

A STUDY OF THE GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN STANDARD
EIGHT PUPILS' WRITTEN WORK IN ENGLISH
IN FOUR CITY SCHOOLS IN KENYA.

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THIS THESIS IS MY ORIGINAL
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This research project is a study of the grammatical errors in written compositions of English as a second language learners. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To identify the types of grammatical errors in the written compositions of English as a second language learners.

2. To determine the distribution frequency of the different types of errors.

3. To identify the most frequent type of grammatical error.

The three sub-questions above are to be answered and to identify errors in the written compositions. In order to obtain the required data, the researcher wrote the composition, he worked on finding the grammatical deviations, or errors, for our analysis. Various types of errors were determined. Verb group errors and tense errors were the most frequent in every count and we also observed that the majority of the errors, or overgeneralization was their main cause. To then suggest the application of the possible pedagogic implications of these findings.

In conclusion, this research project is significant in a number of ways. It helps to identify the errors in Kenya, the findings will be of great use to teachers of English in the country. This is because the findings point out the priority areas of correct teaching and learning in its weightage. In the same vein, the findings will be of use to would-be writers of standard eight English textbooks and curriculum developers at a J.E.

ABSTRACT

This research project is a study of the grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English. The specific objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To establish the types of grammatical errors in the pupils' written work.
2. To assess the comparative frequency of the different types of errors.
3. To infer the cause(s) of the most frequent type of grammatical error.

We chose a heterogeneous group of a hundred and twenty subjects from four city schools. In order to obtain the required data, the subjects wrote a composition. We marked it noting the systematic deviations, or errors, for our analysis. Various types of errors were determined. Verb group errors (past tense errors) had the highest frequency count and we also observed that the psycholinguistic strategy of overgeneralization was their main cause. We then attempted a specification of the possible pedagogic implications of these findings.

In our view, this research project is significant in a number of ways. Being the first of its kind in Kenya, its findings will be of great use to practising teachers of English in our schools. This is because the findings point out the priority areas of content to focus on as well as its weightage. In the same vein, the findings will be of use to would-be writers of standard eight English textbooks and curriculum developers at K.I.E..

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

It is to be noted that English occupies a very special place in the educational system of this country. This is due to recommendations by various Commissions and Committees such as the Ominde Commission of 1964 and the Gachathi Report etc. As a result, English is taught as a subject from standard one to three in our primary schools. In the rest of the primary school education, it is not only taught as a subject but is also used as the medium of instruction in other subject areas. This is possibly due to a governmental realization of the national and international significance of a good command of the language by our pupils.

For several years in a row, the researcher has been involved in that important exercise of teaching English in our schools. The rigours that teachers of English undergo in their tireless effort to help our pupils in mastering the language are quite vivid to the researcher. It is not an overstatement that the marking and grading of compositions occupy the standard eight teachers of English most of the time. The marking exercise basically involves the identification of errors or mistakes that pupils make in the hope that remedial work on the areas of difficulty as pointed out by the errors would greatly assist the pupils. The interest of the researcher in the field of error analysis naturally sprang from this experience.

This interest was all the more whetted by the production in 1986 of a K.C.P.E. Newsletter by the Kenya National Examinations Council. The production underscored the primacy of the study of learner's errors as currently acknowledged in linguistic pedagogic circles. The avowed purpose of this Newsletter was to assist teachers in identifying the areas in which standard eight pupils had most difficulties. In essence, this meant the reporting of errors in the pupils' written work so that they may determine pedagogic orientations of the teacher in, for example, determining the content and teaching approaches. The Council noted that the Newsletter was warmly acclaimed by the field teachers for it greatly helped in promoting their awareness of the most pressing linguistic needs of their pupils. However, it was noteworthy through the reading of the Newsletter that the errors highlighted were not effectively described and explained in linguistic and psycholinguistic terms. For example, the linguistic components in which each error fell and the psycholinguistic reasons for its occurrence were not given. Only a rather superficial linguistic explanation was offered, e.g. the omission or misordering of constituents and so on.

As already mentioned, the production of the Newsletter challenged the researcher to apply his knowledge of linguistics in the systematic study of errors in standard eight pupils' work in Kenyan schools. It was hoped that such a study would greatly assist all those involved in the teaching of English in our primary schools, and especially, teachers of English at standard eight level. In short, the study was hatched and executed in the

same spirit that guided the production of the first K.C.P.E Newsletter, as already mentioned.

1.2 The Scope of The Study

This study falls within the field of Applied Linguistics. Its central concern is the analytic study of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English in Kenyan primary schools. These grammatical errors can otherwise be referred to as morphosyntactic, since morphology (i.e the study of the internal structure of words), and syntax (i.e the study of word combination in the internal structure of sentences) are the two important linguistic domains in the grammar of any linguistic system. Errors in this study have been determined through the consideration of the systematic deviations of the pupils' interlanguages from the norm of the target language, i.e English. By norm, we mean the standard British variety as described in Quirk, et al. (1985). These deviations have been identified, described and explained in linguistic as well as psycholinguistic terms. Some substantiation of this statement is called for. Only the most frequent error has been accorded a psycholinguistic explanation in this research.

1.3 Rationale for the Study.

As has already been observed in the preceding paragraphs of this report, the study of learners' errors as in this research has an important pedagogical justification. Despite the fact that many researches on errors have been conducted elsewhere in the world, almost nothing by way of systematic research has been done in

Kenya. We have already cited the K.C.P.E Newsletter as an example of a good but inexhaustive attempt at the study of errors. Quite obviously, primary school teachers analyse their pupils' errors, but again, as may have been so far implied, this is never done effectively due to their linguistic inadequacy, since they are not qualified linguists. This therefore, justifies this formalised and systematised study of pupils' errors. The errors that we have exhaustively identified, described and explained may guide curriculum developers as they prepare teaching and learning aids, especially at the Kenya Institute of Education. Our findings will also guide would-be textbook writers for especially standard eight books, as well as guide teachers in their daily teaching engagements. This observation is more adequately dealt with in the final chapter of this report under the sub-heading "Pedagogic Implications." Underscoring the significance and purpose of error analysis, Richards et al. (1987:96) have observed that a study of learners' errors would help to "obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials." Expressing the same idea, Corder (1975:260) states that, "The information we get from the study of errors is in part used for constructing appropriate syllabuses and teaching materials."

It is our contention, i.e to the best of our knowledge, that no systematic study of standard eight errors has been done in Kenya. If it were the case, the K.C.P.E Newsletter may have been superfluous. This conclusion is arrived at through our review of the literature and after speaking to, for example, officials at the

K.I.E. This research report is therefore urgent and appropriate. To sum up the justification and significance of this study, Corder (1981:1) has observed that,

There have always been two justifications proposed for the study of learners' errors: the pedagogical justification, namely that a good understanding of the nature of errors is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found and the theoretical justification, which claims that a study of learners' errors is part of the systematic study of the learner's language which is itself necessary to an understanding of the process of second language acquisition.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

This study focuses on three important objectives. These are:

- (a) To establish the types of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English.
- (b) To assess the comparative frequency of the different types of errors.
- (c) To infer the cause(s) of the most frequent type of grammatical error.

1.5 Hypotheses

This study was also steered by three hypotheses that we formulated directly from the specified objectives. They are as follows;

- (a) There are various types of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English.
- (b) Verb Group errors are the most frequent in the pupils'

written work.

- (c) Overgeneralization is the main cause of the most frequent type of error.

We observe that these hypotheses are based on certain research findings. Hypotheses (a) and (b) are based on findings by linguists such as Richards (1971), as explained in our literature review. Also, as explained in the literature review, hypothesis (c) was formulated in consonance with findings of researchers such as Kimani (1987), who established that overgeneralisation was the main cause of most of the errors he observed in pupils' written work. We note that the verb group is distinguished from the verb-phrase by Thomas (1987;2) as is cited in the latter part of this report. It will also become evident that the errors identified may be viewed in terms of major and minor categories.

1.6 Research Design

1.6.1 Sampling

The population in this study is some standard eight pupils in selected city schools. The group of subjects that was used in this study was heterogeneous in the sense that they were of differing mother tongues, sex and motivation. None, however had English as his mother tongue. We assumed that for the primary school pupils sex may not be a crucial variable. The subjects were generally of the same age ranging from fourteen to eighteen. The pupils were randomly sampled with the assistance of the teachers

of English (our assistants) using class registers by, for example, picking numbers 1, 3, 7, 9 and so on, until 30 subjects were sampled in each school. The subjects were therefore, a hundred and twenty. They were drawn from four primary schools in Nairobi as follows: 30 from Muthaiga, 30 from Mathari, 30 from Baba Dogo, and 30 from Kenyatta University. The choice of these city schools ensured the subjects' heterogeneity especially in terms of their linguistic backgrounds.

1.6.2 Data Collection.

The subjects were asked to write a composition entitled, 'The Day I Will Never Forget'. In order to allow the subjects to write the composition freely, we did not impose other restrictions besides the choice of this topic. We were also keen on making the writing exercise as representative of the pupils' English language ability as possible. We were assisted in the administration of this research instrument by four assistants, who are the English language teachers in the four primary schools. The subjects wrote the composition in one hour after which the scripts were collected. The four assistants also helped in the tentative marking of the scripts. We use the term 'tentative', because we had to ensure that what the assistants had marked as errors were indeed so, using the notion of systematicity and asystematicity as propounded by Corder (1981). Systematic deviations from the target language norm were determined by comparing what the pupils said and what they ought to have said. In other words, we considered the form of the subjects' sentences as well as their contexts in

order to determine their semantic value. In the words of Corder (1981), we used 'plausible interpretation' of what the learners intended to say in order to arrive at 'plausible reconstruction' of the same. All the errors were written on cards as they were established as such.

1.6.3 Data Analysis and Presentation

Using the analytic approaches of 'Let the Errors Determine the Categories' and 'Linguistic Category Taxonomy' on a complementary basis, we were able to categorise and present the grammatical errors. The categories were indicated on the cards to facilitate the sorting out. The process of sorting out gradually produced smaller and smaller groups, until all the cards were finally classified. The use of cards was quite useful in that they could easily be re-ordered and re-categorised. This way we were able to identify various types of errors. A comparative frequency count of all the errors was performed in absolute rather than in relative terms. We note that the term 'frequency' refers to the number of times an error type occurs. There is 'absolute' frequency of an error, which refers to the number of times it actually occurs and 'relative' frequency, which refers to the number of times an error could have occurred relative to the length of the composition. This distinction is made by Norrish (1983; 103). As will be presently evident, we considered only the absolute frequency of the errors in our analysis. By examining a number of the known psycholinguistic causes of errors, we were able to infer the main cause of the most frequent type of error.

The method of analysis was basically quantitative.

As already mentioned, the two approaches mentioned above were used on complementary basis. The errors that were determined indicated the grammatical categories. Through the Linguistic Category Taxonomy approach, the types of errors were then categorised as falling under either the linguistic category of morphology or that of syntax. The following table exemplifies our mode of presentation of the errors in the ensuing chapters. Frequency ratings will be illustrated by means of tables showing frequency counts or percentages.

TABLE 1: A SAMPLE LINGUISTIC CATEGORY TAXONOMY.

NOUN GROUP ERRORS.

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR.
<p>A. MORPHOLOGY</p> <p>Plural Morpheme</p> <p>Omission of {-s}</p>	<p>He carried two pen</p>
<p>B. SYNTAX</p> <p>Determiners</p> <p>Indefinite article omitted</p>	<p>I saw man</p>

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

In this study, the analysis of the pupils' errors is based on the theoretical construct of 'Interlanguage'. McLaughlin (1987) has correctly placed Error Analysis within the interlanguage theory when discussing theories of second-language learning. The term 'interlanguage' was coined by Selinker (1969;1972) to refer to what McLaughlin (1987;60) calls 'interim grammars constructed by second-language learners on their way to the target language'. Selinker claimed that although these grammars are transitional, they nevertheless exhibit enough systematicity or regularity. Other linguists used other terms to describe those transitional systems of the learner as he progresses towards the target language. Nemser (1971) called them 'approximative systems' and Corder (1971) called them 'idiosyncratic dialects'.

The grammar of the interlanguage is different from that of the learner's first language and that of the target language. It is the result of the learner's creativity as he processes the input data of the target language using what Selinker called 'Latent Psychological Structure' possessed by the learner. The notion of Latent Psychological Structure is similar to Chomsky's notion of 'Language Acquisition Device (LAD)'. A study of interlanguage through error analysis was found to shed light on second-language learning as well as to improve learning and teaching in the classroom (Applied Linguistics). We also note that

other theories are invoked in the methodology of Error Analysis. In particular, we mention the linguistic and the psycholinguistic theories. Corder (1973;282) has observed that 'Linguistic theory provides the language for talking about the nature of errors, for comparing the language of the learner with that of the native speaker....'. Linguistic theory therefore does not provide the reasons why the learner makes errors. Such reasons are part of psycholinguistics. The term psycholinguistics refers to a branch of linguistics that examines linguistic behaviour and the psychological processes behind it. We have consequently invoked the linguistic and psycholinguistic theories in our analysis. More information on our theoretical framework is given in the following literature review.

2.2 Literature Review

When compared with other research areas such as Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Interlanguage (IL), Error Analysis (EA) has the longest tradition. However, as Sridhar (1985) has correctly observed it is only recently that EA as a linguistic exercise went beyond the impressionistic collections of 'common' errors and their classificatory taxonomy into categories such as concord, omission of articles, tense and so on. The notions of 'error' and 'mistake' were not established in linguistic or psychological terms. What Sridhar (1985) calls 'traditional EA' was therefore of purely practical utility to the instructor in a classroom situation. In this perspective therefore, EA revealed areas of difficulty for the learner, such that it governed sequential

presentation of target language items in textbooks and in the classroom with difficult and more problematic items preceded by easier ones. It also determined the relative degree of emphasis, explanation and practice necessary in teaching items of the target language. All these goals of traditional EA emphasise its functional practical value in the classroom, which is also the focus of this study. This study, however, also intends to provide linguistic and psychological justifications for its pedagogical applications.

Various linguists, such as Sridhar (1985), Corder (1981), Els et al. (1984), have highlighted a number of steps which constitute an EA methodology. These are identification of errors, classification of errors typologically, determination of frequency of the errors and analysis or inference of their causes. These last two steps are crucial since they have made EA broad-based and have signalled a possibility of evolving a theory of errors. Our research involved these steps.

It is important to note that just when CA had developed as a technique of error prediction and explanation, EA claimed the attention of linguists. This was due to certain reasons. In the first place, it was found out by teachers and researchers that there were certain errors that could not be traced to interlingual interference and could not be predicted by CA. This discovery dramatised the dichotomy between theory and reality as far as CA was concerned, which triggered the quest for a more reliable approach to errors. Dulay et al. (1982) have observed that the ultimate rationale for EA was provided by the theoretical climate

of the late fifties and sixties. Chomsky's critique of Skinner's behaviourist theory as an account of language learning paved the way for the evolution of 'developmental psycholinguistics'. Chomsky's notion of Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and Selinker's notion of Latent Psychological Structure depicted the learner as an active participant in the learning process, contrary to the behaviouristic theory, which viewed the learner as a passive imitator. These psychological models were invoked in the explanation of errors in EA which previously could not be predicted by CA. As a result, one argument by Sridhar (1985), in support of EA as a crucial pedagogical tool, is that it exposes 'intralingual' errors which CA could not. The term 'intralingual' refers to errors resulting from the inherent characteristics of the target language itself and is contrasted with the term 'interlingual', which refers to errors caused by interference from the mother tongue. Lee (1968) as quoted by Sridhar (1985 ; 223) also argues in support of EA saying that it provides data on practical problems, as opposed to hypothetical ones, forming "a more efficient and economical basis for determining pedagogical strategies".

Other linguists even maintain that EA is in itself sufficient in dealing with learners' errors, needing no complementation from CA. However, it is the view of others that EA does not successfully deal with all types of errors especially the interlingual ones. This view is held by linguists such as Duskova (1969), Richards (1971), and Schachter (1974), backed by experimental evidence. This issue is important to our research,

for, although it is error analysis from a non-contrastive standpoint, we take cognizance of interlingual interference as a cause of errors in second language learning.

