obeyed him.
- c) After finish writing
After he finished writing.
- d) Stop talkative in the school.
Stop being talkative in the school.
- c) Lazy-lazy can kill you in your life.
Being lazy can be harmful to you.
- (g) When I read and I become dull when he points me I decide to change myself.
When I am tired of reading and he prompts me, I get serious.
- h) We went the game's venue.
We went to the venue of the game.

With regard to (a) the sign language does not have separate words for (I), and (me) and the students tend to use them interchangeably. For the fact that sign language is limited in vocabulary, students use gestures to describe intensions in communication to make meaning clearer: I heard his words means I obeyed him. From (c) to (f) prepositions and helping verbs that are mandatory in making sentences complete were omitted. This is because communication in sign language does not make use of such words thereby making a deaf students sentence constructions incomplete.

Example Ten

Examples of L1 Transfer Errors

1. "By the time when I was in school"
2. "I have a long tongue with my friend"

3. “Then I head his words”
4. “When I read and I BECOME DULL WHEN HE POINTS ME. I decide to change myself. ”
5. “Don’t be lazy-lazy can kill you in your life”
6. “I will go in the room”
7. “Mr Bady was so ruined that he took us to the police station”

The above examples though ungrammatical in English, when literally translated to the sign language are grammatically acceptable so it is possible to conclude that these errors are as a result of L1 interference. These transfers happened because learners did not find corresponding counterparts or the right words to use. They therefore transferred properties. Chuo (2001) however agrees that the use of L1 requires language teachers to explain abstract and complicated grammar structures to learners. Although L1 transfer errors formed the least recording 14 out of the 310 errors, the trend is still worrying. This is because if it continues, their writings may be difficult to understand. Table 6 shows the number of L1 transfer errors discussed above.

Table 5 Sign language transfer errors

Type of error	Frequency	Percentage
Sign language transfer	14	100%
Total	14	100%

The table above shows the number of L1 transfer errors made by learners in this study. The frequency chart is illustrated in figure 6 below.

Sign Language Transfers

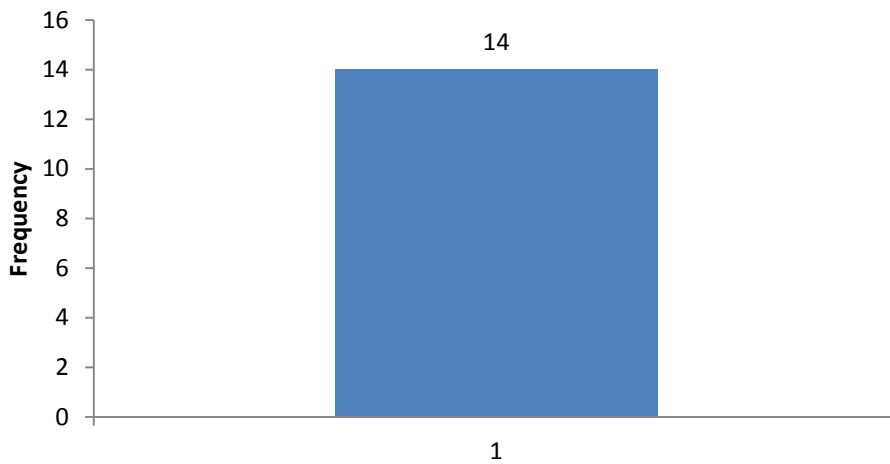


Figure 6: Summary of Sign Language Transfer Errors

4.1.7 Errors in writing

Table 6 gives the summary of the main writing errors identified in the essays of learners in the study. The table is drawn with the highest on top and the lowest at the bottom of the table.

Table 6 Frequency of Errors in pupils' writings

Error type	Frequency of error	Percentage
Spelling Errors	87	26.5
Tense Errors	74	22.6
Capitalization Errors	50	15.2
Non – Sense Construction Errors	60	18.3
Punctuation Errors	43	3.1
Sign language transfer Errors	14	4.3
Total	328	100

Table 6 indicates the summary of error types found from the study with its frequency and percentage. These are presented in Figure 7.

