ANALYSIS OF ERRORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NAKURU WEST SUB-COUNTY: A CASE STUDY OF FORM ONE AND TWO STUDENTS AT RONAKA HOUSE SECONDARY SCHOOL.

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF CONTINUING AND DISTANCE EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI.

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, state that this Research Project is my original work and that it has not been presented to any institution of learning for academic credit.

Sign……………………………   Date…………………………..

KINYANJUI BENJAMIN MBATIA

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This Research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Sign …………………………………………..   Date …………………………

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my family; my dear wife Virginia Mbatia, my precious son Ethan Mbatia and lovely daughter Bethan Mbatia.

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ABSTRACT

English language occupies a pivotal position in Kenya's education system especially because it is the medium of instruction for all the subjects except Kiswahili and foreign languages. English is also the language of commerce, legal procedures and official communications in Kenya. Thus the purpose of this study was to analyse grammatical errors made by secondary school learners in English language. The objectives of the study were to identify the common grammatical errors made by students at Ronaka House School, to diagnose the frequency of the grammatical errors made and to establish the major causes of grammatical errors among form one and form two in written English language. The study was informed by Error Analysis theory as the basis for data analysis. 30 learners at Ronaka House School participated by writing Essays which were analysed. Two English teachers rated and classified the errors made while four other English trainers participated in a survey interview. The findings of the study established that most salient grammatical errors found in learners written language were subjective agreement errors, article errors, tense errors, prepositional errors and Plurality errors. The finding of the study revealed that learners at Ronaka House School make different grammatical errors in English language and most of the errors are as a result of intralingual transfer. The study further revealed that poor teaching methodology and exams based curriculum are major causes of increased grammatical errors among learners in Ronaka House Secondary School. The findings of this study will inform English teachers on the best approach in helping learners to improve on written English language. The study has also fill the gap by providing possible solution to address this problem and hence has contribute globally to the field of English training as a second language.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

EA	Error Analysis
ELL	English Language Learner
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	Foreign Language
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
L1	The learns native language
L2	The language being learned or studied
MTL	Mother Tongue Language
NL	Native language
NNS	Non-native speaker
NS	Native Speaker
TEFL	Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TL	Target Language

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

English language is mainly considered as the language of the British people is the most widely spoken language in the world. (Bock Muniz, 2007) Depending on a particular country, English is used as either the first language, second language or a foreign language. English is considered the language of scientific and technical innovation and hence a very significant medium through which global economy thrive. In Kenya, English is the official language in all formal sphere such as education, political and economics. Proficiency in the English language is not only important in the development of an average Kenya, but also a necessary skill for survival and success in the national and global economy. Similarly, in an increasingly technological and global literacy world, the need for training learners in effective writing skills cannot be overemphasized. Just a century ago, any person that had the ability to read and write was considered elite and of high class. Today, however, this skill is a dire necessity for survival.

Before 8-4-4 curriculum was introduced in 1985, English language and literature were taught and examined as two different subjects. Today English language and Literature are considered as one subject with the two broad divisions. Each division also has sub-divisions. English comprises four sub-divisions including grammar, comprehension and composition.

On the other hand literature comprises of oral literature, novel, short stories, poetry and drama. In total the two sections have nine subtopics which are examined in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (Kenyan National Examinations Council, 2003).

English plays a pivotal role in Kenya's educational system, not only as an important subject but most significantly as the medium of instruction and official communication. In the Kenyan secondary education curriculum, English as a subject plays a very significant role since it is the main language used as the medium of instruction. Students in secondary schools are taught in English in all subjects except Kiswahili and foreign languages such as French, Germany and Spanish. Students are examined in English language, and so grammar is a very fundamental means through which learners are taught. Numerous researchers have established that there has been a significant challenge in training learners writing skills for a second language. It has been established that most students make grammatical errors in writing a second language and this has been so disappointing to both the learners and the trainers. (Reid, 1998; Maniam, 2010). Tan, (2001) asserts that learning to write in a second language is a difficult task which requires a considerable amount of time and devotion to master the art. Compared to other communication skills that include reading, listening and speaking, writing has been considered the most difficult to learn especially as a second language. Writing demands that learners are well vast with lexical and grammatical skills to produce a comprehensible written text.

Goh (2007) agrees that grammar is a very important aspect of conveying information among learners and also one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach. Grammar is actually the basic foundation of learning a language effectively. Kiser (2009) defines a grammatical error as pertaining to violation of the rules of grammar of a given language. This, therefore, means that English grammatical errors are basically errors made by violating English grammar rules.

The government of Kenyan and particularly the ministry of education has made numerous efforts to improve English writing skills among students, particularly in secondary schools but minimal improvement has been achieved. A report by the Kenya National Examination Council of 2008 established that students' grammar writing, particularly in English, is far much below expectation. The report noted the most common errors were grammatical and lexical. The report further confirmed that sentences written by most students do not make sense and are unintelligible. The data available further indicated that the situation is deteriorating in each successive year (KNEC Report, 2008). With this circumstance at hand, it is necessary for English language teachers in Kenya to understand and conceptualize the types of grammatical errors that learners make in writing for the purpose improving their teaching methods in that specific area. This study, therefore, sought to establish the major causes of grammatical errors in English language, to identify the grammatical errors that students make in secondary schools for the purpose of formulating better teaching methods to help the learners overcome the challenge.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya is highly examination-oriented. There has been a high reliance on examination grade to determine academic achievement in which the learner's educational achievement is determined by whether the learner passes the national examination or not. Contrary to this, the quality of education is demonstrated not mainly through passing the examination but through cognitive abilities, literacy and progression to higher level of education.

English as a subject plays a very significant role since it is the main language used as the medium of instruction in Kenya. Students in secondary schools are taught in English in all subjects except Kiswahili and foreign languages such as French, Germany and Spanish. Students are examined in English language, and so grammar is a very fundamental means through which learners are taught. Reports from the Kenya National Examination Council have continued to indicate a gradual decline in the performance of English subject in each successive year. Among the areas most affected is the ability of students to write grammatical and concise sentences in English essays. Numerous studies have been done to examine the causes of this gradual decline of performance in the overall English subject. However, not much has been done to Analysis errors that influence the performance of English Language in Kenya. This study therefore seeks to fill this significant gap.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyse errors that influence the Performance of English Language in Nakuru West Sub-County, Kenya. A case study of form one and two students in Ronaka House Secondary School.

1.4 Research Objectives

This study's objectives were as follows.

i. To identify the common grammatical errors made by learners at Ronaka House Secondary school in English language.

ii. To diagnose the frequency of grammatical errors among form one and form two learners at Ronaka House Secondary.

iii. To establish the major sources of grammatical errors among learners English language.

1.5 Research Questions

A number of research questions were derived from the research objectives.

i. What are the prevalent errors made by the form one and two learners of Ronaka House School in their English language?

ii. What is the frequency of these common errors made by the form one and two students while in English language?

iii. What are the major sources of grammatical errors in English language among learners in Ronaka House Secondary School?

1.6 Significance of the study

In Secondary school, form one and two are the elementary levels in which a proper foundation for study is set. In this regard performance of English language is very important because all other subjects are taught in English apart from Kiswahili and foreign languages. English is the language of instruction and therefore if learners fail to understand English they will by default fail to grasp what they are taught in many other subjects. The findings of this study suggest amendments in the English teaching methods geared towards helping learners improve on English language. The findings will further be an eye-opener to secondary school management on the best approaches that would help in improving the performance of English language in their School. Based on the finding of this study the school policymakers will be able to develop secondary school language policies that will help in enhancing the performance of English language and by extension the rest of the subjects taught in the English language as a medium of transfer. This study will further add to the existing literature in the sphere of English language to serve as a reference to future studies on this sphere of interest.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study sought to analyses the factors affecting the performance of English language in among form one and form two learners at Ronaka House Secondary School in Nakuru Municipality. The researcher further sought to diagnose the frequency of the common grammatical errors in English language as well as establishing the possible remedies for the errors. The study purposively sampled 30 compositions; 15 from form one student and 15 from form two students at Ronaka house secondary school.