The research findings of linguists such as Corder (1971), Selinker (1969) and Richards (1971) have revolutionized the concept of EA as well as opening up 'Interlanguage' as a new area of research. Corder's (1967) influential paper claimed that errors are not only unavoidable, inevitable or imperative, but also a requisite component of the language learning process. Corder also distinguished the notion of 'error' and 'mistake'. To him errors are systematic and regular deviations from the target language norm, while mistakes are deviations due to performance factors, such as loss of memory, fatigue, strong emotion,, etc., which can be rectified easily by the learner or the native speaker. This systematicity of errors was believed by Corder to be formidable evidence of intermediate systems constructed by the learner in the language learning process.

Corder (1981) has strongly observed that EA serves both a practical and a theoretical function. Its theoretical function is that it is an integral part of the methodology of investigating the language learning process. The practical one relates to guiding remedial action by the teacher, preparation of teaching and learning materials and so on. This distinction in function is similar to Sridhar's, earlier mentioned. For the purpose of our research, we wish to state that these two functions are a crucial guidance to the primary school English teacher who needs to know both the psychological processes involved as a learner learns the

target language and the actual errors his pupils are prone to making. In this perspective, Corder (1981 : 35) observes that "the teacher should be able not only to detect and describe errors linguistically but also to understand the psychological reasons for their occurrence". He notes that errors are described by the application of linguistic theory to the data of erroneous utterances produced by a learner or a group of learners. It is explicit therefore, that an ideal error analyst should be a linguist who will be able to identify linguistic errors with precision. It is on the basis of this realization that this research focuses on grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English. It is our sincere hope that this study has yielded an invaluable list of errors which should guide the teaching and learning of English at that level.

Norrish (1983) has listed a number of known causes of errors such as carelessness on the part of the pupil, interference by the pupil's first language, overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, induction and error as part of language creativity. Els et al. (1984) have identified two broad categories of errors, interlingual and intralingual errors. These constitute the current theories on causes of errors. Consequently, we have invoked some of these theories in the explanation of the most frequent error in our study. Still on this issue of causes of errors, it is worth mentioning that Dulay et al. (1972, 1974) reported after their research that a cross-sectional analysis of learners' errors revealed that the majority of errors that second language learners make exhibit greater influence by the target language than by the

first language. Their subjects were Spanish-speakers learning English. The majority of errors that they found were developmental or intralingual, just like those made by monolingual pupils learning English. A more forceful restatement of the same idea is in Dulay et al. (1982 : 138) where they note contributions by EA saying:

Perhaps its most controversial contribution has been the discovery that the majority of grammatical errors second language learners make do not reflect the learner's mother tongue but are very much like those young children make as they learn a first language.

Schachter et al. (1977) were however of the opinion that it is extremely difficult for a researcher to be certain about the typology of errors made by second language learners or about reasons for making them. The contention is that a single error can be attributed to interlingual as well as intralingual factors. Their argument is supported by the findings of other researchers such as Andersen (1978), who assert that it is quite true that some errors are the result of both interlingual and intralingual factors and therefore are difficult to classify.

As earlier mentioned, Richards (1971) conducted error analysis from a non-contrastive standpoint. His study focussed on English errors produced by speakers of Japanese, Chinese, Burmese, French, Czech, Polish, Tagalog, Maori, Maltese and the main Indian and West African languages. He selected errors that occurred in a cross-section of the samples. The samples contained systematic errors typical in English usage that are found in many case-

studies of the English errors of speakers of different linguistic backgrounds. In short, his study focussed on the types and causes of intralingual and developmental errors. He observed in his conclusions that although interlingual interference is a major source of difficulty in second language learning, many errors emanate from the strategies used by the learner in the language acquisition process and from the mutual interference of structures within the target language. In our research we have used this non-contrastive approach, since we have used a heterogeneous group of subjects from various linguistic backgrounds with which the researcher is not conversant.

Taylor (1975) as quoted in Els et al. (1984 : 58) conducted a study that illustrates the description and explanation of errors in second language use. His subjects were Spanish-speakers learning English. He divided the subjects into elementary and intermediate groups on the basis of teacher judgements and test scores. The two groups translated 80 Spanish sentences into English. The focus was on syntactic problems in eight different sentential types. The realization of the auxiliaries and verb phrases were subjected to Error Analysis. The findings were that although interlingual errors are more frequent among elementary learners, both groups mainly produced intralingual errors. His findings are useful to our research since they show the centrality of intralingual errors in second language learning, which are the focus of this study (non-contrastive).

Kimani (1987) studied the acquisition of six morpho-syntactic structures of English by Kenyan school children. In his findings,

he noted that most of the errors could be attributed to the strategy of overgeneralisation and that "the source language does not seem to impinge on the interlanguage forms, nor does it determine the relative difficulty experienced by learners in their acquisition of the structures". This study, and others, were useful in our research, especially in the formulation of the third hypothesis already mentioned.

It is evident from these findings by linguists that there are varied views as to the nature and causes of errors that second language learners make. Halliday et al. (1964 : 119) assert that EA research can be effectively undertaken;

-- with complete accuracy by reference solely of the description of English, without taking any account of the student's native language or even knowing what it is. Each error is stated as a specific deviation from a described English feature.

On the same page, they conclude by saying that;

-- the teacher faced with a class of students having different native languages may prefer the analysis which is most easily accounted for descriptively, since even if he thinks the error was due to interference he cannot exploit this in the classroom.

In our study, we have used a descriptive analysis of the errors as opposed to the comparative analysis, since our subjects were drawn from multiple linguistic backgrounds, not all known to

the researcher. A non-contrastive approach to EA as used by Richards (1971) has therefore been used in this study. Corder (1974) has observed that error analysis may be conducted on a homogeneous group of subjects or a heterogeneous group. Members in homogeneous group have similar aspects such as mother-tongue, age, sex, motivation and equal knowledge of the formation rules of the second language. The errors produced by such a group will be essentially homogeneous. On the other hand, a heterogeneous group has differing mother-tongues, sex, age and so on. However, despite this heterogeneity, Corder observes that the group will exhibit common errors. He notes that the notion of common errors is based on the theoretical justification that "there are certain features of a language which are inherently difficult for anyone to learn" (1973 : 263). He therefore talks of common errors that are common to a heterogeneous group of learners. He then affirms that if common errors are detected for a heterogeneous group, "-- then they must arise from the normal process of learning interacting with the nature of second language and the teaching materials" (1973 : 265).

The rationale for this non-contrastive approach is that only common errors among primary school pupils in Kenya are relevant to pedagogical programmes that are necessarily unified. Corder (1973 : 263) emphasizes this point saying;

We take account, therefore principally of those errors which are common to all, or a majority of members of the group, and discount, for planning purposes, those which are peculiar to an individual or a minority.

With regard to the mechanics of EA, Norrish (1983) has observed that there are basically two main approaches. The first one is for the researcher to set up his own categories of errors on the basis of preconceptions about the learners' most common problems. The second is to classify errors as they are collected into particular areas of grammatical and syntactic problems i.e. the errors determine the categories. He calls the first one "Pre-Selected Category" approach and the second one 'Let the Errors Determine the Categories'.

It is our view that the second approach, which was used by Hudson (1971) and Politzer and Ramirez (1973), as illustrated by Norrish (1983) and Dulay et al. (1982) respectively, has been more productive and efficacious in our research since, although it is cumbersome and involving, it allowed the errors to determine the categories such that by a process of sorting and resorting of errors written on cards the categories ultimately determined themselves. The first approach is less appropriate, since the issue is prejudged.

Finally, on the interlanguage theory on which our research was based, and as was earlier observed, the transitional stages in the second language learner's linguistic development on his way to the target language has variously been described by linguists. Selinker (1969 : 1972) described them as 'interlanguages', Nemser (1971) called them 'approximative systems' and Corder 'idiosyncratic dialects'. The term 'interlanguage' has since the early 1970s characterised a major approach to second language research and theory. The term 'interlanguage' is a theoretical

construct that aims at explaining the process of second language learning. When evolving the term, Selinker believed that a learner who aims at achieving target language norms will never achieve native-like competence. Consequently, the learner's utterances will be characterized by systematic deviations from the target language, since he cannot produce identical utterances to those of the native speaker. To support his view, he borrowed the idea of Latent Psychological Structure (LPS) from psychology, which he believed is in operation when learning a second language. The LPS is incapable of helping the learner to produce utterances like those of a native speaker. He enumerated the causative factors of the learner's errors as language transfer (the learner's utterances have features drawn from his first language), transfer of training (earlier training produces erroneous utterances), idiosyncratic modes of language learning, unique models of dealing with communicative tasks with native speakers of the target language such that the strategy of second language communication causes errors and overgeneralization.

The interlanguage theory is therefore central in the methodology of EA since, as Els et al. (1984 : 37) have observed, EA "focusses on the L2 learner; this approach consists of empirical research into the nature and causes of deviations from the L2 norm". We find this definition quite appropriate for our research, which sought to identify, describe and explain errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS: CLASSIFICATION OF ERRORS AND THEIR ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY.

3.1 Description of Error Types in the Data

The correction of 120 compositions that the pupils wrote yielded a total of 702 intralingual or developmental errors. In keeping with the proposed approach of error analysis i.e. 'Let the Errors Determine the Categories', the errors determined 8 major grammatical categories. These are, verb-group errors, noun-group errors, errors in the use of prepositions, concordial errors, adverbial errors, clause link errors, word order and complementation errors. The focus of this chapter is to provide an exhaustive analysis of these types of errors against the background of an incisive description and examination of these grammatical categories, as obtain in the standard variety of the English language.

3.1.1 Noun Group Errors

In order to achieve a graphic illustration of the grammatical errors made by pupils in this category, a description of the structure of the English noun group or noun phrase is necessary. It is called a noun group because its head or main part is a noun. The head noun may be accompanied by other constituents such as determiners and modifiers. The determiner constituent of a noun group is made up of three categories i.e. predeterminers, central

determiners and postdeterminers. The predeterminers include all the linguistic items that occur before the central determiners or the head noun such as 'all', 'both', 'double', 'twice', and so on. Central determiners include; the articles i.e the definite article 'the' and the indefinite articles 'a', 'an', and the zero article; demonstratives i.e 'this', 'that', 'these' and 'those'; possessives i.e 'my', 'your' and so on; quantifiers i.e 'some', 'any' and so on. The postdeterminers occur after the central determiners and include cardinal numerals such as 'one', 'two' and so on, ordinals such as 'first', 'second' and so on, general ordinals such as 'next', 'last' and so on, and quantifiers such as 'many', 'few', and so on. It is evident that the classification of determiners is dependent on their position in relation to each other within the noun group. In way of defining determiners, Leech and Svartvik (1975;225) have observed that 'Determiners are words which specify the range of reference of a noun in various ways e.g by making it definite (the boy), indefinite (a boy), or by indicating quantity (many boys)'.

On the other hand modifiers are in two categories, i.e premodifiers and postmodifiers. The premodifiers occur immediately before the head. They are all the items before the head noun excluding the determiners such as the adjectives e.g 'beautiful girl' where 'beautiful' is the premodifier of the head noun 'girl' or another noun e.g 'shop attendant' where the noun 'shop' premodifies the noun 'attendant' and so on. All the items that modify the head and occur after it are called postmodifiers. Such items include prepositional phrases, as in;

'The man outside the house',

where 'outside the house' is a prepositional phrase postmodifying the head 'man', relative clauses as in;

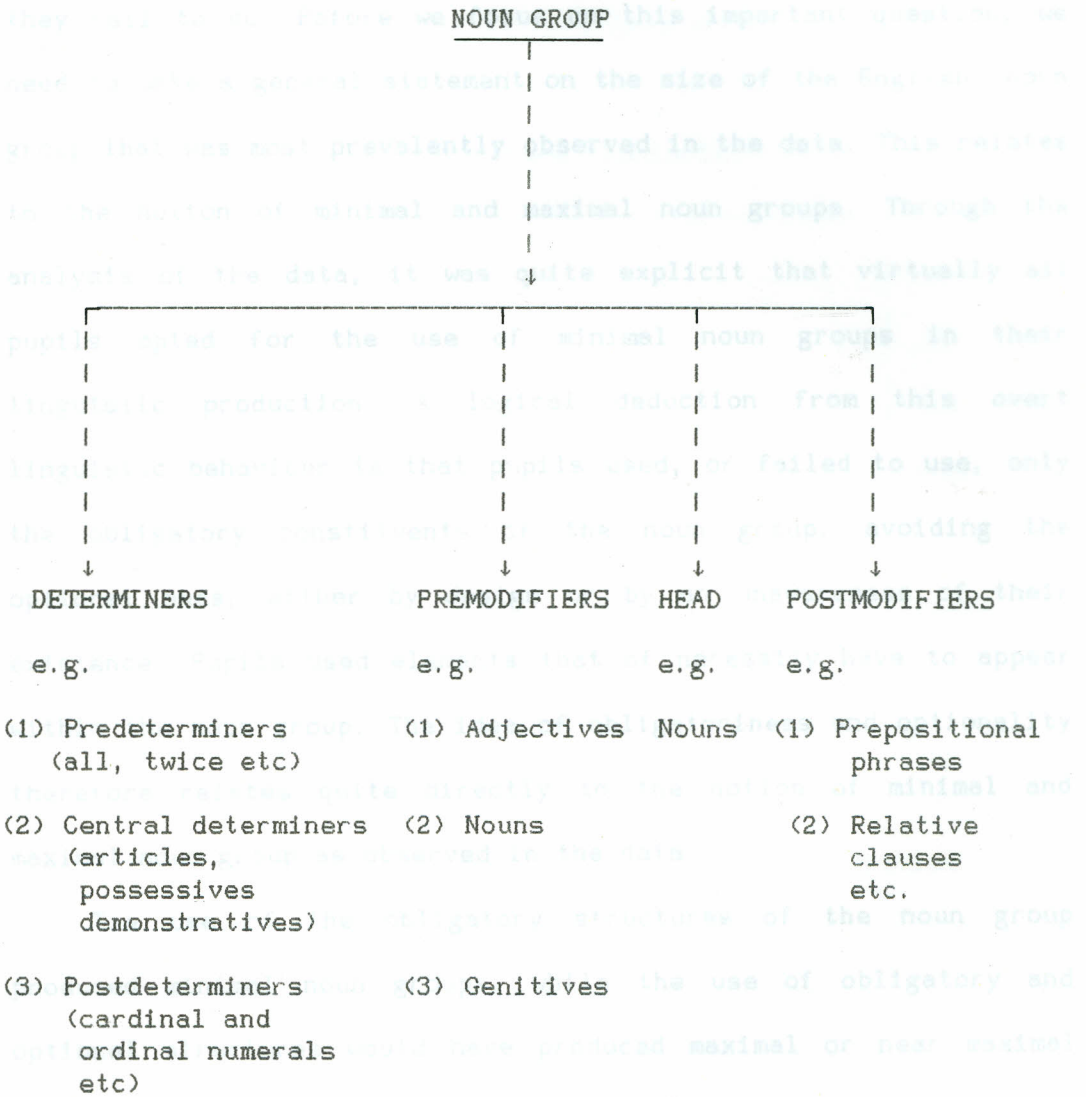
'the man that broke the cup',

where 'that broke the cup' is a relative clause postmodifying the head noun 'man' and so on.

As already mentioned, the head of a noun group is the noun which has been defined by grammarians as the name of a person, a place or a thing e.g person - 'John', 'Kimani' and so on, place - 'Nairobi', 'Limuru' and so on, thing - 'desk', 'pen' and so on. Nouns are of various types such as proper nouns, which are names of particular places, persons or things, common nouns, which are names of unspecified members for example 'boys', 'students' and so on, count and non-count, or mass nouns for example 'cups', 'pens' (count), 'water', 'milk' (non-count, or mass), collective nouns for example 'committee', 'team', 'class' and so on, animate and inanimate, and so on.

The structure of the English noun group can therefore be summarized by the following figure adopted from Leech and Svartvik.