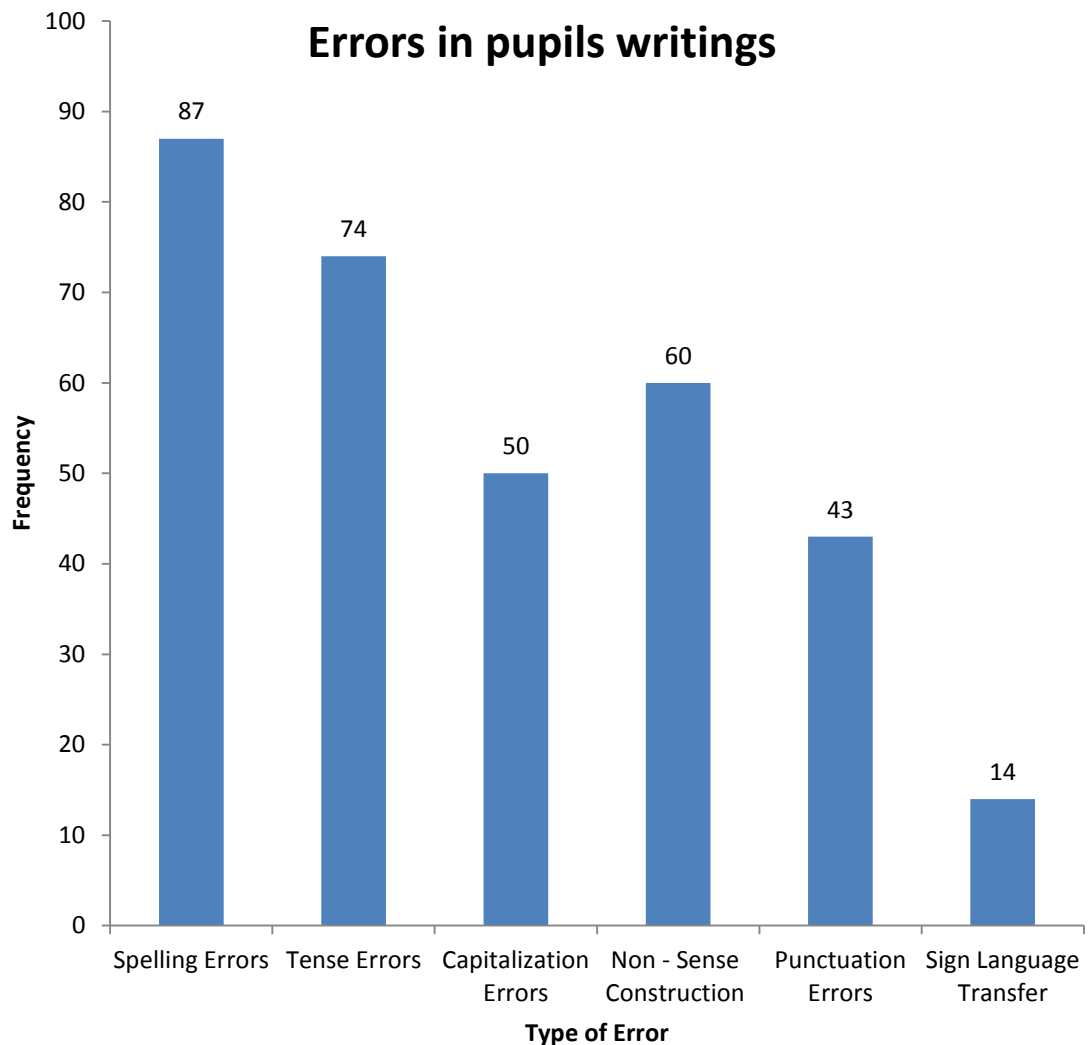


Figure 7: Error types and their frequency of occurrence

Figure 7 is a summary of all the error types recorded from the writing of learners in this study. In all the essays of 30 students were investigated from which a total of 328 errors were identified. From this investigation, spelling errors topped the list with a total of 87 cases representing 26.5% of overall errors categories under spelling errors were due to the addition of letters, omission of letters and substitution of letters. This clearly indicates that, learners in this study have a major problem of spelling resulting from the deaf's inability to hear verbal language usage, poor reading habits which make students not familiar with the spelling of words, and poor or illegible writing of

learners. Tense errors were the second highest recording 74 errors representing 22.6% of the errors made. Under this type of errors, learners used the present tense where they were expected to use the past and vice versa.