1.8 Limitation of the Study

The study was geographically limited to only sample data from one among many schools in Nakuru County. Further the study was limited to analyse one specific element which was grammatical errors in written English language among form one and two students at Ronaka House secondary school. Other vital areas such as spelling, lexical, punctuations among others were left out for the purpose of making the findings of the study more reliable. The study was also limited to a sample of only 30 respondent to enabling the researcher conduct a qualitative in-depth analysis.

1.9 Delimitation of the Study

This study was carried out in Nakuru town West sub-county in Rhonda ward. The study focused on one administrative division and so the findings study can be generalized to other areas with great caution. The study examined a private secondary school and hence public secondary schools were not factored. The study was further restricted to only form one and form two students assuming that this is the levels in which learners lay the foundation of studying English language. The study was further confined to English teachers as the second respondent for the study.

1.10 Conceptual framework

This study was guided by a conceptual framework in order to investigate the factors affecting the performance of the English language by form one and two students at Ronaka House Secondary School. The conceptual framework guided the researcher in identifying the common errors made by learners in written language, establish the factors

that influenced the commission of the grammatical errors and helped to diagnose the frequency of such grammatical errors. The conceptual framework was therefore helpful in identifying the specific areas of the common grammatical errors and hence pinpoint the specific weak areas that require reinforcement for the purpose of improving the essay writing skills of learners.

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┌─────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Common          │      │ Error Analysis and   │      │ General type of      │
│ Grammatical     │─────▶│ Error diagnosis      │─────▶│ errors               │
│ errors in English│      │                      │      └──────────────────────┘
│ language         │      └──────────────────────┘                 │
└─────────────────┘                                                ▼
                                                      ┌──────────────────────┐
                                                      │ Specific type of     │
                                                      │ grammatical errors   │
                                                      │ made by students     │
                                                      └──────────────────────┘
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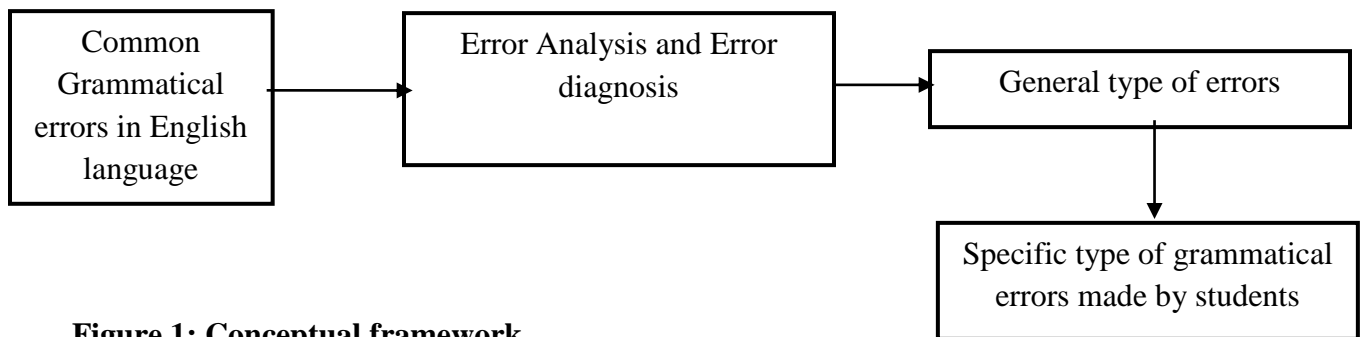
Figure 1: Conceptual framework

1.11 Definition of terms

8-4-4: This refers to a system of the Kenyan education which adopts eight years of primary education followed by four years of secondary education and ends with another four years of university education.

English as a Second language: English language taught to students in Kenyan secondary school as second language for the student, the first language being the mother tang of the student.

Error analysis: Herein refers to the study and analysis of errors made by English learners in the process of second language acquisition.

Grammar: In this study grammar is defined as the whole system structure of English language consisting of morphology, syntax, phonology and semantics.

Language: In this study language refers to the grammar aspect of English as a subject taught in secondary schools in Kenya.

Learners: Herein the term learner refers to students enrolled to pursue secondary education having successfully completed the eight years of primary education as the basic qualification.

Performance: In this study, performance refers to the score obtained by learners particularly in English subject at secondary level.

Teaching Methods: Herein refers to the activities taken by an English teacher in the process of instilling the knowledge to learners.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explores literature related to this study and discuss the theoretical framework. It begins with a review of relevant literature connected to errors in English essays and finally looks at the theory underpinning the study.

2.1 Common Grammatical Errors

In order to fully understand grammatical error, the researcher considered it paramount to first identify what an error is and distinguish it from other mistakes in English writing. Njoku and Izuagba (2001) define error as a major deviation from the normal written standard of a particular language which leads to significant loss of meaning for the intended communication. The term error can also be defined as a noticeable nonconformity of grammar in a particular language based on the standards of the adult native speakers of that language. (Corder, 1997). A mistake on the other hand refers to errors made as a result of the learners' incompetence in utilizing some set rules and standards appropriately. A mistake therefore is considered to be a performance error that can either be a slip or sometimes learners' guess in using a set of language rules correctly (Brown, 2007). In simple terms, learners are well informed with the set of rules but the simply break them when writing.

Boomer & Laver (1968) considered the difference between errors and mistakes. They considered mistakes as unsystematic and errors as systematic. An example in mistake is when we consider a speech error as a "slip of tongue" and a mistake in writing as "a slip of pen". Systematic mistakes now referred as errors occurs as a result of the process of second language acquisition. According to Littlewood (1992) grammatical errors affect L2 speakers and hardly has effect on native speakers of a particular language. This simply means that grammatical errors are mainly as a result of interference of the primary or first language in the process of learning a second language. This typically means that errors mainly affect non-native speakers of a particular language (Brown, 1994).

Richards (1974) classified errors made in the process of learning a second language in to three distinct categories. These include interlingual errors, intralingual errors and development errors.

Interlingual error is a type of error that takes place as a result of interaction between the learner's native language and the second language they are trying to acquire. This in most cases is referred as direct translation which means that the learner translates sentences directly from his or her on mother tongue to foreign language they are trying to acquire. Interlingual therefore refers to an automatic mental grammar that second language learners develop at a specific stage in the process of acquiring L2.

Intralingual on the other hand is a grammatical error that occurs within the second language the learner is trying to acquire and it is not influenced in any way by the native language of the learner. (Bolitho & Tomlinson, 2007). Intralingual errors are made mainly as a result of breaking certain rules of on the second language. Examples of intralingual errors result from insufficient rules application, generalization and failure to learn circumstances in which language conditions are applied. For example a Swahili native speaker learning English as a second language would say "Me I am not happy with you" Instead of "I am not happy with you". It is obvious here that the English learner is making generalization by creating a deviant structure based a different structure in L2.

Developmental errors mainly reflects the learner's competence in the process of second language acquisition. In other words developmental errors are not influenced directly or indirectly by the native language of the speaker. (Richards, 1974). Development errors are actually similar to those errors made by children in the process of learning first language. Example of such errors made by children would be; "I not happy with daddy' (Negation) or " He teached us in form one." (Interrogative).

2.2 Frequency of Grammatical Errors

According to Hamad (2016) there are four significant stages when approaching Error Analysis. These stages include; Sample collection of learners' errors, Identification and categorization of the errors, description of the errors and explanation of the errors.

In the first level of sample collection there are two main factors that the research must consider. First is the language and second the learner. In language the researcher considers the medium through which samples are drawn. This could be either oral or written material. Secondly the researcher must consider the genre from which the sample of the data is draw which may include but not limited to a classroom lecture, a letter, an essay and extra. The research will also consider the content which is determined by the topic the learner is communicating about. The second factor to consider when collecting sample of the learner language is the learner. As far as the learner is concerned the researcher looks at the level of education which could be elementary, intermediate or advance level such as undergraduate and post-graduate levels. Secondly the mother tongue or first language of the learner is considered and lastly the language learning experience which may be formal or informal or both. (Classroom or naturalistic or a mixture of the two).