Figure 1: The Structure of the English Noun Group



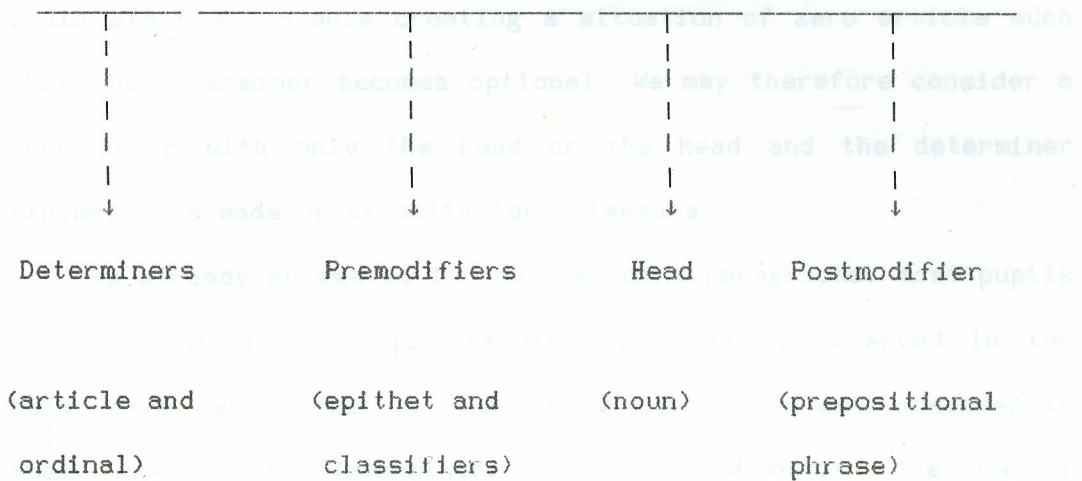
the use of obligatory and optional constituents of the noun group. This observation is entirely crucial as far as the location of most of the errors that we observed in the pupils' use of the noun group. The questions to answer at this juncture are these: Which are the obligatory and optional constituents of the noun group? What are the structures of a minimal and a maximal noun group? and Which examples can be cited from the data? A

Having examined the structure of the English noun group in some details, we now address ourselves to the issue of how pupils made errors in the noun group, i.e. what did they do and what did they fail to do. Before we focus on this important question, we need to make a general statement on the size of the English noun group that was most prevalently observed in the data. This relates to the notion of minimal and maximal noun groups. Through the analysis of the data, it was quite explicit that virtually all pupils opted for the use of minimal noun groups in their linguistic production. A logical deduction from this overt linguistic behaviour is that pupils used, or failed to use, only the obligatory constituents of the noun group, avoiding the optional ones, either by design or by an unawareness of their existence. Pupils used elements that of necessity have to appear within the noun group. The idea of obligatoriness and optionality therefore relates quite directly to the notion of minimal and maximal noun group as observed in the data.

The use of the obligatory structures of the noun group produced minimal noun groups, while the use of obligatory and optional structures would have produced maximal or near maximal noun groups. This observation is entirely crucial as far as the results of our research are concerned, because they point out the location of most of the errors that we observed in the pupils use of the noun group. The questions to answer at this juncture are these: Which are the obligatory and optional constituents of the noun group? What are the structures of a minimal and a maximal noun groups? and Which examples can be cited from the data?. A

maximal noun group would have linguistic items drawn from the four major constituents of a noun group, i.e. determinative, premodification, head and postmodification, as already discussed and described. An example may clarify this possibility, such as;

The first brilliant Kenyan trade unionist of the sixties,



The terms 'epithet' and 'classifier' refer to two types of premodifier. The former is essentially a matter of opinion while the latter is a factual classification of the noun. In the word order of a noun group, epithets precede classifiers Halliday (1985). With regard to optional and obligatory constituents of a noun group, Leech and Svartvik (1973;251) have observed that 'determiners and modifiers can be left out. However, determiners are more essential to noun phrase structure than modifiers. The only situation in which a noun phrase has no expressed determiner is where it has a 'zero article'. We therefore claim that determiners and the head are the obligatory constituents of a noun group while modifiers are optional. However, this claim needs some

articles quite unnecessarily. The notion of mutual exclusion syntagmatic relation in syntax places restrictions in grammar such that proper nouns do not typically occur with the definite article 'the', which makes example 5 above erroneous, since the proper noun 'Lake Magadi' should not be preceded by a definite article. Also the use of the definite article in the following example observed in the data makes the sentential construction grammatically erroneous:

12. ---- went to the border between the Kenya and the Tanzania.

The proper nouns 'Kenya' and 'Tanzania' should not be preceded by the definite article. Other examples of erroneous and unnecessary use of the definite article observed in the data include;

- 13 We will play the netball the previous day.
 14. He told me that the mineral was known as the soda ash.
 15. On the arrival at the police station ----
 16. ----on the fourteenth of January the nineteen hundred and ninety one.

Errors relating to the unnecessary use of the indefinite article 'a' were also observed in the data, such as:

17. ---- along the narrow and a bushy road.
 18. My brother was carrying a sufuria with a hot water.

In these two examples, the grammatical error is the use of the indefinite article 'a' where it ought not be used.

The analysis of the errors also showed that pupils were at times not sure whether to use the definite or the indefinite article. It appeared as if some pupils were not aware of the rule

governing the use of the articles. The following examples from the data may help to clarify this point:

19. We reached Kenyatta National Hospital. My brother was taken out of an (instead of 'the') ambulance.

20. We went away and started looking for the (contextually wrong) bus.

21. The chief ^{asked} told her are you a thief? and a (instead of ('the') thief was --- but a (instead of 'the') chief ---.

Regarding the use of the definite and indefinite articles, Quirk *et al.* (1985;272) have observed that the indefinite article 'is typically used when the referent has not been mentioned before and is assumed to be unfamiliar to the speaker or hearer'. They further observed (*ibid.*; 265) that:

The definite article 'the' is used to mark the phrase it introduces as definite, i.e. as referring to something which can be identified uniquely in the contextual or general knowledge shared by speaker and hearer.

The pupils' unawareness of this important rule is therefore the cause of their inappropriate use of the articles, especially in their (articles) anaphoric use.

It was observed earlier that the demonstratives 'this', 'these', 'that' and 'those' are a sub-category of the central determiners within the noun group. It was explicit from the data that some pupils were not aware of the appropriate use of these pronouns of the deictic category. This is especially with respect to their semantics (which is not the concern of this study) and grammar (singularity and plurality). Pupils apparently did not

seem to know when to use the distal (that, those) and the proximal (this, these) demonstratives e.g.

22. I do not know what had happened to my mother this morning.

23. These Sunday I plan -----

In example 22 above, the demonstrative 'this' was used instead of 'that' and in example 23, the plural 'these' was used instead of the singular 'this'.

Errors were also observed in the pupils' use of the possessives and the genitives. The possessives as a sub-category of the central determiners indicate ownership, originator and so on. Pupils showed some inability in the use of the possessive pronoun 'their', which they used in free variation with the personal pronoun 'they' as in the examples from the data;

24. Ask them they (instead of 'their') names.

25 Their (instead of 'they') left me there.

Nouns are inflected for number (plurality and singularity) constituting some form of genitive inflection. In the medium of writing, the regular nouns are inflected for the singular by the apostrophe 's' as in 'boy's' and in regular plural by the apostrophe that follow the plural (-s) as in 'boys''. In the observed data, pupils displayed a serious problem of inability to use the marked genitive case or the inflected S-genitive for both plural and singular. The apostrophe for both plurality and singularity were wrongly placed, as in the following examples from the data:

26. ----- the boy's families.

27. ----- the policemens' work.

Example 26 from the corpus shows that the learner has failed to apply the rule of placing the apostrophe after the {-s} of regular genitive forms, while 27 shows that the learner has applied the rule for regular plurals erroneously to an irregular plural.

In the following example, the singular s- genitive was left out by a subject:

28. The day our neighbour- house caught fire.
 missing s- genitive

The plural apostrophe was similarly left out in some cases as in :

29. ----- the workers salary (plural from the context).

Another serious grammatical error was observed in the use of the singular possessive pronoun 'its'. Most pupils wrongly and quite unnecessarily placed the apostrophe between 'it' and 's' as in the example,

30. -----had already cooled it's tempers.

Related to the wrong use of the marked genitive case was the pupils' use of the genitive and s-genitive cases synonymously. Quirk et al. (ibid.; 321) have observed that in some cases, there is 'similarity of function and meaning between a noun in the genitive case and the same noun as head of a prepositional phrase with 'of' (sometimes called the of-genitive)'. However, they continue to say that in other instances, only the use of one is acceptable. The s-genitive unlike the of-genitive is therefore the one that is most suitably used with classes highest on the gender scale such as personal nouns referring to human beings and higher animals, as Quirk et al. have put it. This distinction makes the following sentences from the pupils' work erroneous:

31. My bedroom's window was open (the s-genitive for the of-genitive)

32. The ceremony was a wedding of a friend of my brother (the of-genitive for the s-genitive)

The case of the genitive is, however, rather complex, as an alternative acceptable form for 31 would be 'My bedroom window was open' which uses neither the 'of' nor the 's' genitive, and the appropriately indefinite equivalent of 32, using the s-genitive, would be 'one of my brother's friends', rather than the simpler 'my brother's friend', which would be a correct equivalent of the definite 'the friend of my brother'

As has already been suggested in the preceding paragraphs, it was observed through data analysis that pupils had problems relating to the English number system. The English noun group is either singular or plural, a characteristic that is determined by the head noun. Quirk *et al.* (ibid.; 297) have said that 'The English number system constitutes a two-term contrast ; SINGULAR, which denotes 'one', and PLURAL, which denotes 'more than one' '. They have further given the three number classes of nouns as: the singular invariable nouns, which include noncount nouns such as 'music'; 'proper nouns' and so on; plural invariable nouns, which invariably occur in plural such as 'people', 'team' and so on; and the variable nouns, which occur either in singular or in plural and are sub-categorised into regular nouns with predictable plurals e.g 'cats', 'hens' and so on, and the irregular with unpredictable plural e.g 'man --- men ', 'ox --- oxen '.

Errors relating to the number system were observed in the

inflection of variable nouns for plurality. In many cases, pupils failed to pluralize by the addition of the plural morpheme {-s} to the singular noun. Examples from the data are as follows:

33. It was a difficult job for them and they spend two day

(instead of 'days')

34. I saw two boy (instead of 'boys') fighting.

35. When we grow up to be a father (instead of 'fathers').

In these examples, the singular form of the noun was substituted for the plural form, which constituted a serious grammatical error. The plural form was also substituted for the singular.

Other errors relating to the number system were detected in the pupils' use of the plural invariable nouns. Some pupils consistently added the plural morpheme {-s} to nouns that invariably occur in the plural, thus precipitating some very awkward inflections. An example of this is:

36. I was very surprised to see those peoples (instead of

'people' that is already plural)

In this example, the use of the plural morpheme {-s} in clear instance of zero form of pluralization makes the construction erroneous and totally unacceptable in English. Somehow related to this interlanguage error was the addition of the plural morpheme {-s} to irregular nouns with unpredictable mode of plural formation such as mutation where only the vowel changes to form the plural. An example of this from the errors observed is:

37. I met two mens and asked me...

In this example, the noun 'men' is already plural such that the addition of {-s} is superfluous, which constitutes the grammatical

error.

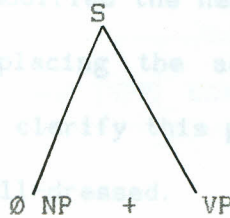
Another serious grammatical error relating to the number system, as observed in the data, was the overt inability by pupils to form plurals of the reflexive pronouns. As a result, such deviant interlanguage structures as the following were detected.

39. They rule themselves (instead of 'themselves')
40. They are not supposed to keep themselves dirty.
41. After we have finished to dress ourselves (instead of 'ourselves').
42. When we started to prepared ourselves to go to church.

The analysis of the data also revealed the tendency to delete the most obligatory constituent within the noun group, i.e. the noun or pronoun. This is indeed a serious grammatical error when we consider certain syntagmatic relations of dependency such as the mutual, or bi-lateral dependency relations that obtain between the noun group and the verb phrase. Any sentential construction should have a noun phrase and a verb phrase as shown by the following simple phrase marker:



We therefore cannot have a sentence with only the verb phrase, i.e.:



as was observed in the following example:

43. Where | saw many different animals.
 NP | VP

The noun group and the verb phrase contract mutual dependency relations such that the two must occur together to form a sentence. This explains the error in example 43, where the subject is deleted.

It was also observed in the data that some pupils used subject pronouns redundantly. A good example is:

44. The village nearby it was on fire.

In this example, the pronoun 'it' is an unnecessary repetition of the noun 'village', which makes the sentence unacceptable in English. Also in a number of cases, the personal pronoun 'they' was substituted for the surrogate subject 'there' as in the example:

45. They were nice things in Mombasa.

Certain errors that were observed in the data related to the issue of modification of the head. As already mentioned, syntagmatic relations in syntax can be viewed in terms of order and dependency. Focussing on the notion of 'order', it was observed that pupils postmodified the head with adjectives instead of postmodifying it by placing the adjective before it. Some examples from the data may clarify this point:

46. I saw four men well-dressed.

47. Then the police traffic came quickly.

48. He gave me the fare bus.

49. We heard the bang loud.

In example 46, the epithet 'well-dressed', which should occur as a premodifier immediately before the noun 'men', is placed after it to constitute a deviant interlanguage structure in the noun group. In example 47, the classifier 'traffic' should have been placed before, and not after, the head 'police', which constitutes the error. The same linguistic operation should have been followed in examples 48 and 49, which consequently makes them erroneous. Also within the noun group, some pupils used adverbs as premodifiers of the head noun instead of using adjectives. An example from the data is:

50. It was a brightly Sunday morning.

In this example, the adverb 'brightly' was used instead of the adjective 'bright', which can effectively describe the noun 'morning'.

The following table indicating grammatical errors that were

observed in pupils' written work may help to summarise the issues already discussed in the preceding paragraphs.

TABLE 2. NOUN GROUP ERRORS IN LINGUISTIC CATEGORY TAXONOMY.

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
<p>A. <u>MORPHOLOGY</u></p> <p>1. Number morpheme;</p> <p>(i). Omission of plural {-s}</p> <p>(ii). Addition of {-s} to already plural noun.</p> <p>(iii). Plural demonstrative for singular noun.</p> <p>2. Possessive morpheme</p> <p>(i). Omission of S-genitive singular (-'s)</p> <p>(ii). Omission of S-genitive plural (-s')</p> <p>(iii). Redundant S-genitive apostrophe</p> <p>(iv). S-genitive with wrong plural apostrophe</p> <p>3. Comparative morpheme</p> <p>(i). Unnecessary {-er}</p> <p>(ii). Use of more + {-er}</p>	<p>between the Kenya and the Tanzania.</p> <p>I saw two boy fighting.</p> <p>I met two mens.</p> <p>We went away and started</p> <p>These Sunday I plan...</p> <p>My bedroom was very hot open</p> <p>The day our neighbour house caught fire.</p> <p>.... the workers salary.</p> <p>.... had already cooled it's tempers.</p> <p>.... the policemen's work.</p> <p>Their left us there</p> <p>It wasn't longer before it bored me.</p> <p>She shouted more higher.</p>

B. SYNTAX

1. Determiners

(i) Indefinite article

omission

(ii) Indefinite article

redundant

(iii) Redundant definite

article

(iv) Definite article

deleted.

(v) Definite for indefinite

article

(vi) S-genitive substituted

for of-genitive

(vii) Proximal demonstrative

for distal demonstrative

2. Pronoun

(i) Deletion of subject

pronoun.

(ii) Subject pronoun as

redundant element

(iii) Possessive pronoun for

personal pronoun and

vice-versa

They were crying

in Nairobi

He came crying in such

way that

... along the narrow and

a bushy road.

... went to the border

between the Kenya and the

Tanzania.

We told him sad news.

We went away and started

looking for the bus.

My bedroom's window was

open

I do not know what had

happened to my mother

this morning.

... where saw many

different animals

The village nearby it

was on fire.

Their left me there

... ask them they names

(iv). Personal pronoun 'they' for surrogate subject 'there'	They were nice things in Mombasa.
3. Adjectives Premodifiers used as	
(i) Postmodifiers	He gave me the fare bus.
(ii) Adverb for adjective	It was a brightly Sunday morning.

3.1.2 The Verb Group Errors

First, we wish to discuss and describe verb group constituency before examining and presenting the types of errors that pupils made within the verb group. It is important to distinguish between the verb group and the verb phrase as we have opted for the former. Distinction between the two has graphically been made by Thomas (1987: 2) who has observed that , 'The verb group is the complex of auxiliary (-ies) and main verb in a sentence without the latter's complementation, while the verb phrase is the main verb and its complementation'. It is therefore clear that a verb phrase may contain a noun phrase and the verb phrase cannot consequently be compared with the noun phrase. Our interest is therefore centred on the verb group.