Capitalization errors recorded 50 representing 15.2%. non – sense construction errors also recorded 60 representing 18.3%. Punctuation errors with 43 recorded cases representing 13.1%. Sign language transfer errors came at the bottom of the table with 14 recorded cases representing 4.3%.

4.2 Causes of learners' errors

A careful observation of results from the analysis made on essays of learners revealed that learners' errors are sometimes caused by teachers, learners themselves and the influence of their first language. Norrish (1987), pp 21 – 26 cited in Adiko, (2016) classifies causes of learners errors into three main types namely *carelessness, first language interference and translation*. To Norrish, carelessness is most often related to lack of motivation. Here, it must be noted that most learners lose interest when teaching materials and presentations become monotonous or do not suit them. This to Norrish is not the fault of the learners. Interference also plays a role in learners' errors. Once a person tries to learn new habits of which language learning is no exception, the old ones will definitely interfere with new ones. Norrish calls this *first language interference*. To him, a learner's first language plays a complex and significant role in L2 acquisition. When learners write under pressure, they are likely to call upon systematic resources from their native language or L1 for the achievement and synthesis of meaning most especially in instances where they exhausted the L1 forms and structure.

Translation is another cause of errors in learners' writings. This comes about when a learner translates his first language into the target language word – for – word. For instance, “*Don't be lazy-lazy*” and “I heard his word”. This probably is the most common cause of errors in language learning. Richards (2015) however shares a different view on the causes of errors. He outlines them to be overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, false concepts hypnotized and ignorance of rule restrictions. Selinker (1969; cited in Richards, 2002) also mentions the following five causes being language transfer, transfer of learning, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication and overgeneralization of target language linguistic materials. The causes of learner errors discussed cannot be complete without elaborating on the role teachers, learners and learners' L1 played. The next subsection discusses how the aforementioned contributed in a way or the other to the causing of these errors.

4.2.1 Errors caused by teachers

The major cause of learners' errors in this study was traced to teachers. From observations made, it was realized that most of the errors made were linked to context of instruction. *This is in line with what Selinker (1969; cited in Richards, 2002) calls strategies of language learning in the teachers attempt to communicate. Learners and teachers were observed both in and outside the classroom lessons. Observations revealed that grammar lessons were taught in sign language by all the four teachers observed. Most of them were teaching traditional grammar, an approach to teaching grammar where grammatical structures and rules were dictated to learners first. This act does not allow learners to use the language in their day to day activities. Examples

were given based on the spelt out rules so that learners could look on to give their own examples.

Grammar was also taught in isolation since the teachers did not prompt learners on the need to apply the grammar rules in both written and sign language. Outside and inside the classroom, teachers communicated with learners in the sign language which does not create much room for learners to use the forms and structures learnt in class. In some cases, teachers teaching languages have not received any formal special education, yet authorities have posted them there to teach language subjects.

This situation seemed to be the largest teacher contributing factor to the deaf's errors in their writings. It is also believed that, because these teachers lack a strong content knowledge when it comes to teaching grammar and other equally technical aspects of the English Language like reading and writing. The researcher found this revelation rather alarming.

On this, Richards (2015) argues that teachers attempt to communicate in the target language without having completely acquired the grammatical forms necessary to do so cause errors. This results in an automatic transfer of error from the teacher to the learners. Faulty teachings can also lead to errors made by learners in their essay. This could be caused by the teacher, teaching materials or mode of presentation. Aside the methods of teaching and the teaching strategies observed to be the causes of learners errors, teachers blamed other colleagues who taught learners in the previous classes for learners' errors. Teachers also have the perception that, if teachers who taught learners in the previous classes had done better in their teachings over the years,

learners' errors in simple spelling, punctuation, capitalization, tense would have been avoided or reduced to the barest minimum.