The second level is error identification. At this level the focus is in distinguishing between and error and a mistake. This is determined by looking at the consistency of the L2 leaner's progress. For example if it is observed that the learner sometimes uses the correct form of grammar and rule but fewer times they use the wrong form then it can be concluded that the learner is making mistakes. However if it is determined that the learner always makes mistakes then is become apparent that it is an error. The second approach in this category is based on the L2 learner to correct his or her deviate utterance. In case the learner is unable to make corrections then the deviations are an error but if he/she is able to correct the errors the deviations are viewed as mere mistakes.

Corder (1981) provided a useful model to help in identifying errors in utterances. According to his model, each sentence a learner constructs is to be considered as an idiosyncratic until proved otherwise. In that reference he distinguishes the two as overt and covert errors. Where wrong structured sentence is constructed as a result of TL (Target Language) then it is regarded as overtly idiosyncratic however when a sentence is properly constructed but does not mean that the learner intends to mean is regarded as 'covertly Idiosyncratic.' A cording to Corder (ibid) the interpretation of learners' utterances is likely to show a significance difference between what the learner wants to say and what the learner has said. This model show that direct translation can be an indicator of FL learners' errors which is likely attributed to interference from their own mother tongue. Al-Tamimi (2006) that an error is any deviance from what an original speaker of the language would produce.

The third level in the Error Analysis approach is the description of the error. This level heavily depends on the former level of identification since description of error cannot be made before identification is done. According to Hamad (2016) error descriptions as useful in three specific ways. One is to substantiate an individual's instinct, second is to act a prerequisite for counting the errors and thirdly it is useful in the process of creating a comprehensive structure of LE errors. Coder (1973) classified errors into four categories including omission, selection addition and misodering of elements. Omission takes place when learners omit a required item when constructing sentences. For example there is book on table. In the above sentence the article 'a' and the article 'the' has been omitted on the sentence and hence makes the sentence inaccurate. The accurate form of

the sentence should be 'there is a book on the table.' Addition on the other hand takes place when the learner adds unnecessary elements on the sentence structure. For example "My brother brought three an apple for us". The article 'an' has been added making it redundant in this sentence. The correct for of the sentence should be 'My brother bought three Apples for us'. Miss-ordering on the other hand takes place when learners misplace grammatical element by putting them on the wrong place.

The fourth approach in EA is the explanation of the error. This level is considered the most important in error analysis approach. Senal (2007) argues that in order to reach some effective corrective measures at this level, researcher must be fully aware of the mechanism that cause each error type. Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) argues that in explaining errors we must determine their causes and the reasons they were made. Ellis (1994) agrees by stating that explaining errors is basically an attempt to establish the processes responsible for L2 acquisition. According to Ellis these errors can be classified as errors of performance and errors of competence. Errors of performance are caused by misinterpreting and applying rules of the target language while errors of performance are achieved as a result continuous mistakes in language use. In general errors as a result of L2 are credited various sources of language factors that may affect the process of English language learning. These linguistic factors are referred to as interlingual and intralingual interference. Intralingual and Interlingual interference are the major interferences that negatively affect acquisition of FL/L2. (Richards, 1974; James, 1996; Brown, 2000; Abi Samra, 2003).

2.3 Sources of Grammatical Errors

Different scholars have come up with numerous ways to explain the sources of errors in the English written language. One of the widely accepted explanation is the view of Brown (2000) who suggest that errors in written language are of two types which include interlingual and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are errors that made as a result of interference from the native or mother tongue of the learner in the process of learning a second language. Interlingual errors can be viewed as either positive or negative. The interference is considered positive when the structure of L1 and L2 are similar. This is because it takes less effort for the learner of the second language to relate a grammar aspect directly from his or her native language. When the structure of the first and second language are different then the transfer is considered negative and hence said to interfere. (Wilkin, 1972).

Karim and Nassaji (2013) in their comprehensive study of errors made in the process of learning a second language established that second language learners used their first language skills in writing L2. In simpler terms they compensate deficiencies in their L2 by adopting L1 applicable formats. Kibata (1998) in his study established that Japanese English students applied same patterns from L1 to L2 especially when transferring rhetorical and organization patterns.

Intralingual errors on the other hand are as a result of fault or partial learning of the second language. As the name suggests, the errors are made within the sphere of L2. (Keshavarz, 2003). Richards (1972) identified four types of intralingual errors and

further cited six sources of the error. He considered ignorance of rules restrictions, false concepts hypothesized, incomplete application of rules and overgeneralization as the four types of intralingual errors.

In a study that sort to establish the sources of errors in second language acquisition, Sarfraz (2011) examined essays written by 50 undergraduate students and found out that majority of errors made were as a result of mother tongue interference and inter-language process. In a similar study that focused to establish the source of errors in L2 among Malay students, Darus and Subramaniam (2009) examined 72 essays written by students. They were able to identify six types of errors including viz; in singular and plural form, agreement and word order, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, word choice and preposition.

Significant to this study also, is a research conducted by Bataineh (2005) focused on identifying the types of errors made by Jordanian English students. Bataineh was able to identify nine grammatical errors made by students and classified them as follows: Writing a as part of the noun or adjective, omission of the indefinite article, substitution of the definite for the indefinite article, substitution of the indefinite article for definite article, use of the indefinite article with unmarked plurals, use of indefinite article with uncountable nouns, substitution of a for an, and use of indefinite article with adjectives.

Owu-Ewie and Lomotey (2016) conducted a similar study at Akan Junior Hish School in Ghana to establish the influence of first language in the process of acquiring the second language. The duo conducted a content analysis in which they examined 90 essays written by the high school students. The study further confirmed that indeed L1 strongly interferes with the acquisition of L2. Among the prevalent errors they established were, first language induced spellings, transliteration, wrong word choice, omission and wrong pronoun uses. The researchers established that transliteration and omission errors were the most frequent errors committed.

Darus and Khor (2009) in their study of errors committed in the process of learning L2, studied form one Chinese students in a Malaysian secondary school. The findings of their study established four type of errors commonly made by the L2 students. These errors were subject-verb agreement, preposition, mechanics and tenses. The researchers established that the Chinese students were greatly affected by L1 in the process of acquiring L2.

Watcharapunyawong (2013) conducted a similar study to investigate writing errors caused by interference of the L1 in EFL students. The researcher investigated three genres which were narration, description and comparison. The study concluded that the common errors made by EFL students include sentence structure, comparison structure and word choice.

In any learning process and particularly in learning a new language, error are crucial and inevitable obstacles to deal with. Researchers have in many years been keen and interested to find out the causes of some specific errors in language learning and development. Richard (1974) studies and distinguishes the main sources of errors as interlingual, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies.

When one begins to learn a new language he/she is never acquitted with the structural system of the target language, and so they heavily rely original language for basic structure (Brown 2000). In other words, learners will apply structural rules of their native language in the target language. The second source of errors is the intralingual transfer. Interlingual transfer comes after the interlingual transfer since this interference will depend on the target language and therefore appear shortly after the learner begins to acquire some basic rules and structure of the new language. Context, on the other hand, refers to the physical, social and cognitive environment in which a learner learns a new language. Context errors are mainly as a result assumptions made by the learner in reference to the target language. These errors are often due to misrepresentation form either the teacher, fellow learners and also the material the learner uses to learn the new language. The fourth source of errors is referred to as a communication strategy. This error manifests when the learner develops his/her own structure to enable him/her overcome shortages of vocabularies when conversing in the target language. According to Brown (2000) this strategy include approximation in which the learner will tend to use the most proximal word, coinage in which the learner will try to combine some words or

sentence structure in order compensate for vocabulary deficiency.   Other strategies include cognates and prefabricated patterns.