The English verb group has two major structural constituents . These are the main verb and the auxiliary elements. As with the case of the noun group already described and discussed, we may also conceptualise the verb group in terms of minimal and maximal standpoints. A minimal verb group contains the obligatory elements while the maximal verb group contains both the obligatory and the

optional elements. Before we determine which elements of the verb group are obligatory and which ones are optional, we shall first examine all the possible constituents of a verb group.

The verb group may be made up of a maximum of five elements. These are: the main verb, the modal, the perfective and the progressive aspects, and the passive. The last four of these five elements form the auxiliary elements of the verb group. The four auxiliary elements are formed with the help of two types of auxiliary verbs namely, the primary auxiliary verbs, i.e 'have', 'be', and 'do', and the modal auxiliary verbs, i.e 'can', 'could', 'shall', 'should' and so on. The main verbs are of various categories of which one or two are of great significance to this study, as will be seen later. There are regular and irregular lexical verbs, finite and non-finite verbs. Lexical verbs can also be seen in terms of their collocation with constituents that occur after them in sentential constructions, such as the objects and the complements. Distinction between regular and irregular verbs is well articulated by Quirk *et al.* (1985;98), who have observed that, 'Irregular verbs differ from the regular verbs, however, in that the past form and the (-ed) participle of irregular verbs cannot be predicted by general rule from the base'. This distinction is of great consequence to this study, as we will indicate in the course of our discussions. The finite lexical verbs have explicit markers of tense while the non-finite lexical verbs do not. There are certain lexical verbs that obligatorily require complementation by direct or indirect objects, and are called transitive verbs. There are others that do

not require this complementation and are called intransitive verbs.

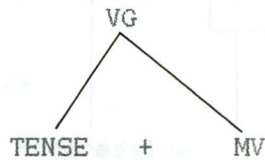
Turning again to the structure of the verb group which is important to our study, we note that there is simple and complex verb groups. A simple verb group is made up of only the main verb marked for tense while the complex verb group is made up of both the main verb and one or more of the auxiliary elements as earlier given. In short, a complex verb group is the main verb with any auxiliary modifications. This graphic distinction between the simple and complex verb groups points out the constituency of what may be referred to as the minimal and maximal verb groups. It also points out the obligatory as well as the optional elements of the English verb. We can therefore state quite explicitly that the main verb is the obligatory element of an English verb group while the auxiliary modifications are the optional elements of the verb group. This observation is crucial in this study because, as will be clearly demonstrated later on, most of the verb group errors we observed were in the pupils' use of the obligatory element of the verb group namely the main verb. The observed data point out pupils' strong propensity to use only the obligatory element of the verb group. This is of course due to the linguistic necessity of using the verb group in any sentential construction in English.

We can exemplify a minimal verb group with the following sentence i.e;

1. He wrote the book.

A tree diagram representation of the verb group in this sentence

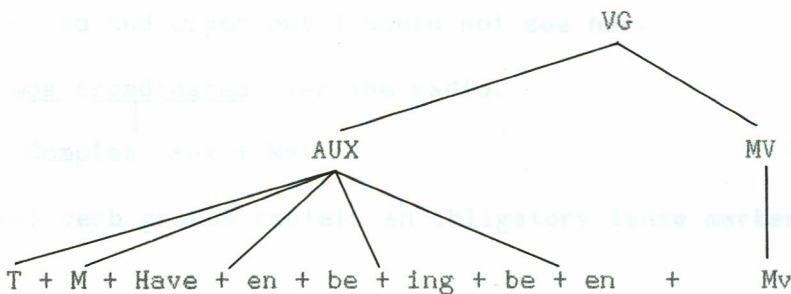
would be as follows;



This sentence has a simple verb group since the main verb 'wrote' has no auxiliary modification. The verb is the obligatory element as it can function as the verb group, provided it is marked for tense, without the presence of any auxiliary elements, which are indeed optional in a verb group. On the other hand, a maximal verb group can be exemplified by the following illustration:

2. Verb group = Tense + Modal + Aspect (Perfective + Progressive) + Passive + Main Verb
- or
3. VG = T + M + Have + en + be + ing + be + en + MV.

In form of a tree diagram, or phrase marker, a maximal verb group can be illustrated as follows:



to the main verb, it is predictable that many errors will relate to tense-formation.

Interlanguage errors were observed in the pupils' use of the modals in cases where premodification of the main verb was necessary. We have already noted that modals are part of the auxiliary structure and are optional constituents within the verb group. Modals express modality in a sentence. Roberts (1967;72) has defined modals as '...words that modify the meaning of the verb phrase usually giving it a future meaning as well as other meanings'. Also in an attempt to define modals, Quirk *et al.* (1985;120) have observed that 'The modal auxiliaries are so called because of their contributions of meanings in the area known as MODALITY (including such concepts as volition, probability, and obligation)...'. We then note that, modals are not inflected for tense as may be exemplified with the following sentences:

I can do it now.

I could do it for you now.

Modals are also not inflected for agreement in person or number.

I can do it.

We can do it.

He can do it.

In these three sentences, 'can' is used with first and third person singular, i.e 'I', and 'He'. It is also used with the first person plural 'We'.

Having made these observations with regard to modals, we note that through the analysis of the errors made by pupils, it was explicit that they were dismally unable to use the modals

correctly. In the first place, a varied use of the modals was clearly lacking, such that in almost all cases of modal use, pupils used only 'can, could, will, would,' in reference to the present and past time. Errors arose in the use of these modals interchangeably:

11. They said that I can drink alot of salty water and that I can do alot of harm to my body.
12. I had no time to ask them when they will return.
13. She told the story in whispers so that she cannot be heard.
14. We tried as we can but the fire was spreading wildly.
15. I run as first as my legs can and then I reached.
16. One morning I asked my father if we can go to visit our relative.
17. I hoped it will make a hole.

In all of the examples 11-17, 'could' should have been used instead of 'can' and 'would' should have been used instead of 'will'.

Interlanguage errors were also detected in cases of aspectual premodification of the main verb. In defining the term 'aspect', Quirk et al. (1985;188) have this to say, 'The term ASPECT refers to a grammatical category which reflects the way in which the verb action is regarded or experienced with respect to time'. It should be noted that 'aspect' is not as deictic as 'tense' for it does not relate to the time of utterance. English has two aspectual constructions namely, the perfective and the progressive. The perfective aspect denotes the verbal action as complete and the

progressive aspect as incomplete or in progress. The perfective aspect in a verb group is conveyed by the primary auxiliary verb 'have' as already stated. The verb that occurs after this verb is always in its past participle form which may resemble the past tense form. The perfective aspect may be symbolised as therefore:

Have + Participle i.e (Have + en)

There is some semantic overlap between aspect and tense such that we here discuss errors in terms of present and past perfective aspect. However, basically the errors observed were in the use or failure to use the past perfect.

The past perfective has the meaning of 'past-in-the-past' as Quirk et al. (ibid.) have put it. The data examined showed pupils' explicit inability to comprehend and utilise this notion of past in the past, as conveyed by the verbal auxiliary form of 'have', i.e 'had'. Consequently, pupils failed to reflect the past perfective, where it ought to have been reflected (considering the context). They deleted the past perfect as in the following examples which constituted intralingual errors:

18. We were asked what caused the fire.

|
past perfect (had) missing

19. He told them that they refused to be beaten.

|
past perfect (had) missing.

20. I saw an ambulance coming where the accident . . . occurred.

|
past perfect (had) missing.

21. When I remembered my brother who died

Inst: past perfect (had) missing

In other cases, the opposite occurred, i.e the past perfect was unnecessarily used, which was a source of error. An example of this from the data is :

22. Imagine your house being crashed by the police and your

property all had gone

unnecessary

Other instances of intralingual errors relating to the past perfective was the substitution of the present perfective for the past perfective. In other words, pupils used 'have' in paradigms where its past tense 'had' should have been used, which constituted a very serious grammatical error. Following are some examples of this occurrence from the data:

23. I bought and after I have drank I filled very happy.

24.and they also said that they have forgiven me.

instead of 'had'

As already mentioned, the progressive aspect is conveyed by the form of 'be' and the '-ing' morpheme. It is otherwise called 'durative' or 'continuous' aspect. Errors in this area occurred as a result of the substitution of the simple present for the past progressive as shown by the following data:

25.and looked where the noise come from.

instead of 'was coming' (be + ing)

Other instances of using the wrong kind of tense in backshifting the time and as observed in the data are as follows:

26.that he was in hospital he is asked to pay

instead of 'has been asked'

27. and I thought that he was shot.

instead of 'had been'

28. the ambulance took those who were injured

instead of 'had been'

In example 26, the wrong kind of tense is used, i.e 'is' instead of 'had been'. In 27, the wrong kind of tense i.e 'was' is used instead of 'had been'. In 28, the wrong kind of tense i.e 'were' is used instead of 'had been'. In one instance, the passive voice was used instead of the active voice as in the example :

29. It was a lorry and a small car which has been collided.

Most errors within the verb group were in respect of the main verb in terms of the two tenses of English namely present and past. Before examining some of these errors from the observed data, we note the occurrence of other types of errors relating to the lexical verb. Some instances of total deletion of the main verb were observed such that pupils produced deviant sentences such as:

30. This.....because I would not stay at home

main verb deletion

31. My brother and I on back seat and father ...behind

wheel (the two gaps indicate main verb deletion)

32. I don'thow I would have survived without

main verb deletion

Interlanguage errors were also observed in the pupils' use of the phrasal verbs. It was observed that some pupils used only the

verb leaving out the particle, which resulted in erroneous constructions. Examples from the data are:

33. Yet we were locked in the same cell.

particle 'up' missing.

34. I took the bicycle and set for the other side of the village.

particle 'off' missing.

There were some isolated instances where pupils used adjectives in place of verbs. Some examples from the data include:

35. My child has dead.

adjective instead of the verb 'died'.

36. that the snake did not dead (instead of 'die')

It has already been pointed out that most of the errors within the verb group, as observed in the data, related to the grammatical concept of tense. It was also noted that tense is a free voting element that can be reflected or attached to any of the verbal structural elements. Since most pupils opted for the minimal verb group which contains only the obligatory main verb, tense errors were mainly observed in relation to the lexical verb. In particular, pupils were unable to use the two tenses in English, i.e present and past. We note that these problems were especially related to the finite as opposed to the non-finite verb group since only the former is tensed and also was commonly used by the pupils. Some examples that show the substitution of the present for the past tense in both regular and irregular verbs can be cited from the data as follows:

37. He come (instead of 'came') and greet (instead of

47. She took the matchbox and lighted (instead of 'lit') the gas cooker.

48. He took a step and the ground shaked (instead of 'shook')

In relation to these regularisation errors, we note that pupils were not aware of the fact that irregular verbs such as 'light', 'shake', 'hear', and so on, form their past tenses erratically. They undergo internal morphological changes such that their pastness is not as predictable as in case of the regular verbs, which take the past tense morpheme {-ed} quite predictably. An isolated case of the addition of the past tense morpheme to an irregular verb already in the past was detected. An example of this phenomenon is:

49. She tolded me to go home

tell...told....tolded

The error of example 49, was consistently repeated by one pupil who apparently used the verb 'told' as a present tense form which needed the past tense morpheme {-ed} to form the past tense form.

The following table summarises most of the issues discussed in relation to the verb group errors.

TABLE 3: VERB GROUP ERRORS IN LINGUISTIC CATEGORY TAXONOMY.

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR.
A. MORPHOLOGY	
1. Progressive morpheme omission of {-ing}	I was very sad with whatever was happen.

2. Simple past tense

- | | |
|--|--|
| (i) omission of {-ed} in regular verbs | He ask me what had happen to me. |
| (ii) Addition of {-ed} to irregular verbs | They heard strange voices. |
| (iii) Addition of {-ed} to already past form. | She told me to go home |
| (iv) Present for past tense in regular and irregular verbs | She asked us how we were but we keep quiet |
| (v) Past tense for present participle (base) | I saw it was my cousin who had came to visit us. |

B. SYNTAX

1. Main verb

- | | |
|---|--|
| (i) Lexical verb omission | This because I would not stay at home. |
| (ii) Particle in phrasal verbs omitted. | Yet we were locked in the same cell. |
| (iii) Adjective for verb. | My child has dead. |

2 Modals

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| (i) Omission | We did not know what happen next. |
| (ii) Present tense form for past form | ...and started telling that he can beat him. |

<p>3. Aspect</p> <p>(i) Perfective</p> <p>(a) Omission of past perfect</p> <p>(b) Addition of past perfect</p> <p>(c) Present perfect</p> <p>(ii) Progressive</p> <p>Simple present for past progressive</p>	<p>I started running towards the man who called me.</p> <p>Imagine your house being crashed by the police and your property all had gone...and after I have drank I felt very happy.</p> <p>...and looked where the noise come from.</p>
<p>4. Passive</p> <p>Passive for active voice</p>	<p>It was a lorry and a small car which has been collided.</p>

3.1.3 Prepositional Errors

Before examining the interlanguage errors relating to pupils' use of the prepositions in prepositional phrases (also called prepositional groups), we make some introductory remarks on this grammatical category, which should be of immense importance in clarifying the errors. Quirk *et al.* (ibid.; 657) have observed that '...a preposition expresses a relation between two entities, one being that represented by the prepositional complement, the other by another part of the sentence'. This observation is critical in the choice of prepositions in English because, in order for prepositions to express that relation between entities

in a sentence, they must of necessity be the correct ones. Prepositions in English may be simple, such as those consisting of one word, e.g 'by', 'on', 'to', 'with' and so on, or complex ones consisting of more than one word, e.g 'out of', 'on top of', 'by means of' and so on. A prepositional complement as mentioned in the above quotation is normally a noun phrase, a wh-clause or an -ing clause. As the word 'preposition' suggests, prepositions are usually placed before the prepositional complement, or what is otherwise called the object of the preposition, as exemplified above. The product of this combination between the preposition and its complement is the prepositional phrase. The following figure adopted from Quirk et al. (ibid.) clarifies the issue.

Figure 2. STRUCTURE OF A PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE

PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE	
PREPOSITION	PREPOSITIONAL COMPLEMENT
under	the bed
on top of	the tree
from	what I heard
by	making the statement
on	reaching there

In our discussion of errors relating to the use of prepositions and prepositional phrases, we also invoke the notion of order and dependency in syntagmatic relations in syntax. By

examining the internal composition of a prepositional phrase, we notice that it is made up of two constituents that contract a mutual dependency relation. The two constituents contract paratactic relation, since both are equally important in the structure of a prepositional phrase. In short, the two constituents are obligatory in the structure of a prepositional phrase, although we know that the prepositional phrase itself is an optional constituent of a sentence in some cases.

We now address ourselves to the question of the syntactic functions of a prepositional phrase. Observations on this issue will help to clarify the grammatical errors observed in this study. First a prepositional phrase occurs in a sentence as a postmodifier of the head noun in a noun group as earlier discussed. An example is as follows:

1. The man in a coat is his father.

Prep. + Noun group (Prepositional phrase).

2. Those houses on the hill are new.

Prep. + Noun group (Prep. phrase).

A prepositional phrase can also function as complement of either the verb or the adjective. An example of verb complementation is as follows:

3. The pupils were looking at the blackboard

Prep. + Noun group

Verb Complement

An adjective complementation by a prepositional phrase may be exemplified as follows:

4. He is remorseful for his behaviour

Prepositional phrase.

Prepositional phrases may also function as adverbials, i.e. adjuncts as in

5. They were eating in the hall;

Adjunct

as subjunct, as in

6. From a political standpoint, the move was wise.

Subjunct Prep. phrase.

as disjunct, as in

7. In all probability, the boy was murdered.

and as conjunct, as in

8. On the other hand the man tried to stop the accident.

Conjunct Prep. phrase.

Lastly, prepositional phrases may function as noun phrases, i.e. as subjects, complements or even prepositional complements. Some examples are as follows:

- 9 After the speech is the time for lunch.

Subject Prep. phrase.

10. He is in a coma

Complement Prep. phrase.

11. The heat from below the earth killed him.

Prep. phrase as Prep. Complement.