In the grammar lessons observed, exceptions to rules in the use of structure and form were not spelt out to learners. This resulted in what Richards (2015) termed overgeneralization. The teacher has a role of providing models of the target language with regard to the way they speak, write and teach the language. From all indications, students errors in their writings could be teacher – induced because the teachers themselves have issues regarding the correct structure of the language.

4.2.2 Errors caused by learners

Apart from teacher – induced errors, learners to a great extent also contribute to the errors they make in their writings. From the interactions with students, it was revealed that learners had poor reading habits. Learners had limited opportunity to read outside school contact hours. The only time this happened was in the classroom during reading lessons or when they had been given assignments to work on at home. The motivation to read extensively was not there which resulted in learners lacking exposure to words and how they are used correctly in speech and in writing.

Also, during grammar lessons, learners were observed to be passively involved in lessons since most of them were not answering or asking questions. The few who answered and asked questions made a number of faulty constructions. The researcher also observed that, most grammar lessons were simply teacher – centered since learners were not given the opportunity to use rules learnt. It makes learners passive more than active learners which results in learners' inability to grasp the concept

taught. This leads to the construction of ungrammatical sentences by most of the learners.

Additionally, students do not make efforts to think directly in the target language, but analyze every question in the sign language first before making an input.

Carelessness, confusion and poor handwriting are also factors that could contribute to errors caused by students in their essays. When learner's writing is illegible. They tend to omit letters, amalgamate words and add letters to words in the cause of their writings. Norrish (1987) however shares a different view on carelessness. To him, carelessness is most often related to lack of motivation and not the fault of the learner. Some performance errors are of cause, merely "performance errors which is a temporary lapse (or a slip of the pen)" (Carney, 1994 p 81).

4.2.3 Errors caused by learners' L1 Transfer

Research has shown that, L2 writers employ their L1 skills in their writing of the L2 they are learning; They adopt L2 composing strategies to compensate possible deficiencies in the L2 proficiency and as a tool to facilitate their writing process (Karim & Nasaiji, 2013). At the initial stage of L2 learning, learners frequently transfer L1 structure to the L2. This to Brown (2000) happens because the learners' native language is the only previous linguistic source the learner can draw from. This assertion is not different in the case of the deaf learners in this study. They over-generalize rules from structures in their sign language and use them in their L2 writings.

Learners did not seem to know the similarities and the differences in the structure being taught between the sign language and the L2. For example, to the deaf learners

‘ lazy-lazy’ means being very lazy. In sign language repeating a word depicts extremities this concept is transferred to English. Such errors according to Brown can be detected if the teacher is familiar with the sign language of the deaf learners. These findings are similar findings made by Lakkis and Malak (2000) on the influence of L1 on L2. They concentrated on the transfer of Arabic prepositional knowledge to English by Arab students. Both positive and negative transfer were examined in order to help teachers identify problematic areas for Arab students and help them understand where transfer should be encouraged or avoided. In particular, they concluded that an instructor of English whose native language is Arabic can use the students L1 structures that use the equivalent prepositions in both languages. On the other hand, whenever there are verbs or expressions in the L1 and L2 that have different structures that take prepositions or that have no equivalent in one of the languages; instructors should point out these differences to the students.

4.2.4 Summary of causes of errors

Analysis done on the available data collected from essays of students and general observations made reveal that errors in essays of deaf learners in English are due to factors. Key among them are L1 (mother tongue –sign language) interference, inadequate or lack of motivation to learn and write in English, wrong spellings, and the absence of elaborate illustrations to augment understanding of the printed text.’ As Senior High Secondary student learners, they need the right structure to help them in their writings. They can however not express themselves well because they have limited exposure to good Standard English both in school and at home. In both situations, learners do not have the opportunity to use structure learnt in their daily

expressions which do not aid constant practice often leading to forgetfulness of structures learnt.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented details of results obtained from the analysis of data collected. It analyzed results from test and observations made. The first section presented an analysis of common errors committed by learners in their essays. From all, 328 errors were recorded from the essays of 30 participants with errors on spelling topping the list with a recorded number of 87 cases. Tense recorded 74 cases, Capitalization recorded 50 cases; Non – Sense Construction errors recorded 60cases; Punctuation recorded 43 cases, followed by Sign language transfer errors which also recorded 14 cases.