Interlingual transfer

As observed above Interlingual errors are those errors that are caused as a result of the Native language (NT) or Mother tongue. Interlingual error occurs as a result of language transfer is can be caused by learners MT. These errors are also referred as transfer errors or interference errors, language-specific errors and interlanguage errors (Catalán 1997). Language transfer interference can be viewed as either positive or negative. Positive interference takes place when in the process of the learner acquiring target language applies rules of the native language and somehow it fits correctly. It is important to state categorically; therefore, that interlingual transfer interference is as a result of a negative transfer of structural rules from L1 (Al-khresheh, 2010). The negative transfer here are basically rule and structure in L1 that when applied to TL leads to gross errors. A number of studies have shown that most errors committed by learners of a second language are as a result of their L1 (Al-khresheh, 2010, 2011; Mahmoud, 2005; Lim, 2003; Noor, 1996; Richards, 1974; Kharma and Hajjaj, 1989)This clearly points out the significance that first language plays in acquisition of a second language.   Using L1 in the process of learning L2 is unavoidable irrespective of whether the interference is positive or negative. Learners use L1 as a basic tool when pursuing L2 (Al-Nofaie, 2010). Zobl (1980) highlights six basic characteristics that distinguished interlingual errors from other types of errors. First, he note that the interlingual interference results to errors which are not comparable with developmental errors. Second is that learners of L2 depend heavily on

L1 due to insufficiency of vocabularies they have acquired in L2. Thirdly learners used

L1 hypothesis to attain proficiency in L2. Fourth is that learners lack the capacity to

separate L1 from L2. L1 is their main point of reference to handle challenges posed by

L2. Fifthly, learners' errors are due to L1 habits, and finally, learners of L2 employ

interlingual generalisation. The three main characteristics that influence interlingual

errors include overgeneralization, ignorance of rules restrictions, and incomplete

application of rules.

Overgeneralization refers to a situation or circumstance in which learners of a second

language apply a specific rule in the language learning process in several circumstances

when there are indeed different rules that can be applied. Richards (1974) defines

overgeneralization as "the use of previously available strategies in a new situation". It is

considered as one of the main reasons that lead to interlingual errors. F2 learners are fond

of using this strategy to cover for their language deficiency. O'grady (2005) notes that

overgeneralization not only affects L2 learners but is also common in L1 acquisition. In a

nutshell, overgeneralization takes place when learners of either L1 or L2 widens the

scope of the rule erroneously leading to a linguistic structure conflict Al-khresheh (2013).

It involves using a specific rule in context that are unsuitable. L2 learners often consider

overgeneralization as an effective learning strategy forgetting while ignoring the context

for the application.

The second reason for interlingual errors is ignorance of rule restriction. This aspect is

closely similar to overgeneralization. Ignorance of rule restriction takes place when the

learner of a second language fail to uphold the limits of a specific rule in sentence construction. This leads the learner to apply the rules in inappropriate circumstances.

The third cause of the interlingual error is the incomplete Application of Rules. This takes place when L2 learners are unable to conceptualize deep grammatical structures and so they overly on simple grammatical rules application. Learners find it easy to communicate using simple grammatical structures and so the evade difficult structures.

In an ordinary sense, errors are often viewed to be negative. When we talk of errors we think of mistakes, and so the term bears a negative connotation. It is however critical to note that errors play a crucial and significant role in the development of a second language. According to Corder (1968) errors in language acquisition are significant in three specific ways. First error commitment is a crucial means through which the teacher is able to assess the level at which the learners have grasped the language lesson. The extent to which learners make errors signals the teacher the far he/she has advanced towards the achievement of the learning objectives. The errors inform the tutor areas in which he/she needs to put more emphasis and also points out to the particular learners the teacher needs to pay more attention to. Secondly errors are indispensable to the learners of a language since errors acts as a stepping stone on which the learners step in the process of acquiring a new language. Empirical studies have been carried out to demonstrate that indeed, errors are not only effective but significant means through which learners enhance their grammatical accuracy. (White et al, 1991; Carroll and Swain, 1993). Carter (1997) clearly notes that in order to understand the concepts of

grammar we cannot leave out the errors made to understand how grammar is misused. Learners must be able to recognize errors that are present in their verbal and written communication to fully understand the nature and causes of errors they make. Last but not least, errors are the only means through which researchers can establish the means through which language is learnt or acquired. Errors enables scholars to determine the tactics which learners employ in the process of language acquisition. With this understanding, this present study is focused on identifying and categorizing errors that learners make when writing English essays in order to acquaint English trainers of the problems that learn face in the process of trying to acquire a new language.

James (1988) suggest three main types of errors that affect learners of a second language when writing essays. These errors include tenses, weak vocabulary and preposition. Grammatical errors in written composition can also be classified into four categories which include omission, disordering, additions and misinformation (Coder, 1973). This classification is based on the difference of the reconstructed version of L2 and that of the learner's utterance.

According to Coder (1973) Omission is the absence of certain English components in an ordinary sentence structure. Disordering, as the term suggests, refers to the misplacement of a morpheme or a group of morphemes in a sentence structure of the English language. Addition refers to the act of introducing a new item in a sentence structure that should not appear in ordinary circumstances. Finally, Coder (1973) defines misinformation as use of the wrong morpheme in a sentence structure in the English language.

In a different study Darus (2009) considered the following as major areas in which English students make errors. These areas were verb tense, word choices, singular and plural form, subject-verb agreement and preposition.

Grammatical errors in essay writing can further be categorised into five key areas. These areas include punctuation, morphology, semantics, spelling and syntax. (Juozolynas, 1991). Punctuations refer to special marks that are used in English written language for the purpose of separating certain elements of sentence structure in order to clarify meaning. The most common punctuation errors in writing among students in the addition or omission of the comma. Morphology, on the other hand, is an error that occurs as a result of word structure inflected in a sentence structure. Semantics error occurs as a result of errors of meaning in words resulting from the wrong choice of words in English written language. Last but not least, spelling errors is the omission or addition of specific letters in words which mostly differ from their pronunciations and are intricate.

2.4 Error Analysis Theory

This study was guided by the Error Analysis Theory. "To err is human." This is a famous cliché that actually suggests that making an error is a fundamental stage in every learning process. In order for a human being to acquire any skill and in any particular field, they make errors in particular stages of learning as they endeavour to perfect the skill.

Error Analysis theory is a linguistic theory which compares the errors made in the target language and the target language itself. It emphasizes the importance of learners' errors in the process of acquiring a second language.

Latiff & Bakar (2007) suggested four main approaches in the study of errors. These approaches include Error Aalysis (EA), Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), Interlanguage Analysis (IA) and the Contrastive Rhetoric (CR). This study will mainly focus on Error analysis.

Error analysis is a method commonly used to analyse errors that learners make in the course of their study irrespective of the sources. Coder (1975) asserts that EA is mainly reserved for the study of erroneous utterances made by learners of a particular language. Two main categories of EA are theoretical and applied errors. (Keshavars (1997). Theoretical EA is mainly focused on the process of acquisition of L2 and similarities with L1 acquisition

Corder (1967) is considered the main proponent of EA theory. He holds the view that error are "Important and in and themselves." Coder (1981) suggested a number of ways in which errors are significant. To the learners of a second language, coder suggested that errors are indispensable. The teacher of the second language also benefits in the sense that EA tells him or her the extent to which the learner has progressed and consequently, what is left of the learner to attain the goal. Finally, EA helps the researcher have evidence of the system of language a learner is using in the process of acquiring a second language. Error Analysis has the potential of discovering new aspects of a language and can be used as a method to verify assumptions derived as a result of the frame-work of a linguistic theory (Noth, 1977).

Error analysis theory was considered the best alternative to contrastive analysis because it was able to suggest sources of second language acquisition error that contrastive was unable. Proponents of error analysis argued that Contrastive Analysis ignored factors that are likely to affect second language learner's performance such as training, communication strategies and so on. It mainly focused on the differences between L1 and L2.

The two main types of errors in EA are 'Breach of the code' and 'Errors in the use of code'. (Coder,1967). Breach of code constitutes the wrong application of grammar rules resulting in grammatical errors while errors in the use of code result from the learner using TL in inappropriate context even though the construction may be grammatically correct.

According to Corder (1974) three main stages in Error Analysis include recognition, description and explanation. Recognition is the first stage and considered the most important. Coder suggests that recognition solely depends on the correct interpretation of the learner's purposed meaning in the context. Failing to recognise the intention of learners may lead to considering appropriate utterances as erroneous. For the researcher to know exactly what the learner intended to say, they may ask them in their L1 to explain what they intended to say. This was the researcher can arrive to the authoritative reconstruction of the learner's utterance.