Turning now to the actual errors that were observed in pupils' use of the prepositions and prepositional phrases, we note that the errors can be grouped into three categories. These are,

errors in the choice of the wrong prepositions, the unnecessary use of prepositions and the omission of vital prepositions. Errors in the choice of the wrong prepositions were especially preponderant. The result of this was the formation of erroneous prepositional phrases which the pupils purported to serve various syntactic functions. Pupils chose wrong prepositions which they added to noun phrases to form prepositional phrases functioning as adjuncts. Some examples from the data are as follows:-

12. There was an accident in our village in the road. ('in' instead of "on the road").

13. My uncle who lives at Nakuru.
('at' instead of 'in Nakuru').

14. He drove off with full speed.
('with' instead of 'at full speed').

15. They stayed home at about two weeks.
('at' instead of 'for').

16. It was on November 1989.
('on' instead of in').

17. I decided to escape on my bedroom's window.
('on' instead of 'through').

Considering the above examples of erroneous sentential constructions by pupils, some observations can be made. In the first place, all the examples indicate grammatical errors in the use of prepositional phrases as adverbial adjuncts. Examples 12 and 13 show errors in the choice of prepositions in an attempt to form adverbial adjuncts of place. Examples 14 and 17 show errors in the choice of prepositions to form adverbial adjuncts of

to this observation especially in the pupils' attempt to form adjuncts of place,

21. Every child was \perp home *cheering to him*

'at' left out. 'to' and 'for' missing

22. To my surprise there was no one \perp home *at the competition*

'at' left out and 'to' missing

(We may note that omission of 'at' before 'home' is acceptable in American English, but not in British English).

23. After buying the bag we went \perp nearby hotel *phrases*

'to' missing *subject used*

Also prepositions were deleted in the formation of adjuncts of time, as in the following examples from the data:

24. We continued with the game \perp about 3 hours.

'for' missing

25. We arrived \perp two o'clock.

'at' missing.

26. He bent down to look \perp the man.

'at' missing.

As earlier mentioned, prepositional phrases have the syntactic function of being complements of the verb and the adjective. Examples of grammatical errors in respect of verb and adjective complementation by prepositional phrases drawn from the data are as follows:

27. ——— parade listening ——— some of the important
announcements.

28. ——— people of the coast are quite different with the
people of Nairobi.

29. I looked — ways and means to escaped.

30. I went home and met with my mother.

31. ——— following him and cheering to him.

In example 27 and 29, the prepositions 'to' and 'for' were deleted as obligatory elements in the formation of complementary prepositional phrases of the verbs 'listening' and 'looked' respectively. In examples 30 and 31, the prepositions 'with' and 'to' were used as redundant elements which ought to have been left out, since the verbs required only the noun phrases for complementation. On the other hand, a certain subject used the wrong preposition, i.e 'with' after the adjective 'different', which should have been 'from', which caused an error in the adjective complementation.

The following table summarizes the intralingual errors in respect to the use of prepositions and prepositional phrases by pupils.

TABLE 4: PREPOSITIONAL ERRORS

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
<u>SYNTAX</u>	
1. Wrong preposition used	I saw my father enter the room at the left side.
2. Redundant preposition	as we reached at the bus stop.
3. Omission of preposition	--- every child was home.

3.1.4 Word Order Errors.

Before a description and discussion of the word order errors that were observed in this study, we wish to make some important preliminary remarks on the notion of word order in English. On the basis of functional classification, as opposed to formal classification, we note that the clause structure in English is composed of five elements namely; the subject (S), the verb (V), the object (O), the complement (C), and the adverbial (A). These elements are exemplified in the following simple declarative sentences

1. Njoroge (S) went (V) hurriedly (A) to the classroom (A).
2. Their father (S) normally (A) beats (V) them (O) with great fury (A).
3. Last week (A) the President (S) was (V) very angry (C).
4. The teacher (S) has been (V) in the field (A) since morning (A).
5. The President (S) offered (V) him (O) a post (O).
6. He (S) thinks (V) himself (O) very wise (C).
7. They (S) should carry (V) all the food (O) to the dining hall (A) carefully (A).

We then can borrow two important terms from Quirk et al. (ibid.) to make certain observations on word order from these examples. These terms are 'centre' and 'periphery'. We note that it is now clear that clause elements that combine in particular ways to form correct English sentences, and the

the verb is certainly the most central constituent and is normally preceded by the subject in an English clause. The verb may be followed by one or two objects, or a complement, which should occur after the object if present. The adverbial is the most peripheral in the sense that it can occur in various syntactic positions, i.e initially or before the subject, medially, or finally after the verb, object or complement. The verb normally occupies a medial fixed position. The adverbial is the most mobile structural element as it can occur in various positions within the clause. The subject, object and complement are less mobile than the adverbial, since their syntactic positions of occurrence are more or less fixed. It is due to these observations that English is described as a 'fixed word order language' as compared to some other languages such as Latin, which is 'free-word-order'. Consequently, Quirk et al. (ibid;5) have observed that ... '...in English the positions of subject, verb and object are relatively fixed. In declarative clauses, they occur regularly in the order S.V.O.'. They conclude by saying that, "English does indeed have strict limitations on the ordering of clause elements.... After V, S is the least mobile element followed by O and C".

Having made these preliminary observations we now examine actual word order errors as observed in pupils written English. It is important to stress here the point that our consideration of word order is restricted to sentential elements, as they relate to each other, and not on the order of linguistic items within one element. It is now clear that clause elements must combine in particular ways to form correct English sentences, and the

systematic deviations from these conventional modes of element combination constitute grammatical errors. Such deviations from accepted word order in English were observed in the data. Let us consider the following example from the data:

8. Entered the dancers into the room
 V + S + A

This example is one of subject-verb relation. We have already observed that in English the verb normally occurs medially after the subject. This makes example 8 erroneous as the verb is placed before the subject.

There were instances of word order errors in respect of the subject-verb-object (SVO) relation. Some pupils wrongly fronted the object, placing it before the subject as in the following example:

9. Nothing we found, (instead of)

O + S + V

We found nothing

S + V + O

On the whole, word order errors in relation to sentential elements were not a frequent problem.

TABLE 5 WORD ORDER ERRORS.

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
SYNTAX	
1. Verb before subject	Entered the dancers into the room.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 2. Fronting of adverbs | Out we went |
| 3. Fronting of objects | Nothing we found. |

N.B.

Adverb fronting is an acceptable stylistic device in British English, but was considered as erroneous as from the context it was clearly not intended as such by the learner, as the stylistically unmarked form 'We went out' would have been appropriate.

3.1.5. Concordial Errors

First we present some introductory remarks on the grammatical notion of 'concord', which will facilitate a clearer description of concordial errors observed in the data. Leech and Svartvik (1975;220) have observed the following in an attempt to define the term concord. "'CONCORD (also called AGREEMENT) means that certain grammatical items agree with each other in A number or -B. person'". In the same vein, Quirk *et al.* (1985; 755) have defined concord as "'..the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (e.g plurality) that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other'". Lyons (1968;239) also has this to say about concord, "'In many languages, the constituents of a particular syntactic construction are said to 'agree', or be 'in concord', with respect to such features as 'gender', 'number', 'case', 'person' etc'". All these definitions of 'concord' have one common denominator, i.e. the view that linguistic items contract

concordial relations when they share some morphosyntactic relation. It is important to note that this linguistic phenomenon applies to many languages, English included. In the ensuing paragraphs, we shall describe concordial relations in English that are relevant to the findings of this study, namely, number and gender concord.

In case of number concord in English, the subject and the verb must agree in number. This means that a plural subject must be followed by a 'plural' verb and a singular subject must be followed by a 'singular' verb. Examples of this are as follows;

1. The boy is eating.
2. The boys are eating.

In example 1, the singular subject 'The boy' agrees with the 'singular' present tense auxiliary verb 'is'. In example 2, the plural subject 'The boys', accords with the 'plural' auxiliary verb 'are'. Despite this concordial requirement in English, it was observed in the data that some pupils failed to match the verb and the subject in terms of number. They failed to observe the principle of grammatical concord, which occasioned very frequent intralingual errors. Some examples from the data are as follows:

3. My parent were impressed with the party.
4. The forest were silent.
5. The last place we went to were the Agricultural Scheme.
6. This are leprosy, measles e.t.c.

In examples 3 and 6, the subjects failed to observe the principle of grammatical concord by failing to pluralize the head noun 'parent', and the deictic pronoun 'this', respectively, in order

to match with the 'plural' verbs 'were' and 'are'. On the other hand, in examples 4 and 5, some subjects failed to use the 'singular' verb 'was' which could have tallied with the singular subjects 'The forest' and 'The last place'. The failure to observe this concordial requirement constituted these grammatical errors.

Concordial errors in terms of number were also observed in the relationship between the subject and its complement. In English, the subject must agree with its complement in terms of number as in the examples,

7. She is a beautiful girl.

8. They are beautiful girls.

In example 7, the singular subject 'She' properly accords with the subject complement 'a beautiful girl' while in example 8, the generic plural pronoun 'They' accords with the plural subject complement 'beautiful girls'. This is as it should be in English. However, some pupils made interlanguage errors in this respect such that deviant sentential constructions as the following were observed;

9. Forty days are the day of a thief.

10. The clergymen are the one who cause the fight.

11. The youth who guide our village were the one who saw the two thieves.

In example 9, the plural subject 'Forty days' is wrongly matched with the singular complement 'the day' (instead of 'the days'). In examples 10 and 11, the plural subject 'The clergymen' and 'The youth' were wrongly complemented with the singular pronoun 'the one' (instead of 'the ones'). The two examples also therefore

exhibit pronominal concordial errors in English as the pronoun which anaphorically refers to a singular noun phrase should be in singular and one that refers back to a plural noun phrase should be in plural. We also consider the following examples from the data;

12. ...and they spend two day.

13. I see two boy fighting.

In these examples, the subjects failed to pluralize the head noun 'boy' to 'boys' so that it may accord with the plural numeral 'two', which constitutes a grammatical error. Still within the noun phrase, some subjects failed to effect agreement between the head noun and the demonstrative pronouns i.e. 'this' (singular), 'these' (plural) 'that' (singular), and 'those' (plural). As a result, such erroneous sentences as the following were observed in the data.

14. I was shocked to hear this words (instead of 'these words')

15. I was very happy to hear this words from my mother

16. These Sunday I plan.....(instead of 'This Sunday')

In examples 14 and 15, the subjects used the singular demonstrative pronoun 'this' instead of the plural demonstrative pronoun 'these', which could have accorded with the plural head noun 'words'. The opposite occurred in example 16, where the subject used the plural demonstrative pronoun 'These', instead of the singular demonstrative pronoun 'This'.

In the case of gender concordial errors which we observed, we note first the following. Roberts (1967;271) says that 'English noun phrases have three genders _ masculine, feminine and neuter'.

This is due to the three third person singular personal pronouns 'he', 'she', and 'it'. He then stresses that in using these three pronouns in reference to an antecedent noun phrase, we decide whether that antecedent is masculine, feminine or neuter. Masculine noun phrases refer to males, feminine to females and neuter to lifeless things with some exceptions e.g ship (referred to as 'she'), sun (referred to as 'he') and so on. Contrary to this concordial requirement in English, some subjects used the wrong pronouns for some antecedents. Some examples from the data may clarify this point. Consider the following;

17. I asked my mother and he told me.
18. The girl opened his eyes (contextually 'his' should be 'her')
19. ...to tell him that her son was crying
20. I asked my mother the name of that house and he told me.

In example 17, the antecedent noun phrase 'my mother' is feminine and should rightfully be followed by the feminine pronoun 'she' and not by the masculine pronoun 'he'. In example 18, the noun phrase 'The girl' is feminine and consequently should be followed by the feminine possessive pronoun 'her', and not by the masculine possessive 'his'. In example 19, the objective pronoun 'him' is masculine and consequently should be followed by a masculine possessive pronoun 'his', and not the feminine possessive pronoun 'her'. Explanation of the error in example 20, is as the one for example 17. These examples from the data clearly demonstrate the frequency of grammatical errors relating to gender concord in standard eight pupils' written work in English.

These observations are summarized in the following table.

TABLE 6: CONCORDIAL ERRORS

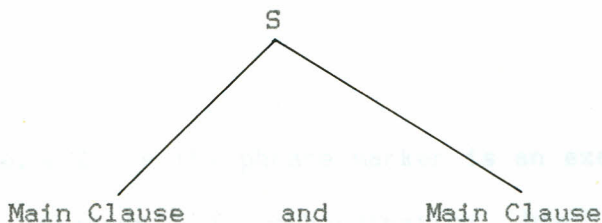
LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
SYNTAX	
1. Number Concord	
(i) Lacking between subject and verb in plurality.	The two thief were caught.
(ii) Singular number concord lacking between subject and verb	The last place we visited were the Agriculture scheme
(iii) Plural number concord lacking between subject and complement.	Forty days are the day of a thief.
(iv) Number concord between post-determiners and count nouns lackingand they spend two day
(v) Number concord between demonstrative and head noun lacking.	I was shocked to hear this words.
2. Gender Concord	
Lacking between pronoun and its antecedent	I asked my mother and he told me.

3.1.6. Clause Link Errors

In English, there are two important processes of relating two clauses in the same sentential framework. It is these two processes that we now make some important remarks about, which we deem relevant to this study in- so- far as they help to clarify the interlanguage errors we observed in clause linkage. These two processes are coordination and subordination. In the process of coordination, the linked clauses are of the same rank in the same clause structure. The coordinated clauses are said to contract a paratactic relation since they are of equal rank. Quirk *et al.* (1985;918) have noted that coordination is of two types, i.e syndetic, which is signalled by overt markers such as the coordinating conjunctions 'and', 'or' and 'but', and asyndetic, which is not overtly marked by conjunctions. An example of coordination is the following.

1. He ate food and went away
- main clause coordinator main clause

A phrase marker for this example would be;



In the process of subordination, one clause is included within another clause that may be called a main clause. A subordinated clause may also have another subclause within it. The syntactic

'as.....as', 'so.....as', 'so.....that' etc.

Having made these preliminary remarks with respect to coordination and subordination in English, we now wish to describe and discuss the errors we observed in the data under certain sub-headings, namely, deletion of imperative coordinators, use of wrong coordinators, superfluous use of coordinators, deletion of subordinators, substitution of coordinators for subordinators and the incorrect use of correlative subordinators.

Some subjects omitted or deleted important coordinators, which yielded some very erroneous instances of clause connection as in the following examples:

3. I took a novel which was on my bed started reading it.
4. He asked me my nameI did not answer.
5. We go to the gatesaw the watchman.
6. I stood up immediately.....went to borrow permission.

In examples 3, 5 and 6, the subjects left out the coordinating conjunction 'and', as marked by the blanks. In example 4, the subject omitted the coordinating conjunction 'but' that should indicate contrast between the two main clauses. The result of this was the production of uncoordinated clauses and erroneous sentences.

In other cases, it was observed in the data that some subjects used the wrong coordinators as in the example:

7. He told the people to move away so that the person could get fresh air. The people moved away and the person died.

In this example, 'but' would have been the correct coordinator, in order to bring out the contrast between the people moving away

so that the person may live and the person dying, contrary to expectation. There were erroneous instances of superfluous use of the subordinators. Errors relating to this may be exemplified by the following interlanguage construction:

8. They came with clubs and spears and arrows and pangas.

The repeated use of 'and' in this example is unnecessary. The use of one 'and' and commas would have been enough as in the following correction;

9. They came carrying clubs, spears, arrows, and pangas.

Grammatical errors in clause connection were also observed in the deletion of vital subordinators, as in these examples from the data:

10. It was'nt longit bored me.

11. I told herI would not go anywhere.

12. My mother decidedwe go back home.

In example 10, the subject omitted the subordinating conjunction 'before', in example 11, the conjunction 'that' was left out, and in example 12, the subordinator 'that' was again omitted. These omissions produced erroneous instances of subordination as exemplified.

Other errors relating to the process of subordination that were noted in pupils' work were in respect of coordinators being substituted for the subordinators. Consider the following example from the data:

13. When I got home I was unhappy to find that my mother was not at home and I expected to find her there.

In this example, the subject used the coordinator 'and' instead of the subordinator 'because' to introduce the reason for the unhappiness.

Lastly, it was noted that subjects used the correlative subordinating conjunctions wrongly. In some cases, a part of the conjunction was left out while in others, a wrong part was used with a correct one. Some examples from the data may help to clarify this observation:

14. I woke upquickly as I could.
15. I was very tired that I couldn't walk.
16. He was so scaredI nearly collapsed.
17. He lookedfierce as a lion.
18. I was happy as a king.
19. She got very annoyed that she slapped me.

It is clear from these examples that the two correlative subordinating conjunctions that pupils had problems in using are 'as....as', and 'so....that'. In examples 14, 17, and 18, pupils omitted the first 'as'. In examples 15, and 19, the subjects used the intensifier 'very' instead of 'so', and in example 16, the subject omitted the subordinator 'that'. It is to be noted that the misuse of these two correlatives was quite rampant in the data.