The second section presented a discussion on the causes of errors based on the causes of these errors based on the findings. This was done in line with the first two research questions. The causes of errors in learners' essays were then identified to be from the teachers, learners themselves and the influence of learner's L1. These were further categorized into laziness and carelessness on the part of learners', lack of motivation to read, speak and write in the target language, poor teaching methods and teacher incompetence among others.

CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter seeks to draw attention to the issue leading to the continuous occurrence of errors in the Deaf's sentence construction and to suggest interventions to minimize such errors. To illustrate these issues the responses of the questionnaire administered to the teachers were carefully studied and analysed. The findings and the results will be illustrated in this chapter.

5.1 Summary

To remain functional and abreast of civilization and also derive maximum benefits from globalization, once ability to communicate meaningfully is key. Vital information could be lost or misunderstood if thought are not adequately presented especially with regards to the Deaf.

It is inevitable for the learner of a second language to make certain errors, but that of the deaf demands a certain degree of collaboration from all the stakeholders.

The sources of errors in the Deafs' sentence constructions was unveiled among the form two class through the following media.

The researcher made frequent visit to the form two class, on some occasion sought permission to inspected class exercises as well as class test scripts. To reinforce facts essay topics were given to 10 students from the Home Economics, Arts and Technical programmes to write.

The questionnaire to teachers as earlier state was to ascertain the source of error and the write ups for students was to identify the errors. An analysis of the essays from their class test script was carried out. The five teachers chosen were the only English teachers of the school whereas the 30 students were randomly chosen.

Some of the errors identified were typical errors expected of second language learners but worrying among them were errors centered around wrong word ordering, word omission, non-sense expressions among others.

According to Quirgley and King (1980) wrong word ordering is very common in their sentence constructions. This error leads to distortions and incoherence making meanings of their expression incomprehensible. Supporting this claim is Van Vallin and Lapolla (1997) who explain that, the vital factors that determines the meaning of a utterance is arrangement of the word. Consequently, since their constructions lacks the proper arrangement the meaning is always distorted.

Wrong spelling also featured prominently as well as subjects not agreeing with their corresponding verbs.

Notwithstanding, a few of them perform marvelously and this could be attributed to some factors that include: having educated Deaf parents who helped in the formation years with structured sign language, and also having the basic right through the various stages of education.

Typical of second language learner, the Deaf think and write in the sign language and the tendency to import this into English sentence construction is high and since the language structures are different meaning is distorted.

One notable factor is the fact that majority of teacher at the basic and secondary levels are not equip enough to handle these special students. The first educators are house mothers who are responsible for teaching them the initial signs they will use for communication among themselves in the school community. It is obvious the mothers

had no formal training. They are also seventy years and above and might be using archaic methods of teaching function language.

In the classrooms, time allotted to each subject is minimal with regards to their peculiar state, lessons are glossed over from one stage unto the other.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research a number of recommendations are suggested.

Since the deaf child is confronted with variance of the sign language upon enrolment to start formal education, specially trained and certificated teachers should be their first educator: the Ghanaian Sign Language which is actually the Deafs' first language should be taught with a lot of illustrations so that the sign structures will be properly internalised.

As much as possible instead of using the functional sign which is purported to aid a firm grasp of concepts by teachers signing direct English must be adopted by all teachers in the classroom.

The pre-senior high school curriculum should be narrowed and devoid of other subjects except the teaching of English through role play. Lastly, regardless of what other teachers teach, there should be a collaborative effort to check and mark expressions as well as insisting on the right spelling whilst stepping up with frequent inspection of students work output

5.3 Suggestions for future research

This study only examined the errors students of form two at the Senior High Secondary School for the Deaf write in their sentence constructions. Future research may focus on identifying other categories of errors other than those found in the

present study. Again, researchers may also investigate how errors in Deaf students' English sentences are corrected by teachers in the classroom as well as helping them in developing good paragraphs. It is also suggested that this study can be extended to other Deaf schools in the Ghana with an increase in the number of participants.



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