Description of errors involves making a comparison of the errors made by the learner and his or her native forms of the language. Description of errors will be embedded on categorisations which include grammatical errors such as wrong plural formation, omission, use of wrong verb form, wrong transformation e.t.c

Lastly explanation of errors is concerned with answering the question of where such errors come about. Observation explains where the learner has broken, misused, disregarded or ignored the rules of L2. Many results have suggested that most of these errors bear a strong correlation to the L1 since most of them are considered as a word-for-word translation of L1 to L2.

The main assumption of Error Analysis it that the first language acquisition is the same to second language because learning is considered a creative process. The learner of a second language possesses the innate grammar borrowed from the first language that enables him or her to learn the second language. In this case, errors play a positive role learning of the second language.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the procedures which were followed in conducting this study. It focuses on the research design, population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Mugenda (2008) a descriptive survey design is handy when the researcher seeks to analyse, determine and report on matters naturally. The design is useful when attempting to present data such as attitudes, feasible behaviour, characteristics and Ideals. In addition to the descriptive design method, the researcher applied a content analysis method of inquiry which is a 'multi-method in focus' (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). This method has been credited for allowing a divergent and deeper data gathering procedures which lead to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied through the 'perspectives of those involved' (Glesne, 2006). The primary objective of this study was to analyse grammatical errors made by secondary school students in English language.

3.2 Target Population

Ngechu (2004) defines target population as the particular populace from which data required for analysis is obtained. The population for this study were 30 learners from

Ronaka House secondary school in Nakuru country and four English trainers in the same school. The 30 students were selected from form one and form two classes, respectively. 15 students were drowned from form one and 15 students from form two. The sample for this study was drawn from form one and two respectively because at this level of study, the students are still at the elementary level in learning English essay writing and therefore by analyzing the grammatical errors they make, their teachers will get to know areas in which they need to pay more attention while teaching them.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample size for this study was 30 students from form one and from two classes at Ronaka House secondary school and four trainers. The researcher considered convenience sampling technique as the most appropriate sample procedure to sample the school for the study. Having done his teaching practice at Ronaka House School, the researcher considered the school most appropriate for his study.

The researcher used purposive sampling technique for the purpose of identifying students as respondents for the study. The students were grouped into three categories, determined by the level of the challenges they face in essay writing. The three categories were below average, average and above average in essay writing skills. The classification was based on a previous exam testing on essay writing. There were 52 students in form one and 54 students in form two at Ronaka house school making a total of 106 students at the two classes. For suitable descriptive research, the sample for study should be at least 10% of the entire population (Mugenda (2003).

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3.4 Data Collection tools and instruments

This study employs both qualitative and quantitative approach (mixed approach) for the purpose of providing a more comprehensive view of the phenomenon being studied. It is, however, important to note that only a small fraction of the study (about ¼) was quantitative in nature. The quantitative aspect of the research was focused on attaining the second objective of the study which was to diagnose the frequency of the grammatical errors made by students in Ronaka House School. Three specific tools were used by the researcher in the pursuit to answer research questions. These tools were sample data, a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview.

Sample: The sample size for this study was 30 essays written by the form one and form two learners at Ronaka House Secondary School. 15 essays were randomly drawn from each class respectively. The aim of collecting these samples was to analyse the common grammatical errors committed by learners in Ronaka House Secondary School.

Questionnaire: Secondly the researcher further developed a questionnaire which was focused to diagnosing the causes of grammatical errors among the learners. The questionnaire was tailored to explore learners' views towards English writing skills. The questionnaire was issued to the students whose essays were analysed.

Semi-structured Interview: Lastly, the researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with English trainers at Ronaka House Secondary School. The semi-structured interview was focused to establish the likely causes of poor grammatical errors among learners at

the school. The interview further focused on finding out the possible remedies that can be put in place to ensure grammatical errors in learners are minimized.

Learners were asked to write an essay on the topic; "How I spent my Easter Holiday". The aim was to find out the grammatical errors in the written essay. The research assigned the students 40 minutes since this is the standard time for short essay writing at their level. The researcher then collected all the essays written and assigned two trained raters to identify and categorize the grammatical errors that were made by the learners.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedures

This study sort to analyse errors that influence the Performance of English Language in Nakuru West Sub-County. The errors were sort in essays written by the form one and two students at Ronaka House Secondary School. The data collected was tabulated using a method of descriptive statistics. The researcher asked two raters who were English teachers to help him in the process of identifying and classifying the common types of grammatical errors in the students' essay. The errors were counted based on the frequency they appeared in all the samples collected. The errors were then classified into five categories which were subjective agreement errors, article errors, tense errors, prepositional errors and Plurality errors. The data was then organised in tables to show the percentage of the type of grammatical error made by the learners.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

The overall purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting the performance

of English among form 1 and form 2 students at Ronaka House secondary school and

find out the possible causes for the errors. The researcher targeted 30 learners who were

randomly selected from form one and form two at Ronaka House secondary school in

Nakuru County. This chapter presents the findings that were derived from the data

collected. The chapter is organised in five main sections. The first section is the

introduction and organization of the chapter, the second section contains data on the first

research question. The third section in this chapter discusses data focusing on the second

research question, and the forth and firth sections will based on the third and the fourth

research questions respectively.

4.1 Error Identity and Category

The first objective of this study was to identify the common grammatical errors made by

students at Ronaka House School while writing English essays. The researcher assigned

two English teachers who are experts in grammar the role to identify and categorize

various errors in the written essays. The raters received a brief training from the

researcher based on an expert validated guide for analysing errors. The research raters

categorized the errors into five clusters including; subjective agreement errors, article

errors, tense errors, prepositional errors and Plurality errors (Singular versus plural). The

study exclusively focused on grammatical errors leaving out all other types of errors such

as organisation, expression of thoughts and cohesion. It is important to note that some errors made by the learners cut across two or more categories. A total of 261 errors were analysed.

4.1.1 Subject agreement errors

Subject agreement errors were analysed by looking at the correspondence of a verb in relation to the first, second and third person both in singular and plural. Analysis was based on two main principles including the principles of subjective-verb agreement as proposed by Sorenson (2010) and the principle of pronoun agreement as outlined by Bock & Miller (1991). Subject-verb principles mainly applies to finite verbs in the present tense while noun-pronoun agreement focuses on the correspondence pronoun in first, second and third person both singular and plural and gender aspects including the masculine and feminine. (Sorenson, 2010). Basing findings on the two principles above, the researcher established that both the form one and form two students at Ronaka House Secondary School violated both the subject-verb agreement and the noun-pronoun agreement principles. Table 1 below shows examples of the subject agreement errors committed by learners.

Table 1: Subject-verb agreement errors

Sn	Error	Correct form
1	We *take s*ome food when we arrived	We **took** some food when we arrived
2	my uncle and aunt **was**	my uncle and aunt **were**
3	My uncle and aunt **was** sitting in the sitting room	My uncle and aunt **were** sitting in the sitting room
4	We went with my mother and **he** bought me the bicycle.	We went with my mother and **she** bought me the bicycle
5	**There** house was locked when we arrived	**Their** house was locked when we arrived

Based on the findings above the researcher established that students in Ronaka House School have severe problems with subject-verb-agreement since they were not able to distinguish verbs such as 'are', 'is', 'was', and 'were, their, there'. The researcher further established the candidates were unable to differentiate between singular and plural nouns. These findings indicate a significance influence of the first language (L1) *Kiswali* which does not change based on the subject and so the students are unable to write proper subject-verb-agreement form.

4.1.2 Articles errors

The researcher considered four fundamental rules in the English language in order to identify and categorize article errors. In analyzing this element of study, the researcher considered that one, all proper nouns in the English language do not take up an article. Plural and common nouns can be used with or without an article at the beginning. The researcher further considered that every singular common noun in English language must take an article and lastly the definite article 'the' can be used with superlative adjectives. For the purpose of categorizing the errors made in regard to the use of articles, the

researcher categorised article errors into three clusters borrowing a model by Samatle (2001). The category were those errors with missing artless, errors of wrong use of article and redundant article errors. Table 2 below shows some article errors derived from data collected from the essays written by form one and form two students at Ronaka House Secondary School.