In the following table, we summarize clause link errors as

observed in the data and as described and discussed in the following table.

TABLE 7: CLAUSE LINK ERRORS

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
SYNTAX	
1. Omission of coordinator	I took a novel which was on my bed started reading it
2. Redundant coordinator	They came with clubs and spears and arrows and pangas.
3. Wrong coordinator	He told the people to move away so that the person could get fresh air. The people moved and the person died.
4. Omission of subordinator	It wasn't long it bored me.
5. Coordinator substituted for subordinator	When I got home I was unhappy to find that my mother was not at home and I expected to find her there.
6. Incorrect use of correlative subordinators	
(i) as.....as	He was happy as a king.
(ii)so.....that	He was very tired that he couldn't walk anymore.

verb". Some examples of this are:

1. He is rather stupid.
2. He was a miser.
3. They are in the hall.

In example 1, the subject 'He' is linked by the copular verb, 'is' to the adjective phrase 'rather stupid', which operates as a subject complement. In 2, the nominal subject complement 'a miser' is linked to the subject 'He' by the copular verb 'was'. In 3, the copular 'are' links the subject 'They' to the predication adjunct 'in the hall'. It is therefore clear that the adjective phrase 'rather stupid', the noun phrase 'a miser' and the adjunct 'in the hall' are verbal complements.

Monotransitive verb complementation occurs in English (a) when a noun phrase occurs as a direct object, as in

4. He ate the food.,
- S + V + O (direct).

(b) when a noun phrase occurs as prepositional object, as in

5. They approved of the bill.,
- S + Prep V + O (direct).

(c) when a finite clause is the complement as in the following example where a that - clause is the object

6. He said that the boy should come; and

(d) when a non-finite clause is the complement, as in the example

7. They desire to publish the article.

It is clear from these examples that monotransitive complementation of the verb occurs in S.V.O (Subject + Verb + Object (direct)) clauses in English.

Ditransitive verb complementation occurs in the S V O O Type of clauses, which have the lexical verb collocating with a direct and indirect objects as noun phrases, as in

8. They wrote him a letter

S + V + O (indirect) + O (direct)

The complex transitive complementation in English occurs when the lexical verb in predication collocates with a noun phrase (direct object) and its complement as in the following example:

9. We found the speech very boring

S + V + O (direct) + O. Complement.

In English, there is also adjective complementation as already mentioned. The adjective and adjectival participles may collocate with various complements, such as that- clauses, to-infinitives, prepositional phrases etc. as in the following examples:

10. He is fond of playing.

Adj + Prep. Phrase

11. They were glad that you recovered

Adj + that- clause

12. He was pleased to see him

Adj + to-infinitive.

Lastly, we have prepositional complementation in English. As mentioned in our discussion of prepositional errors, the structure of a prepositional phrase is that it has a preposition before either a noun phrase, a wh-clause, or an -ing clause, which operate as its (preposition) complements. Some examples may clarify this fact.

13. He wrote on a paper

Prep+ NP.

14. They fought for what was found.

Prep + Wh-clause

15. She argued about deleting the clause.

Prep.+ -ing clause

Having made these important observations with regard to the notion of complementation in English, we now examine the interlanguage errors relating to this notion, which we observed in the data. Errors relating to monotransitive verb complementation were noted in the analysis. Some subjects failed to supply the direct object, which is an obligatory element of a transitive verb in English. The following examples from the data help to clarify this interlanguage error:

16. My mother went near and hit _____ with a rungu.

17. He greet _____ with 200 shillings.

18. We paid _____ and we entered.

19. I enjoyed _____ very much etc.

In example 16, the pronominal object 'it' was left out. In 17, the objective pronoun 'me' was omitted. In 18, the object 'the fees' was left out as the object was also omitted in example 19. The result was the production of these deviant interlanguage sentential constructions which cannot pass as correct English sentences, and therefore are ungrammatical.

Instances of errors relating to ditransitive complementation were also observed. Some subjects used only one object where two were imperative in ditransitive verb groups as in the following

examples:

20. Then she gave _____ fourty shillings for transport.

S + V + O (indirect object missing) + O (direct)

In this example, the indirect object 'me' is missing, which makes the construction incomplete and therefore ungrammatical. It was also noted that some subjects attempted to use a ditransitive complementation, i.e attempted to use two objects where one was superfluous as in

21. He entered the room and saw me that I was unhappy.

S + V + O replaced by S + V + O + O

Interlanguage errors relating to the use of the ditransitive verb complementation were noted in pupils' use of the non-finite clause. Some subjects used the bare infinitive in place of the to-infinitive complement, which yielded complementation errors as in the following example:

22. I told them have seats, (instead of) I told them to have seats.

These observations are summarized in the following table.

3.2.1 Adverbs

Adverbs in English have been defined as words that modify the meaning of a verb, adjective, or other adverbs. On the basis of their structure, they can be divided into simple adverbs, e.g. 'well', compound, e.g. 'somewhere', and locational, in that they are derived from adjectives by the addition of the suffix 'ly', e.g. 'quickly'. Traditionally, adverbs in English have been classified into three functional categories, namely, clause element, adverbial and predicative. Clause element adverbs are those which are used to modify the main clause, and are usually placed at the beginning of the clause. Adverbials are those which are used to modify the main clause, and are usually placed at the beginning of the clause. Predicative adverbs are those which are used to modify the main clause, and are usually placed at the beginning of the clause.

TABLE 8: COMPLEMENTATION ERRORS

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR
<p>SYNTAX.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deletion of direct object in monotransitive complementation. 2. Deletion of objects in ditransitive complementation. 3. Ditransitive complementation substituted for monotransitive complementation. 4. Bare infinitive for to-infinitive complementation. 	<p>My mother went near and hit with a rungu.</p> <p>Then she gave fourty shilling for transport.</p> <p>He entered the room and saw me that I was unhappy.</p> <p>I told them have seats</p>

3.1.8 Adverbial Errors

Adverbs as a formal category have been defined as words that modify the meaning of a verb, adjective, or other adverbs. On the basis of their morphology, they can be divided into simple adverbs, e.g. 'well'; compound, e.g. 'somewhere'; and derivational, in that they are derived from adjectives by the addition of the -ly suffix, e.g. 'wisely'. Traditionally, adverbs in English have two syntactic functions, namely, clause element adverbial and premodifier of adjectives and other adverbs. The term adverbial

refers to a form of adverb that occurs as clause element, just as a verb, subject, object, or complement. It is in this context that an adverbial is optional in clause structure. An example of an adverb as clause element is

1. He unfortunately, lost his father.

An example of an adverb as a premodifier is

2. He was extremely weak by then.

| |
Adverb Adjective.

(Premodifier)

We need to mention that when an adverb in English operates as clause element adverbial it fulfils four important syntactic functions. Adverbs may function as adjuncts (which are optional or peripheral elements that express various concepts, e.g. time, manner e.t.c.), as in

3. He stopped at the airport, shortly.

|
Adjunct.

They may function as subjuncts (adverbials that express viewpoint, courtesy or emphasis), as in

4. He sincerely said that.

|
subjunct.

The third function is as disjuncts (adverbials that comment on the form or content of the clause), as in

5. Certainly, I will win.

|
disjunct

An example of adverbs as conjuncts (adverbials which express the speaker's assessment of the relation between two linguistic items) is;

6. He is not very sick, so that he will come.

conjunction

It can be observed from these examples that the adjunct and subjunct adverbials have closer affinity to the structure of a clause than the disjunct and the conjunct.

Other than modifying an adjective, as in example 2 above, adverbs may modify other adverbs, as in

7. He ran so quickly that he won.

Adverb as premodifier of adverb.

Adverbs may also modify noun phrases as in

8. It was quite a success,

and so on.

Adverbials in English have various structures. They may be adverbs, as already seen, prepositional phrases, non-finite clauses, noun phrases, and so on. Examples are as follows:

9. He placed it on the table.

Prep. Phrase.

10. He was preparing to go.

An Infinitive

11. They were called last evening.

Noun Phrase.

In terms of adverbial positions in the clause, most adverbials are very mobile in that they can occur in the front, medial and final positions. Some examples of these adverbial positions are as follows:

However, we note that some occupy fixed positions in a sentence. Examples of the three adverbial positions are as follows:

12. Slowly, he went to the bus stop.

Front

13. He can slowly recover from the disease.

Medial

14. He walked to the bus stop slowly

Final

In example 12, the adverbial 'slowly' occurs before the subject 'he'. In 13, it occurs after the auxiliary modal 'can'. In 14, it occurs finally, which still would have been the case even if there were objects or complements after the verb. We note that in English, the placement of the adverbials in the sentence depends partially on what Leech and Svartvik (1975:198) explains as their "structure (adverb, prepositional phrase etc), partly on its meaning (time, place, manner etc)". They continue to say that order and emphasis also determine adverbial positioning. Long adverbials occupy final positions normally, and rarely medial positions, which are taken by short adverbs.

Adverbials denoting manner, instrument or means normally occur finally. Place adverbials also occur at the final position in a sentence, which is the same case with most of the time adverbials. Degree adverbs occur in medial positions although end-position is still possible. Sentence adverbials, i.e adjuncts, subjuncts, disjuncts and conjuncts, as already discussed, occupy front positions. Some examples of these adverbial positions are as follows:

15. They walked carefully
 |
 Adverb of manner. (final)

16. He cut the orange with a knife
 |
 instrumental adverbial
 (final)

17. He will go home
 |
 Place adverbial (final)

18. She will certainly pass her exams.
 |
 Degree adverb (medial).

Examples 3,4,5 and 6 on page 84, show the normal positions of sentence adverbials.

After these important considerations of the English adverbials, we now wish to examine the interlanguage errors in relation to this grammatical category that we observed in the data. First, some pupils substituted the adjective for the adverb, which yielded ungrammatical sentential constructions, as follows:

19. He welcomed me nice and happy.

20. The lion walked slow up to where I lay.

21. I knocked as bold as a brass

22. I walked calm towards Him.

23. I woke up as quick as lightening.

24. I screamed so loud that my father also came.

In all these examples the subjects left out the -ly suffix that is morphologically added to the adjective to form adverbs through a derivational process. The right adverbs would therefore have been

'nicely and happily' in 19, 'slowly' in 20, 'boldly' in 21, 'calmly' in 22, 'quickly' in 23, and 'loudly' in 24.

Other subjects substituted the noun for adverbials as in the following examples observed in the data:

25. The car was moving very speed
 |
 Noun for adverb.

26. It was going very speed
 |
 noun for adverb.

In examples 25 and 26, the adverb 'speedily' would have been appropriate.

On the whole, we observed that adverbial errors were not many. The two types noted are shown in the following table.

TABLE 9: ADVERBIAL ERRORS.

LINGUISTIC CATEGORY AND ERROR TYPE	EXAMPLE OF LEARNER ERROR.
SYNTAX	
1. Adjective substituted for adverb.	He welcomed me nice and happy.
2. Noun substituted for adverb	It was going very speed.

3.2 Frequency Rating for the Major Categories of Errors

In the field of error analysis, the term 'frequency of an error' refers to the number of times an error occurs. As has already been mentioned in our research design, the frequency of an error may be determined in two ways, i.e the 'absolute' or 'relative' frequency of an error. The absolute frequency of an

error refers to the number of times the error actually occurs, and relative frequency refers to the number of times the error could have occurred relative to the length of the composition. We opted for the absolute mode of error computation since our data was systematically collected, which allows absolute frequency count.

The major categories of errors that our research yielded have already been described and discussed in the preceding paragraphs. By way of recapitulation, we enumerate these categories as follows: noun group errors, verb group errors, adverbial errors, complementation errors, word order errors, concordial errors, prepositional errors and clause link errors. Our onus in this section is to demonstrate the frequency rating for these major grammatical categories of interlanguage errors as determined by the observed errors themselves.

TABLE 10: ERROR TYPES AND THEIR ABSOLUTE FREQUENCY RATINGS

ERROR TYPE	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL
Verb Group	59	65	83	90	297
Noun Group	30	39	46	42	157
Prepositional	15	19	16	19	69
Concordial	6	14	23	18	61
Clause Link	12	22	13	11	57
Adverbial	6	8	7	8	29
Complementation	6	1	10	6	23
Word Order	3	0	3	3	9

N.B: GROUP A: MUTHAIGA PRIMARY

GROUP B: KENYATTA PRIMARY

GROUP C: MATHARI PRIMARY

GROUP D: BABA DOGO PRIMARY

The table above clearly shows the eight categories of grammatical errors arrived at through data analysis. It also indicates the grammatical errors in terms of categorial numbers as collected from each group of subjects. The frequency rating for each grammatical category is in terms of absolute number of occurrences and the total number of errors for each type of error given for all the groups of subjects. These totals are quite revealing about the relative degree of error frequency in terms of grammatical categories. This observation is especially borne out by the following table that shows the frequency rating for the errors in terms of percentages.

TABLE 11: ERROR TYPES AND THEIR PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY RATINGS.

TYPE	TYPE TOTAL	% OF THE TOTAL NO. OF ERRORS.
Verb Group	297	42.3
Noun Group	157	22.4
Prepositional	69	9.8
Concordial	61	8.7
Clause link	57	8.1
Adverbial	29	4.1

Complementation	23	3.3
Word order	9	1.3
TOTAL	702	100%

With reference to the table above, we notice that 42.3% (297 out of 702) of the grammatical errors were verb group errors. This frequency percentage therefore shows that verb group errors were the most frequent in the observed data. The frequency rating for the noun group errors was the second highest, with 22.4% (157 out of 702). The rest of the errors followed in the following order of frequency rating: prepositional type, 9.8% (69 out of 702); concordial errors, 8.7% (61 out of 702); clause link category, 8.1% (57 out of 702); adverbial category, 4.1% (29 out of 702); complementation errors, 3.3% (23 out of 702); and word order errors, 1.3% (9 out of 702).

We also observe from these tables and from our knowledge of the English clause structure that the frequency ratings of these grammatical errors are directly governed by the notion of obligatoriness and optionality of constituents at clause structural level. The verbal element of a clause is central to the structure of the English clause such that users of English, our standard eight pupils included, have of necessity to use it. This is irrespective of whether they have mastered its use or not. When it is the case that users have not properly mastered the use of any obligatory structural element, in this case the verb group and the noun group, errors in that structural element must predominate. This observation is borne out by the two frequency

tables that indicate the most grammatical errors to have been observed within the verb and noun groups. This observation is given greater credence by considering the number of errors that were observed in pupils use of the adverbials. We know that, as a clause element, adverbials are optional and peripheral. This means that users of English can use them or not depending on their whims. This explains the low frequency rating of even the other categories.

3.3 Frequency Rating for the Verb Group Sub-categories of Errors

It is now quite clear from the frequency rating of the major grammatical categories that errors within the verb group were the most frequent. We had observed in our statement of the objectives and hypotheses at proposal level that the various types and sub-types of errors envisaged in this study would be explicated in this reporting stage. Consequently, we now wish to show the frequency rating of the sub-categories of errors within the verb group, as determined through data analysis. The following table clearly shows this.

TABLE 12: FREQUENCY RATING FOR VERB GROUP SUBCATEGORY ERRORS.

SUB-CATEGORY	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL
Main verb					
Past tense	21	27	38	58	144
Present tense	0	3	0	0	3
Deletion	2	6	1	1	10
Adjective					
for verb	0	0	2	1	3
Aspect					
Perfective					
Past perfect	21	17	20	15	73
Present perfect	1	0	0	0	1
Progressive	0	2	3	4	9
Modal					
Past	16	15	16	7	54
Passive					
Passive for					
Active	0	0	1	0	1

This table shows verb group errors in terms of their sub-categories, as discussed under the sub-heading 'verb-group errors' in the preceding pages of this report. By way of recapitulation, the verb group sub-categories of errors are those pertaining to the use of the main verb in terms of its tense, deletion and adjective being used in its place, the use of the

perfective and the progressive aspect, modal and the passive voice. It is clear from this table that errors relating to the tense of the main verb were the most frequent within the verb group. In particular, past tense errors of the main verb had the highest frequency rating. We further like to point out the finding that, past tense errors of the lexical verb were almost equal to the second highest frequency rating of the noun group (noun group 157, past tense 144), in comparison with any other type of errors either of major or minor category.