Table 2: Articles errors

Sn	Error	Error Type	Correct form
1)	River was highly polluted by the waste from the factory	Missing article	*The* river was highly polluted by the waste from the factory
2)	We saw elephant crossing the road	Missing article	We saw *an* **elephant** crossing the road
3)	There was **a** umbrella on the drawer	Wrong use of article	There was **an** umbrella on the drawer
4)	Uncle bought us *an* pen and *an* pencil each	Wrong use of article	Uncle bought us *a* pen and *a* pencil each
5)	My brother bough three *an* apples for each of us	Redundant article	My brother bough three apples for each of us
6)	*The* river Tana is located in Eastern Province	Redundant article	River Tana is located in Eastern Province

4.1.3 Tense Errors

Unlike many languages in English tenses form an integral part of grammar to determine the time in which an action verb is takes place. Tenses in in English can be past, present, future and continuous. Errors of tenses will mainly occur when the learner uses the wrong verb in a sentence. A Plurality of studies have established that these errors are very common among second language learners of English mainly because in other languages the verbs do not necessarily indicate time aspect. English language dictates consistency in regard to when the action took place and the type of verb used in that particular regard.

Table 3: Tense Errors

Sn.	Error	Correct form
1)	He come home late that night	He came home that night
2)	She cook for us the food and we ate.	She cooked food for us and we ate
3)	We ren to the field play some games	We ran to the field to play some games
4)	She felled down as she was running on the veranda	She fell down as she was running on the veranda
5)	Our team beated thier team two nil	Our team beat their team two nil

The researcher established that student in Ronaka House Secondary School violated this fundamental tense rule with the following as some examples drawn from the data collected.

Similar to what Sonmez and Griffiths (2015) established in a previous study, the above findings indicates that tense errors are among the most frequent among learners of L2. Tense errors were so common because in the first language of learners the verb does not indicate time. Learners are therefore confuse and in most cases omit the tense to indicate the verb. In Kiswahili for example, the same verb is used for past present, future and continuous tense and does not change with regard to the time the action took place.

4.1.4 Preposition errors

Preposition is a word that is used to link noun or pronoun with other words in a sentence. In other words a proposition is used to show a relationship between nouns and pronouns with other parts of the sentence. Prepositions tells the reader when and where something took place as well as the manner in which it happened. In this study the research analysed propositions errors in two broad categories which include the missing preposition and the redundant use of preposition. Below are excerpts from the data collected indicating the prepositional errors made by the leaners.

Table 4: Preposition errors

Sn	Error	Error category	Correct form
1.	Our team was overconfident **of win** the game but we lost it	Wrong preposition	Our team was overconfident **of winning** the game but we lost it
2.	Uncle assured us that the car will arrive **within five** minutes	Wrong preposition	Uncle assured us that the car will arrive **in five** minutes
3.	We were advised to move **of** fence to avoid electrocution	Wrong preposition	We were advised to move **away from** fence to avoid electrocution
4.	The tour guide warned us not to violate **against** the stipulated rules in the game reserve	Redundant preposition	The tour guide warned us not to violate the stipulated rules in the game reserve
5.	My uncle was required to sign **on** the contract before payment	Redundant preposition	My uncle was required sign on the contract before payment
6.	The trip benefitted **to** me very much	Redundant preposition	The trip benefitted me very much

The researcher established that the main cause of prepositional errors is as a result of the influence of L1. 'at' 'of' 'on' and 'by' were the main preposition that the students confused. It was evident that the learners could not tell which preposition to use where and in what manner.

4.1.5 Errors of Plurality

Singular and plural errors are determined by Plurality of items in a language. English like almost all the languages of the world has a means to distinguish between singular and plural items. Most nouns can be made plural in the English language but there are a few exception in which some rules apply. The role of a noun in the English language is to identify a person, place, thing or idea. A singular noun therefore identifies one person, thing, place or idea. A plural noun on the other hand identifies more than one person,

place, thing and idea. Most singular nouns need a's' to become plural noun. Singular

nouns ending with *s, ss, sh, ch, x* or z will all require an *es* at the end to become plural. It

is important to further note that some singular nouns ending with *s* or *z* will require that

you double the *s* or *z* before adding *es*. Nouns that end in a consonant followed by a *y*

change into plural for by changing the y to *i* and then adding *es*. For example *city*

becomes *cities*. Last but not least some nouns in English language will retain the same

form in both singular and plural form. For example the word *deer* will remain the same

both in singular and plural language. The researcher noted with great concern that

students in Ronaka House Secondary School violated this rule. They used plurals where it

was not necessary and sometimes failed to use plural where it was paramount. The

following are a few examples that were obtained from the data collected.

Table 5: Errors of Plurality

Sn	Error	Correct form
1.	My uncle had twenty **sheeps** and fifteen goats	My uncle had twenty **sheep** and fifteen goats
2.	My aunt brought two **knifes** to peel potatoes	My aunt brought two **knives** to peel potatoes
3.	All **babys** remained in the vehicle with aunt	All **babies** remained in the vehicle with aunt
4.	The tour guide mentioned that the hills were formed as a result of multiple **volcanos** thousands of years ago.	The tour guide mentioned that hills were formed as a result of multiple **volcanoes** thousands of years ago.
5.	My sisters was asked to wash all the **dishs**	My sisters was asked to wash all the **dishes**
6.	We were asked to name the capital **citys** of East African countries	We were asked to name the capital **cities** of East African countries

4.2 Frequency of the Grammatical Errors

The second objective of this study was to diagnose the frequency of the grammatical errors made by students in Ronaka House School. The researcher analysed 30 essays which were a sample of the essays wrote by the form one and form two students at Ronaka House School. From the 30 essays analysed the researcher detected a total of 261 errors. The 261 errors were limited to five categories including subjective-verb agreement errors, article errors, tense errors (Past, present, future, present participle e.t.c), prepositional errors and Plurality errors (Singular versus plural). These errors were tabulated based on frequency and percentage as seen in table six below.

Table 6: Frequency of grammatical Errors

No.	Grammatical Errors	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Subjective/Verb Agreement	85	33%
2.	Article Errors	36	14%
3.	Tense Errors	63	24%
4.	Prepositional Errors	42	16%
5.	Plurality errors	35	13%
	TOTAL	261	100%

As seen in the above table, subject-verb agreement constituted the majority of the errors committed by learners in Ronaka House School. Out of the total 261 errors detected, subject verb-agreement garnered 85 errors which was equivalent to 33% of the total errors committed. Errors in tenses followed closely with a total of 63 errors detected in the 30 essays wrote by the learners, constituting to 24% of the total errors made. Preposition errors came with a total of 42 errors equivalent to 16% of all errors made.

Plurality errors garnered 35 of the errors equaling to 13% and article errors 36 equivalent to 14% of the total errors made. The findings above clearly revealed that subject verb-agreement errors were the most errors committed by learners and Ronaka House Secondary School while article errors are the least committed. Based on these findings it is clear that subject-verb agreement is a great challenge to L2 English learners in agreement with the work of Chele (2015) especially with verbs in reference to the 3rd person. The findings further agrees with earlier studies by Sonmez and Griffiths (2015) which revealed that tense errors are among the most frequently committed among learners of a second language especially English. Further categorization for the errors was made on errors at Sentential Level and Errors at Word Level with the following types of errors noted amongst the students.

Table 7: Types and frequency of the errors found in the English sentences

Type of Errors	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Errors at the Sentential Level			
Tense	11	4.2%	8
Subject-verb agreement	38	14.5%	3
Fragment	31	11.8%	4
Capitalization	16	6.1%	6
Punctuation	44	16.8%	1
Word order	6	2.29	11
Errors at the word level			
Transition words	1	0.69	13
Spelling	22	8.4%	5
Adjectives	2	0.86%	12
Verbs	12	4.5%	7
Articles	40	15.3%	2

Nouns	9	3.4%	9
Pronouns	9	3.4%	9
Prepositions	11	4.2	8
Parts of speech	2	0.86	12
Word Choices	7	2.7%	10
Total	261	100	

From the results shown in table 7 reveal that the most frequently made error type was punctuation (16.8) closely followed by articles (15.3%). Other error types were subject-verb agreement (14.5%), Fragment(11.8%), Spelling (8.4%), capitalization(6.1%), verbs(4.5%), propositions(4.2%), nouns(3.4%), pronouns (3.4%), word choices(2.7%), word order(2.29%), adjectives (0.86%), parts of speech(0.86%) and transition words (0.69%).

A further analysis of the errors revealed that the five most common errors were found to be were punctuation marks, articles, subject-verb agreement, fragmentation and spelling respectively. These findings echoes the results of Sermsook, Liamnimit & Pochakorn (2017) that indicated that articles and punctuation were the most common type of errors amongst Thai students in high school.

4.3 Causes of grammatical errors

The third objective of this study was to establish major sources of grammatical errors among learners English language in Ronaka House Secondary School. The researcher first focused on two areas of language transfer that could lead to grammatical errors in

learners of a second language. These areas were the Interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Interlingual transfer are errors committed by learners of a second language in the attempt to achieve smooth communication. This is sometimes referred as direct translation. It is considered as an important cognitive approach that stumble learners when they run shot of vocabularies while writing in second language. On the other hand intralingual transfer is potential cause of grammatical errors as a result of lack of correlation with the first language and the language being learned (TL). This happens when learners of a second language misinterpret or generalize some specific rules in the language being learned.

Figure 2: Intralingual versus Interlingual grammatical errors
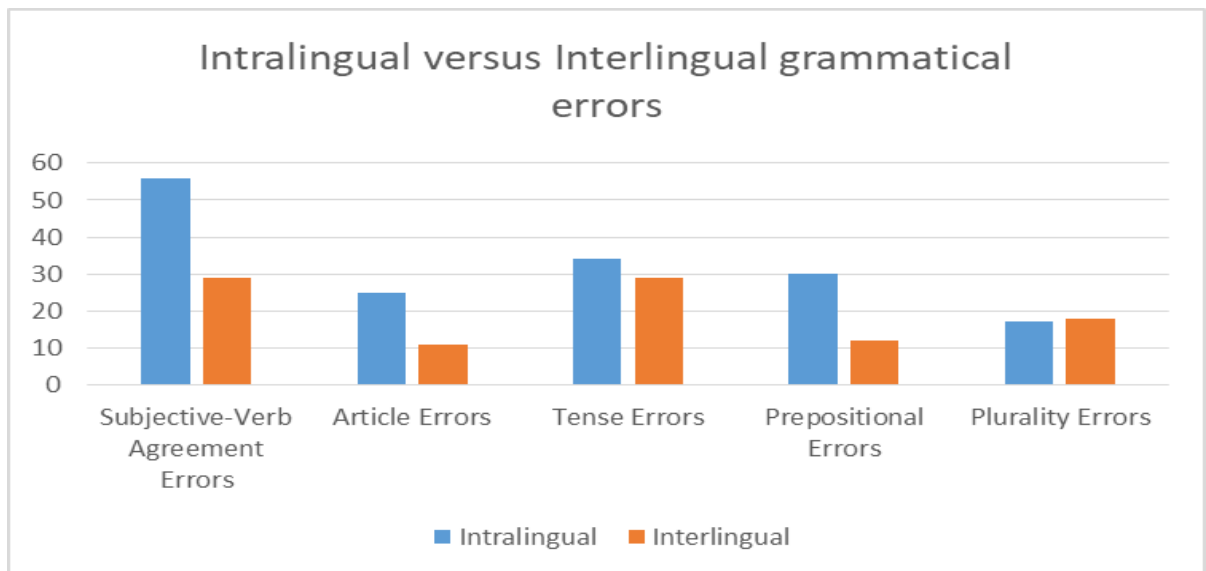
Graph one above shows the relationship between errors made as a result of intralingual and interlingual transfer. As evident in the graph above majority of the grammatical errors committed by form 1 and form 2 learners at Ronaka House School were as a result

of intralingual transfer. Subject-verb agreement were the most committed errors with a total of 56 errors for intralingual and 29 errors for interlingual. Article errors constituted 25 intralingual and 11 interlingual errors. Tense errors were 34 for the intralingual and 29 for interlingual indicating that learners in Ronaka House School are struggling with tenses. Prepositional errors were mostly committed as a result of intralingual transfer constituting 30 intralingual and 12 interlingual errors. Plurality errors constituted for 17 errors in intralingual and 18 errors for interlingual. Second from Subject-verb agreement errors in intralingual transfer was tense errors that constituted 34 units. On the other hand Interlingual errors of this category constituted 29 units. From the findings shown in the graph it is clear that intralingual transfer interfered with second language acquisition compared to interlingual transfer by form one and form two learners in Ronaka House School. This findings are consisted with a study conducted by Bataineh (2005) which also revealed that Intralingual is to blame for most grammatical errors found in students' essays.

Table 8: Intralingual and Interlingual Grammar Errors in percentages

No.	Grammatical Errors	Intralingual		Interlingual	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Subjective-Verb Agreement Errors	56	35%	29	29%
2.	Article Errors	25	15%	11	11%
3.	Tense Errors	34	21%	29	29%
4.	Prepositional Errors	30	19%	12	12%
5.	Plurality Errors	17	10%	18	18%
	TOTAL	162	100%	99	100%
Total Percentage Computation					
			Error Cause	Units	Percentage
			Intralingual	162	62%
			Interlingual	99	38%
TOTAL				**261**	**100%**

Table 8 above shows the relationship of intralingual and interlingual errors with respect to percentages. The researcher was able to identify a total of 261 errors from 30 essays that form one and form two learners in Ronaka House School made. 162 intralingual errors were committed by learners constituting 62% of the total errors. Interlingual errors on the other hand were 99 which was equivalent to 38% of the total errors committed. Subject-verb agreement errors constituted 35% and 29% of the intralingual and interlingual causes of errors respectively. Article errors were 15% for the intralingual and 11% of the interlingual. There were 34% of tense error in intralingual and 29% of the interlingual errors. Prepositional errors was equivalent to 19% for intralingual slightly

differing with interlingual reasons that constituted for 12% and finally plurality errors constituted 10% for the intralingual and 18% of the interlingual.

In order to establish other major courses of grammatical errors among learners in Ronaka House Secondary School, the researcher further conducted an interview with five trained English grammar teachers. The interview was recorded using an audio recorder and later transcribed for analysis. Based on the questions asked in the interviewing process the respondents considered poor Teaching Mythology and Exams focused Curriculum as the alternative major causes of poor grammatical errors among form one and form two learners in Ronaka House Secondary School.

4.3.1 Teaching Methodology

Four out of five interviewees conducted with the teachers stated that poor teaching methodology is a contributing factor to the poor writing skills among learners in secondary schools. The respondent cited that most of the teaching methodologies are old-fashioned; used in the 20th century and may not be applicable in the 21st century when an increase in knowledge and technology is at a higher level. When asked if they adopt and introduced new teaching methodology in class all the respondents admitted that they seldom integrate modern teaching methodology. Below are two samples of the response from two respondents.

Respondent 1: *For me I think that we as teachers lack motivation. The employer does not motivate us because we still earn very little and so sometimes it is difficult to go overboard to train learners. At the same time the employer does not care to take us for training where we would learn new teaching methodologies and so we stick to the methods we learnt long ago! In my part I think education should be taken seriously especially with both the private and public employers.*

Respondent 2: *We as teachers are sometimes under too much pressure to finish the syllabus and so we may not have enough time to explore various modern teaching methodology. At the same time we may want to employ new teaching methods but the employer has not provided the facilities requires. For example to effectively learn English or any foreign language a school requires to have an Audio and Speech laboratories. Since many schools do not consider arts subjects important you will hardly find any speech laboratory in secondary school. Also most schools cannot provide audio visual aids to facilitate new teaching methodologies. So we do not have otherwise but to stick to the old teaching methodologies. We normally focus on teaching exams questions and so major grammatical areas with fundamental details are left out.*

Further the responses obtained from the questionnaire that the form one and two learners at Ronaka Secondary School filled indicated that a vast majority 24 were not satisfied with the instructional method that teachers used in teaching English language. These learners were convinced that the methods in which they are taught English language plays a role in weakening their writing skills in English language.