The preponderance of past tense errors within the verb group may be tentatively explained by the nature of the elicitation task which was a composition that rendered the use of the past tense forms obligatory. In most cases, the subjects used the present tense forms of the lexical verb in place of the past tense forms. Added to this fact is the obligatory use of the lexical verb in any sentential construction in English, which renders errors relating to its use logically preponderant. This point has already been clearly brought out in the preceding discussions. Errors in the aspectual, modal and passive sub-categories of the verb group are of necessity less, because they belong to the auxiliary structure, which is optional in clause structure. This is shown by the absolute frequency rating in the table. The following table shows the frequency rating of these subcategories in terms of percentage.

TABLE 13: PERCENTAGE FREQUENCY RATING FOR VERB GROUP SUBCATEGORY
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 ERRORS.

SUB-CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORIAL TOTALS	PERCENTAGE
Main Verb		
Past tense	144	48.5
Present tense	3	1.0
Deletion	10	3.4
Adjective for Verb	3	1.0
Aspect		
Perfective		
Past perfect	73	24.6
Present perfect	1	0.3
Progressive	9	3.0
Modal	54	18.2
Passive	1	0.3
Total	297	100.3

	PRESENT FOR PAST	PAST FOR PRESENT
	2	0
	24	0
	30	0
	15	0
TOTAL	71	0

CHAPTER FOUR.

ANALYSIS: CAUSES OF THE MOST FREQUENT TYPE OF ERROR.

4.1 Analysis of the Most Frequent Error.

Having demonstrated in the preceding analyses, discussions and illustrations that past tense errors in relation to lexical verbs were the most frequent in standard eight pupils' written work in English, we now wish to present some analyses of these errors, hoping that this will help in clarifying our inferred conclusions about their possible causes. We do this in the following table, using the notion of categorization of lexical verbs into regular and irregular verbs.

TABLE 14: ANALYSIS OF PAST TENSE ERRORS IN LEXICAL VERBSa). IN REGULAR VERBS

GROUP	PRESENT FOR PAST	PAST FOR PRESENT
A	4	0
B	3	0
C	10	0
D	16	0
TOTAL	33	0

The explanation of errors is an attempt to infer their possible causes. This can be done via both a linguistic and a psychological approach. The strict standards, linguistic theories may

b) IN IRREGULAR VERBS.

GROUP	PRESENT FOR PAST	PAST FOR PRESENT	PAST FOR PAST (wrong)
A	7	0	8
B	15	3	9
C	18	2	6
D	30	3	8
TOTAL	70	8	31

With reference to the above tables of analysis, it is explicit that past tense errors with regard to the substitution of the present for the past tense predominated with a total of 104 frequency counts. The use of past tense in place of present tense was only noted in eight cases of irregular verbs. 31 cases of the addition of the regular past tense morpheme {-ed} were noted, as shown in the column entitled 'past for past (wrong)'. In the rest of this chapter we will endeavour to explain the possible causes of past tense errors in relation to the lexical verbs, on the basis of this analysis. We will try to explain why most of the past tense errors related to the substitution of the present for past tense in both regular and irregular verbs and why most of these errors related to the irregular verbs.

4.2 Causes of the Most Frequent Type of Error.

The explanation of errors is an attempt to infer their possible causes. This can be done from both a linguistic and a psycholinguistic theoretical standpoints. Linguistic theories may

help to explain how the learner has broken, ignored or substituted certain formation rules of the target language as we have already done. Psycholinguistic theories, on the other hand, grapple with the reasons why the language learner has broken, disregarded or substituted rules that govern a target language. It is, however, difficult to state quite categorically or in absolute terms that a certain error is due to this or that cause. This is because a single error may have a multiplicity of causes. The truth of this made Corder (1973:290) observe that the explanation of errors is fraught with 'uncertainty and speculation'. Explanation of errors as we will be engaged in in the rest of this chapter is therefore a speculative as opposed to a factual exercise. Various psycholinguistic theories have been proposed to account for errors in the interlanguage as observed in our literature review. By way of recapitulation, these are: carelessness, first language interference, overgeneralization, incomplete application of rules, induction by teaching and learning materials, universal hierarchy of difficulty, and so on. We will invoke these theories in our attempt to explain past tense errors within the ambit of the substitution of present for past tense and the preponderance of past tense errors relating to irregular verbs over those relating to regular verbs. We will aim at establishing whether overgeneralization is the chief cause of these errors. We hope to achieve this objective by a careful assessment of the extent to which each of these theories can explain these errors.

presenting the main theories of the second language errors.

4.2.1 Carelessness.

It is to be observed that most teachers of English normally invoke the notion of carelessness in the explanation of grammatical errors made by their pupils. To some extent, this may be true in a situation where a student is not motivated in learning the target language. While it is unwise to totally reject this notion as a source of past tense errors in our study, we feel that it is of little consequence. First, it presupposes that the pupils knew the past tenses of lexical verbs but failed to use them correctly due to lack of interest.

By invoking the distinction drawn by various linguists between the concepts of 'error', 'mistake' and 'lapse' (the term 'lapse' refers to the inconsistent ill-formed structure due to lack of concentration). We assume that carelessness in the writing of compositions by pupils would only have produced asystematic deviations from the target language norm, causing mistakes or even lapses. In other words, carelessness would only have produced, in Chomsky's terminology (1965), 'performance' as opposed to 'competence' errors. We note that in our collection of data, we carefully disregarded such mistakes for they cannot pass as errors, due to their unsystematicity. On the other hand, we gave the subjects enough time to write the compositions and proof-read them. This certainly helped them to correct what would have been errors due to carelessness. On this basis therefore we were reluctant to accept carelessness as an authentic main precipitating factor of the past tense errors.

4.2.2 Interference by the First Language.

The behaviourist theory of language learning as propounded by Skinner (1957) claimed that language was a set of habits and learning it was viewed as a process of habit formation through constant reinforcement and 'shaping' of utterances to conform with the target language norm. Consequently, it was believed that in learning a target language, the old habits of the mother tongue would inevitably interfere with the learning of the second language. This interference was seen as the major source of errors. As mentioned in our literature review, this belief was shattered by another Chomsky's theory of Language Acquisition Device that depicted the learner as an active participant in learning a target language as manifested by the formation of hypotheses about the nature of the target language.

To what extent then can this interference by the first language explain the past tense errors in our study? In the first place, linguists have, through experimental evidence, shown that contrary to popular belief, interlingual errors are not as preponderant in second language learning as earlier believed. First language interference is especially unimportant in error causation in the linguistic component of grammar, which was the focus of this study. Dulay *et al.* (1982:262) have strongly expressed this view saying, "The influence of the learner's first language is negligible in grammar. It is significant, however, in pronunciation. Adults are more prone to fall back on their first language; young children rarely do." In keeping with this observation, we also note that our subjects were children. We also

indicated from the very beginning that we were to conduct our study from a non-contrastive viewpoint, since we were to deal with subjects from various linguistic backgrounds not all familiar to the researcher. In other words, we were to focus on 'common errors' which, as was observed in our literature review, linguists believe should be intralingual and material induced and not interlingual. On the basis of these considerations, we felt that first language interference cannot be the main cause of past tense errors in this study. We however, believe that this factor may have been the cause of other errors as observed in this study.

4.2.3 Overgeneralization.

This is an intralingual phenomenon in which the language learner tends to overgeneralize the use of an already internalized or well learnt formation rule of the target language. In other words, the learner applies certain realization rules of the target language in linguistic contexts that they do not apply thus creating a deviant interlanguage structure. Overgeneralization may be caused by a number of factors. Norrish (1983:32) observes that, "Some possibilities are the manner or order in which the language items are presented by the teacher or the text". We may also add the order in which the learning items are presented in the syllabus. The reasoning behind this observation is that, for overgeneralization to occur, the language learner invokes the previous knowledge in order to deal with new linguistic data. It then so happens that, the learner's previous knowledge is of the items that he has been taught by virtue of their occurrence before

others in the syllabus, text, or in the presentation by the teacher.

By way of recapitulation, we note that our third hypothesis was that overgeneralization is the chief cause of the most frequent grammatical error in standard eight pupils' written work in English. Through data analysis, it was observed that pupils failed to use the past tense, which they substituted with the present tense. Richards and Sampson (1974: 14) have observed that "Facility and economy of effort may explain why first learnt words and structures tend to be overused and may resist replacement by later taught items". To exemplify this view, they continue to say "Once the present continuous is introduced (or the simple present) it is often used more frequently than necessary". Nickel (1971) called this 'a factor of chronology' when he observed that "We all know that patterns learned first have priority over patterns learned at a later date because of the convenient simplicity of the first basic structures", as quoted by Richards and Sampson.

We find these observations quite illuminating as to the main cause of the past tense errors. It should be noted that this factor of chronology is observed by teachers, textbooks and syllabuses in the presentation of materials in Kenya as in many other countries. This chronological factor relates directly to what Corder (1973: 311) calls the "notion of relative ease or difficulty" in the gradation of linguistic items in a syllabus. The easy structures are presented and taught before the difficult ones in order to provide the context for the introduction of the new difficult items.

We examined the teacher's book for standard eight, Primary English, and noted a very important comment on the gradation of items by the K.I.E. (writer) (1987: VII). The teacher is advised to teach items as they are presented in the pupils book because "All the items in (a) to (c) are graded and introduced in a planned sequence; and you will find that the teaching of an item often depends on the pupils' knowledge of other items taught earlier in the course". We observe that in this book, the present tense is presented before the past tense. When we also examined the standard eight English syllabus for the 8:4:4 system of education, we found out that item 126 of the content is present simple tense, item 127 is past simple tense and item 128 is the present continuous tense. Quite logically, in terms of relative simplicity, the present tense is taught before the past tense. The simplicity of the present tense as compared to the past tense is borne out by research in second language acquisition in the Kenyan context. Kimani (1987: 280) observes that, "The conclusion we draw from this finding is that among the six structures studied, non-past tense was one of the least difficult to acquire". It is on the basis of such findings that we invoke the psycholinguistic theory of overgeneralization in accounting for the preponderance of past tense errors in standard eight pupils' written work. Pupils tend to hold on to the use of the present tense because, by virtue of its ease in acquisition, it is taught first, and consequently garners priority in use over the past tense, that is more difficult to acquire and is taught second. In short, the present tense is learnt first and tends to be overgeneralized by

being applied in contexts suitable for the past tense. Overgeneralization combined with the law of least effort therefore, explains the preponderant use of the present tense by pupils. The law of least effort is in two senses, i.e. that the first learned is easiest to carry on using and that stem or base form is least complex.

The process of overgeneralization was even more explicitly shown by the data as indicated by table 14b, the column entitled 'past for past (wrong)'. In about 31 cases pupils used the {-ed} past tense morpheme for the regular verbs in forming the past tense of the irregular verbs. This was exemplified in Chapter 3 such that instead of forming the past tense of the irregular verbs 'hear' and 'choose' as 'heard' and 'chose', respectively, some pupils used 'heard' and 'choosed'. We found this a formidable evidence of the cognitive process of overgeneralization as possibly the chief cause of the most frequent error in pupils written English, namely, past tense error. This conclusion is in consonance with Corder's observation as quoted in our literature review that common errors among a heterogeneous group of subjects as ours arise mainly, "from the normal process of learning interacting with the nature of the second language and the teaching materials.

4.2.4 Universal Hierarchy of Difficulty.

This theory in second language acquisition is based on the theoretical construct that certain phonological, syntactic and semantic structures are inherently difficult to learn whatever the

linguistic background of the learner. Richards and Sampson (1974: 13) have observed that "Some forms may be inherently difficult to learn no matter what the background of the learner". We note that the focus of this study was common errors that pupils from heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds would make in the Kenyan situation. We agree with Richards et al. (ibid.) that the common errors we identified in this research relate generally to those linguistic items that any learner of English as a second language would find difficult to master, due to their inherent difficulty.

On the basis of this observation, we may therefore postulate that in the universal hierarchical order of difficulty, it is easier for second language learners of English to master the concept and the form of the present tense. We have already referred to findings in Kimani (1987) that the non-past is relatively easier to acquire than, by implication, the past tense. We may even verify this by considering the nature of English itself. The present tense in English may be represented in the base form of a lexical verb in all persons and numbers except the third person singular e.g. in the sentences:

1. I walk to school everyday.
2. You walk to school everyday.
3. We walk to school everyday.
4. They walk to school everyday.,

'walk' is the base form as well as the finite form of the lexical verb 'walk'. The verb carries the present tense in its base form. The child who learns the base form by implication also learns the present tense which indicates the ease with which the present

tense is introduced and taught. This is not the same with learning the past tense. The child is taught the formation rule of past tense in regular verbs, i.e. the addition of {-ed}, the zero morph {Ø} in some verbs e.g. 'cut', 'put' etc. and the past tense formation in irregular verbs, as separate forms from the base.

We may also carry the notion of universal hierarchy of difficulty between the tenses further by claiming that even within the past tense formation, a hierarchy of difficulty is discernible. We want to claim that it is easier for pupils to learn the formation of past tense in regular verbs than it is to learn the formation of past tense in irregular verbs. This claim is based on the notion of predictability of the past tense in regular verbs and the unpredictability of past tense in irregular verbs. Quirk *et al.* (1985: 98) have brought this point out by observing that, "Irregular verbs differ from the regular verbs, however in that the past form and the -ed participle of the irregular verbs cannot be predicted by general rule from the base." In other words, we feel that the ease in the formation of the past tense in regular verbs is based on the fact that pupils learn only one general rule of the addition of the {-ed} morpheme to the base as in :

Walk + ed → walked (past tense).

On the other hand, the formation of past tense in irregular verbs is not governed by a single rule. This is because some irregular verbs form their past tenses by undergoing individual internal morphological changes which are therefore quite erratic. Pupils have to learn the past tenses of irregular verbs on a 'one-to-

one' basis. This point is underscored by Kimani (1987: 271) who observes that "one conclusion we can draw from the rank of the functor is that irregular past tense was one of the most difficult structures to acquire.

The fact that the acquisition of the past tense in regular verbs is easier than that of irregular verbs, and their order of presentation in syllabuses, texts and by teachers, may account why pupils overgeneralize the use of the past tense morpheme of regular verbs (-ed) by applying it on irregular verbs. Pupils do this, because they have properly internalized this rule and have not as yet learnt the past forms of all the irregular verbs.

It is to be noted, however, as Richards (1974: 12) has observed, that the notion of universal hierarchy of difficulty is so far not fully incorporated "in the literature of second language acquisition". Although this situation may have changed by now, we still need to be cautious about invoking this theory as the main cause of past tense errors in this study. We have also tried to show that this theory essentially seems to strengthen that of overgeneralization in accounting for the past tense errors. We are therefore of the opinion that it may only partly explain the cause of the past tense errors. Overgeneralization still stands as their main cause in our opinion.

4.2.5 Incomplete Application of Rules.

This factor is possibly the opposite of overgeneralization, since it is a partial use of the formation rule while the later is an overuse of a realization rule. The interlanguage structures

resulting from this partial application indicate what Richards (1974 : 177) calls, '....degree of development of the rules required to produce acceptable utterances '. This observation suggests that the learner possesses only a partial knowledge of a particular rule of the target language. This may be exemplified by the learner's use of a statement as of a declarative sentence as if it is a question. The question mark is put at the end without effecting the necessary transformation in the statement itself. Richards has noted that this may be caused by the pupils repetition of full or partial questions as answers in a classroom situation as in the following example.

Teacher: Do you eat much?

Pupil: Yes, I eat much.

Teacher: Ask him where he stays

Pupil: Where you stay?

We note that this factor may not be important as the main cause of past tense errors in this study. This is because instead of partial application of the rules governing the formation of past tense in English, we noted instances of overapplication of the rules, a phenomenon which we classified as overgeneralization. In other words the pupils had full, as opposed to partial knowledge, of the formation rule of the present tense which they generally applied in cases where the past tense rule would have been applied. We may speculate that the pupils had no knowledge at all of the past tense rule which they consequently failed to apply. In the same vein, the pupils who overgeneralized

the rule for the formation of past tense in regular verbs by making it apply to the irregular verbs had full knowledge of it but no knowledge of the past forms of the irregular verbs involved. In all these cases, there was no evidence of partial application of tense rules. We therefore feel reluctant to accept this theory as an explanation of the main cause of past tense errors in this study.