4.3.2 Exam focused curriculum

Responses from the interview conducted revealed that there is a problem with the 8-4-4 curriculum that is currently used in the education system in Kenya. The respondent lamented that the current curriculum is focused on examination other than equipping learners with relevant skills. Both learners and teachers are focused in passing the progressive and terminal exams at the expense of grasping the skills. Two responded had the following to say in respect to exam focused curriculum.

Respondent 1: *It is obvious that the interest of the employer is to see his or her school shinning in national examinations. Employers especially in private school want to attract more customer to their schools and so want good grades. As teachers we are obliged to rush through the curriculum so that we can start early revision and predicting examination questions. For example by the mid of second term I am required to have finished form four syllabus so that I can start drilling my students to answer KCSE questions. In this case my focus is not whether or not they grasp the concepts but how fast they memorize answers. Therefore I do not have time to teach in-depth grammar to my students because I am in a hurry to clear the syllabus so that we can begin revising for exam.*

Respondent 2: *For every B a student scores in English my employer gives me ksh 1000. On average I have about 70 students in form four and so my struggle is to get about ksh. 10,000 at the end of the year. For this reason I will do all it takes to make sure my student pass exams. I am connected to some teachers from National Schools who always seems to predict exams questions accurately I do not understand how. They sell revision*

papers to our school and so by second term we begin to cram the answers with my students. By the end of the term they the can almost memorize all the answers from the questions. Anyway my hope is that the CBC Competent Based Curriculum will change circumstances. We are really under pressure to have our students pass exams and not focused in giving them competent skills.

From the responses above and others from the full data collected it is evident that learners do not have time to learn and grasp concepts other than focus on predicted examination questions. The interest of the school and the learners is to have good grades and not proper skills. It is therefore possible to see students with A and B grades in English but wonder why they cannot effectively write even a simple essay.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings in line with the three objectives of the study, the conclusions and recommendations.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The first objective of this study was to identify the common grammatical errors made by learners at Ronaka House Secondary school when writing English language. The researcher categorised grammatical errors into five categories including; subject-verb agreement errors, article errors, tense errors, prepositional errors and Plurality errors (Singular versus plural). The researcher established that the most frequent grammatical errors made by learners were subject-verb agreement errors followed closely by tense errors. Prepositional errors came third while article errors fourth. Plurality errors were the least types of errors committed by learners and so they came fourth in the category from most committed to least committed.

The second objective of this study was to diagnose the frequency of the grammatical errors made by students in Ronaka House School. Errors were categorised into subject-verb agreement errors, article errors, tense errors, prepositional errors and Plurality errors (Singular versus plural) in order to establish the frequency of their occurrence in the essays analysed. A total of 261 errors were found in the essays that learners wrote. Out of the 261 errors detected subject verb-agreement constituted 85 errors. Tense errors

came second garnering 63 errors while prepositional errors ranked third with a total of 42 errors. Article errors and plurality were the least committed errors each constituting 35 and 36 errors respectively.

The third objective of the study sort to establish the major sources of grammatical errors among learners English language. The findings of the study established that majority of the grammatical errors committed by form 1 and form 2 learners at Ronaka House School were as a result of intralingual transfer. Subject-verb agreement were the most committed errors with a total of 56 errors for intralingual and 29 errors for interlingual. Article errors constituted 25 intralingual and 11 interlingual errors. Tense errors were 34 for the intralingual and 29 for interlingual. Preposition constituted 30 errors for intralingual and 12 errors for interlingual. Finally plurality errors constituted for 17 errors in intralingual and 18 errors for interlingual. The results further pointed out that poor teaching methodology and exams focused curriculum are among the major reasons for poor grammar in essay writing. The respondents cited that most of the teaching methodologies are old-fashioned; used in the 20th century and may not be applicable in the 21st century when an increase in knowledge and technology is at a higher level. They further lamented that the current curriculum is focused on examination other than equipping learners with relevant skills which requires time especially when dealing with grammar in English language.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The findings of this study has established that learners in Ronaka House Secondary School have experienced acute grammatical difficulties when writing essays. The findings established that subject-verb agreement and tense errors were the most committed errors and article and plurality errors least committed. The study further established that intralingual interference is a major cause of grammatical errors compared to interlingual interference. Learners tend generalize some specific rules in the language they are striving to learn more than they directly translates sentences from first to second language and henceforth multiple grammatical mistakes in English essays. An in-depth interview conducted to English trainers revealed teachers are more focused on completing the syllabus and hence they have limited time to train grammar which requires a lot of time. Trainers further pointed out that the teaching methodology is insufficient. They pointed out that they heavily rely on the 19th and 20th century methods which are out of date.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are proposed. First, English trainers should be motivated by giving them favorable remunerations. When motivated by employers, teachers will be willing to instill skills to learners. Secondly they is need for attitude change in English subjects among learners. As an art, English has always been taken for granted by learners thinking that it is an easy subject and so they do not pay close attention to it. Thirdly, there is the need to revise the English curriculum so that it can focus on skills training other than passing exams. Terminal examinations

should be done away with to allow learners concentrate on content other than grades. In this case teachers will also have an ample time to instill knowledge to learners as required other than running to complete the syllabus. Finally teaching methodology should be updated. Lecture teaching method should be minimise and encourage group discussion which is more of learners' centered. Incorporating fun-filled activities like games and debates can greatly supplement the classrooms methods and motivate learners.

It is also highly recommended that English language teachers consider the study findings positively by considering course enhancements on the writing component with a view to incorporate errors on word and errors on sentences. The study recommend that English teachers should provide more clarity during English lessons, particularly on explanation about grammar rules such as articles, tenses, subject-verb agreement, spelling amongst others. There is need for English language teachers to use creativity in developing teaching material. Teachers should place more emphasis on developing strategies on how best to teach students punctuation, articles and sentence. The teachers need to adopt more of problem solving strategies by ensuring that teachers provide more writing exercises while checking for proper use writing techniques.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Dear Respondent,

RE: REQUEST TO RESPOND TO RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a student at the School of Continuing and Distance Education in the University of Nairobi pursuing a Post Graduate Diploma in Education. As part of the requirement for the award of this Diploma, I am conducting a research on ANALYSIS OF ERRORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PERFORMANCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN NAKURU WEST SUB COUNTY: A CASE STUDY OF FORM ONE AND TWO STUDENTS AT RONAKA HOUSE SECONDARY SCHOOL. The purpose of this letter therefore is to kindly request your support in responding to the attached questionnaire. Your comprehensive response will be of great help towards meeting the objectives of this study. You are not required to write your name anywhere in the questionnaire for the purpose of ensuring that any information you give is treated in confidence. The findings of this study will be helpful in improving academic performance in Secondary Schools in all subjects and more especially in English Language.

Your quick response in filling and returning the questionnaire will be highly appreciated. Thank you in advance for your support.

Yours faithfully,

Benjamin Mbatia

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your attitude towards English Language as a Subject. Please note that this questionnaire is not an exam and therefore all answers given will be considered right. All that is required of you is your personal and sincere opinion. Please be honest in your responses. Your answers will be handled in strict confidence and so you will not be victimized by your teachers or anybody because of the responses you give. Please respond by ticking (√) where required and writing answers where necessary. Your responses will be used to help improve the performance of English Language and other Language by extension to Secondary School learners in Nakuru West Sub-County.

SECTION: GENERAL INFORMATION

1) What is your gender?

   Male   [ ]   Female   [ ]   Other (Specify)

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   What is your level of study?

2) Form One   [ ]   Form Two   [ ]

SECTION B: REASONS FOR MULTIPLE GRAMMATICAL ERRORS IN ENGLISH

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1) Why do you think you committee many grammatical errors in English Language? Explain.

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2) Do you appreciate the teaching methods used by your English Grammar teacher? Elaborate

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3) What do you perceive as the main goal of learning English language in as a
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4) Do you consider the English Syllabus appropriate for your learning?

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APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1) What do you consider to be the major causes of grammatical errors among the form one and two learners in Ronaka House Secondary School? Elaborate.

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2) Do you integrate the 21st Century teaching skills in your instruction methods? If not what methods of instruction do you use?

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3) What do you think of the evaluation method we use to evaluate English language as a subject?

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4) Do you consider the 8-4-4 appropriate especially with the English Language Syllabus? If not what do you think are its shortcomings?

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