4.2.6 False Concepts Hypothesized.

This is also a form of intralingual factor that springs from what Richards (1974 : 178) has described as 'faulty comprehension of distinctions in the target language'. This may occur due to the nature of gradation of the teaching or learning items. In a way of exemplification of this phenomenon, Norrish (1983:33) observes that the present continuous tense is presented through wrong contexts in English textbooks in '...series of pictures illustrating a sequence of actions, with the caption in the present continuous, although the use of the tense in this context is unnatural'. He notes that a more suitable tense for this would have been the present tense as in a radio commentary of a football match. He is therefore critical of the contrived use of target language items because pupils ultimately use the wrongly presented data as part of their hypotheses about the nature of the target language. Teaching materials should therefore present language items realistically in order for pupils not to form false concepts about them i.e using for example present continuous in place of present tense.

In this study, errors relating to false conceptualization may be exemplified by possibly the use of 'so', and 'very' as earlier discussed in terms of clause subordination by correlatives. This may have been caused by their being both adverbials. We feel that pupils would not have formed a false concept between the present and past forms especially due to their unique morphological forms.

4.2.7 Ignorance of Rule Restriction.

This factor involves the use of rules in situations where they do not apply. The learner is not aware of the restrictions that obtain in existing structures. In other words, the second language learner forms some false analogies or applies some rote-learned rules which cause errors. It is a phenomenon closely related to overgeneralization of rules, as discussed above. A graphic example of this is the analogical use of prepositions such that when target language learner encounters a given preposition used with a certain verb, he uses the same preposition with similar verbs. Some examples are;

1. (a) She said to him. _____
 (b) She asked to him.
2. (a) They argued about it _____
 (b) They discussed about it.

In these examples, the two 'bs' are wrong because 'to', and 'about' are superfluous, which causes ungrammaticality in the two sentences. This is due to false analogy.

We therefore observe that while this factor may explain some of the prepositional and determiner errors identified in our

research especially the use of articles, or even some of the past tense errors, it may not be the chief cause of the latter. As already mentioned in our preceding discussions, analogy by way of overgeneralization is possibly what mainly explains these errors. However, as this theory involves the notion of analogy as in overgeneralization we may assume that the use of the regular past tense morpheme {-ed} with irregular verbs is a case of ignorance of the rule restriction that the morpheme only applies to regular verbs. We note that this form of overgeneralization occurs in only 31 cases as compared with the other 103 instances of past tense errors. This therefore rules out this theory as the main cause of the most frequent error, i.e. past tense error.

5.2 Summary of Past Tense

Being the subject of the present study, the past tense is the introductory chapter of the book. The first chapter, 'Introduction', deals with the general background of the study, the objectives, the scope, the methodology, and the organization of the book. The second chapter, 'Past Tense', deals with the grammatical errors into

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Review of the Objectives and Hypotheses

In the introductory chapter of this report, it was explicitly stated that three objectives and three hypotheses were to steer this project on error analysis. By way of recapitulation, the three objectives are: to establish the various types of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English; assess the comparative frequency of the various types of errors; and consequently infer the cause(s) of the most frequent type of grammatical error. These objectives guided the formulation of our three hypotheses which we stated as follows: there are various types of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English; verb group errors are the most frequent in the pupils' work; and that overgeneralization is the main cause of the most frequent type of error. In the preceding chapters, our findings can very well be deduced, but we wish to summarize them in the following paragraphs as follows.

5.2 Summary of Results

Using the two analytical approaches as stated in the introductory chapter, namely, 'Let the Errors Determine the Categories', and 'Linguistic Category Taxonomy', on complementary basis, we were able to classify the grammatical errors into

various categories. These categories are: noun group errors; verb group; prepositional; adverbial; word order; clause link; complementation; and concordial groups of errors. The varied nature of these categories concurred with our hypothesis that there are various types of grammatical errors in standard eight pupils' written work in English. Consequently, we accepted the hypothesis. We also carried out a comparative study of the errors in terms of their frequency of occurrence as per our second objective. The analysis clearly brought out past tense errors within the verb group as the most frequent. We therefore accepted our hypothesis two.

Lastly, we attempted to explain the possible main cause of the most frequent error i.e past tense error as per our last objective and hypothesis. Although an explanatory exercise of the causes of errors is basically speculative and somehow unwise to attribute a type of error to a single cause, we were generally convinced after weighing various psycholinguistic causes of errors against the data of past tense errors that overgeneralization is basically the main cause of this type of errors. This, again, was in consonance with our last objective and hypothesis. We consequently accepted the hypothesis that overgeneralization is the main cause of the most frequent type of error in standard eight pupils' written work in English, other reinforcing contributory causes being economy of effort and simplicity of the base form in the hierarchy of difficulty.

The eight pupils' written work was liberally categorised linguistically in terms of their errors and constituents. The categorisation brought out the

5.3 Pedagogic Implications of the Results.

The eight grammatical categories as were determined through data analysis have some important pedagogic implications. In the same vein, the frequency rating for each of the eight categories and the cause of the most frequent error are also, in our opinion, of immense significance in the field of pedagogy in Kenya as in other countries. These findings are not only important to the classroom teacher but also to all those related in any way to the teaching of English in our primary schools and especially to the standard eight class. These other groups of people may include the Kenya Institute of Education, writers of English textbooks for use in our primary schools, teacher trainers and trainees, school inspectors and so on. Following is a discussion of these pedagogic implications within the context of our findings, for they provide linguistic and psychological basis for pedagogy.

We note that, the eight groups of errors which we identified cover almost the whole of the English clause structure. This pervasive, or extensive nature of the errors, implies the unimpressive nature of the pupils' awareness of the English language at this level. It also reveals the nature of the pupils' interlanguage as it approximates to the target language. This finding should be of great pedagogic importance as it may assist curriculum developers at the K.I.E. in preparing teaching and learning materials, such as syllabuses and textbooks for standard eight pupils. This is so because, the eight categories we identified have been clearly categorised linguistically in terms of their structural constituents. The categories point out the

areas of linguistic weaknesses of our pupils, which curriculum developers should focus on, in their attempt to specify the components or learning items to be included in the syllabus. In other words, the categories should help in determining the content of standard eight English course. For any other textbook writer, the categories would likewise help him in determining the most relevant linguistic areas to include as his content.

To the English teacher in the classroom, the various types of errors may help in reshaping his attitudes toward the errors made by his pupils. The pervasive occurrence of the errors should indicate to the teacher the seriousness of the linguistic situation among his pupils and possibly help him to redouble his effort in assisting the pupils to grow out of these interlanguage errors as much as possible. This is especially so because, as Corder (1983;11) remarked, the learners' errors should, 'tell the teacher how far towards the goal the learner has progressed and what remains for him to learn'. We may also add that the many types of errors should indicate to the teacher their inevitability in the learning process. As a result, the errors should not cause revulsion and distaste to the teacher but rather make him accept them as a necessary by-product of the learner's effort in processing the input data of the target language. Teachers should therefore encourage their pupils when they make errors and not reprimand or disapprove them. We also believe that with careful consideration of errors made by pupils, teachers may be able to change their presentation techniques such that certain errors are avoided in their pupils' linguistic performance. Teachers will

also be able to provide the most appropriate input data that would help pupils to eliminate most of the errors we have identified, i.e. the right content and exercises.

The pedagogic implication of the frequency ratings of the eight grammatical categories is that curriculum developers and the teachers will be able to determine with greater precision the amount of time to assign a given item of content. After tabulating the error frequencies, it was explicit that verb group errors and even more specifically past tense errors relating to the lexical verbs were the most frequent, followed by noun group errors, which were followed by prepositional errors and so on. Our contention is that these frequency ratings indicate the relative weakness of pupils in the use of the various structural elements. We are assuming that the more the errors the greater the difficulties in mastering the particular area where they fall. This should consequently determine the amount of time and content, i.e. weightage that each linguistic item should be apportioned in the syllabuses, textbooks, and by the teachers within the year. As an example, we feel that since past tense errors are the most frequent, enough time and content should be apportioned to the teaching of tense with respect to the lexical verbs and especially the irregular lexical verbs. The amount of time and content for the other categories should in like manner be determined. The textbooks should also provide enough content and practice for the areas with most errors. It would, for example, be naive for a textbook writer to include little amount of content on the verb group, where most errors were identified, and more on adverbials

where less number of errors were identified.

In trying to establish the main cause of the most frequent type of error, we examined various psycholinguistic theories. It was established that overgeneralization is perhaps the main cause of this type of error. We feel that this examination and finding have an important pedagogic implication for the teacher in that they may help him understand the psychology behind the errors. This way, the teacher will become aware that his pupils are indeed actively and seriously trying to master the target language. He will understand that pupils are not carelessly or intentionally making errors. This realization might help in changing the teacher's attitude towards his pupils in relation to the errors they make, and specifically, in the case of past tense errors, to pay more attention to the formation of the past tense, both regular and irregular, which learners obviously find difficult to acquire once they have acquired the base form, which is the predominant form of the present tense.

5.4 Limitations and Possible Future Research.

We wish to point out some of the things we were not able to do as well as pinpoint certain areas of possible future research. As may now be very clear to the reader, we were only able to perform a sub-categorical frequency analysis of the verb group errors. We feel that the same analysis would have been extended to the other categories had it not been for the possible enormity of the task as well as our assumption that only verb group errors merited such an analysis as this was important for our third hypothesis.

We also acknowledge the fact that we were not able to reflect miscellaneous errors in our classification. This was possibly due to the feeling that such errors would not be essentially useful to our study that aimed at concretely classifiable errors.

As was mentioned earlier, we note that error analysis from one piece of written work such as ours is bound to show only part of the reality. The topic of the composition may have favoured the use of only a particular form of language, for it was the one necessary for the topic. Other errors may have been masked because the choice of the topic somehow excluded them. We feel that the choice of our topic may have greatly favoured the use of the simple past tense, which perhaps may partly explain the preponderance of past tense errors, over for example, the present tense errors and so forth. The reader may appreciate the difficulty of choosing a topic that would favour the use of all English language forms.

We feel that a number of possible areas of future research may be cited. It was overtly clear to us that pupils have problems relating to the semantic component of the English language. We were at times pondering on whether an error was grammatical or semantic, especially in connection with modal errors. A research on the pupils' lexical semantic errors and the semantic basis for their morphosyntactic errors may be not only possible but also extremely useful in our view.

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APPENDIX

Three sample compositions follow in this order i.e the good one starts from page 126 and ends on page 127, the fair one from page 128 and ends on page 129. The poor one is on page 130.

THE DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET

It was one dull, sunny morning. I was packing my camping equipments, food and scouting shoes. After packing I waited for some time for the bus to come and pick me up. A few minutes later the bus arrived, while in the house I could hear chattering voices from my fellow scouts in the bus. Once in the bus, I sat next to my best friend Wayne. Wayne and I had gone to many holiday camps together, infact this was our ninth camp together. We talked about the many things we were going to do.

We ^{were} camping at the famous Philadelphia forest resort. We arrived at about noon. Our guide, Sally, went to the registration office to get our camping licence. After she got it, we went in and started our long journey to the top of the hill.

It was getting rather chilly and spooky. Once I had fallen down, twice I had screamed: Oh! this was really getting tough. We reached the top at about five o'clock. Sally helped us into six groups, namely A, B, C, D, E and F. The first two were tent makers, the second two ^{were} firewood collectors and the last two were guards during the night. Wayne and I were guards. Dusk fell and time went very fast. We told one another stories. Everybody went to sleep, the guards remained up, guarding different corners of the camp. I was not very used to staying late and has hard as I tried. I couldn't help falling asleep. A few minutes later I fell asleep!

I was woken up abruptly by a loud rattling sound just a few metres. I collected myself up and looked around. Oh my God! to my great surprise, one metre away, was ^a greenish, ugly looking, scary rattle snake. Staring ^{sp} menacingly at me. We stood still, each of us looking straight into the other's eye. "Wayne, Wayne," I wispered. But he couldn't hear me because he was far off. It so happened that Wayne was lonely and needed company. So was coming to have a chat with me. While he was just a few metres from

and started looking for the snake. He saw it and with one mighty throw of the stone he hit the snake on the head and it died. I was so frightened so that I couldn't talk. Wayne took me to my tent and promised me that he was going to guard for me.

The next day after drinking hot chocolate, still shaken up but could talk, I narrated the incident to the others. Sally wanted me to stay at the camp while others went for a forest test. I wanted to go so we argued for a long time until they reluctantly agreed to let me go. The main aim of the test was to retrain the path-finding badge. We taken deep into the Philadelphia forest then we spread out. Sally gave me a peck on my forehead and wished me luck. This gave me great confidence. I prayed and started looking for the path back to the camp. For several hours, I had been search for the path. I became more and more aware the I was getting lost and indeed I was lost!

The scorching noon heat penetrated through my skin making me feel hungry. I climbed on top of a mahogany and due to the heat I fell asleep. I woke up feeling very icy. The sun had set. I heard the hoot off an owl, the laugh of a hyena and hungry roar of "Shia-con" tigers, each of them waiting to test my trembling flesh.

Then as though it was a miracle I heard a twig break. And emerging through the trees was Archie and Wayne. I was as happy as a lark when I saw them. We went back to the camp and packed we were leaving. The other had already left.

I was worn out by the time I reached home. I don't know how I would have survived without my best friend Wayne. Those days will always dwell in my memory forever. I learnt a lesson that my I will live to tell my grand-children. I will never forget that day thanks to friendship.

THE DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET.

Composition

The day I will never forget is when a thief came to our house

It was on a Saturday night at around ten thirty when we were sleeping. I hardly don't know whether I slept or not after these thoughts, but I started suddenly on hearing some voices and murmur outside my bedroom door. I sat up in bed to listen, but the sound stopped.

I tried to sleep but my heart bet anxious. Just then it seemed ? that the door of my room was touched as if fingers passed over the door in feeling some people outside. I said, 'Who is there?' Nothing answered. I grew cold with fear. All at once I remembered that it must be thieves trying to break my bedroom door.

A dream was approaching, when there was a low deep evil laugh which sounded at the very keyhole of my door. The sound was repeated. My first idea was to rise and fasten the door, my next, to cry out, 'Who is there?' Something moaned. Footsteps were heard up the verandah towards my room. A door had been lately made to shut, I had it open and close. It was now impossible to remain alone in that room. I dressed myself, unfastened the door with a trembling hand and opened it.

In surprise I saw a lit candle on the floor. I crept slowly to see what was there and what was happening and what was their. I was really shocked on seeing three men wore in rags. I was really frightened that I had to go and tell my mum and dad. When I was returning back, one of the men saw me and crept slow

behind me and got hold of me. I was really frightened that I nearly collapsed and fainted, I shouted with a very weak voice, 'mummy help me' but she never heard, the thieves told me to keep quiet or else they'll kill me, the only thing was just to keep quiet.

They started talking their own language that I would not understand. I got more frightened that I thought they were planning to kill me, the only thing I was to do is to pray to God and tell my mum and dad Goodbye. Suddenly they left me and told to go and sleep. Instead of me going back to my room I went to my mother's room to tell her what was happening. When I got there my dad and mum were in deep sleep that I decided to wake my father since he is the head of the family. I shook him and at once woke up.

He woke up and was angry with me, what's the matter he said why disturb me when I am sleeping. I told him that I'm sorry for disturbing you, but there are some people in the kitchen were in rags. Without wasting any time my father took his metal and crept slowly while I was following him behind. He saw the men, and made his metal ready and whipped the man next to him and cried 'Oo I'm dead forgive me', I laughed as much as I could.

My father took them to the police station and were jailed for life. That was the day I would never forget in my life.

THE DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET.

It was on April the coming of the cold season. On that day ~~it was~~ ~~when~~ the school was closed and each and every child was ~~home~~ ^{home} my father and I ~~we~~ were coming from ^{the} reserve and ~~we~~ ~~start~~ ~~coming~~ ~~back~~ ~~now~~ ~~it~~ it was ^{ten} 10:00 am. we start seeing some police men coming to wards ~~to~~ ~~us~~. we ~~were~~ ^{were} ~~very~~ ^{scared} ~~disappointed~~ but fortunately the police went away and then me and my father. we went away and started ^{looking} ~~finding~~ for ~~the~~ bus.

but it wasn't took more time we saw a kenya bus. carrying some people. ^{ing's tensest!} ~~men~~ we get in. and the bus ~~drove~~ away from the town. after few kilometres from the town we meet some policemen on the way. one of the policemen said "can every body get out ~~from~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ bus. even the driver of the bus. then the policemen. ~~get~~ in the bus. and went away. the we start seeing some police men with spears. rungs. and other with gun men the police start beating and asking how many ruling party and all people said one. they was. a man said two he was beaten badly

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and till to be killed.

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