RESEARCH REPORT

Grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays: A Case Study of Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School, Koloti Circuit, Limpopo, South Africa

by

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A research report submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree of

MASTERS IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

in

Department of Language Education

in the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Education)

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

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2022

DECLARATION

I, Chauke Titos, declare that the study **"Grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays: A case study of Mmakgabo senior secondary school, Koloti circuit, Limpopo, South Africa"** is my work and that I have not submitted it previously at this institution or any other university. I confirm that all the sources used in this study have been fully acknowledged.

Mr. Chauke T   **07/10/2022**

                                                                Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to all language lovers and those who have endured background hurdles financially, socially, emotionally etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays: A case study of Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School, Koloti circuit, Limpopo, South Africa, paying much attention to the use of grammatical rules features specifically, in their academic piece of writing (descriptive essay). The study aimed at finding out the patterns of grammatical errors that are present in learners' essays and the effective approach that one can use to trace the grammatical errors made by school learners in descriptive essays. The nature of the study and type of data to be collected motivated the researcher to use qualitative approach. Therefore, the researcher deployed qualitative method to collect and analyse data for this study. This method gave the researcher a wide range of opportunities to collect invaluable data which made him to gain in-depth insight of the study and the problem researched. As data collection instruments, the research firstly relied on document analysis by analysing English essay scripts of learners. In addition, the researcher conducted structured interviews by asking relevant questions to English teachers in order to ascertain their experiences and knowledge of the kind of grammatical errors learners make when they write English texts. The researcher found from document analysis that learners commit grammatical errors such as the use informal language, sentences fragment, spelling errors, incorrect use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions. The interview findings also presented similar findings and the interviewees ranked learners' adherence to grammatical rules to average level. The researcher relied on the findings of both the interviews, and document analysis interpreted in conjunction with recent empirical studies to conclude that learners still have many challenges with regard to following grammatical rules when they write in English. Therefore, the researcher recommends that teachers put extra effort to teach learners how to write coherently in English.

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CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

1.1 Introduction

Adherence to rules of grammar has always been problematic to school learners all over the world (Sumalinong, 2018). Harmer (2000: 16) asserts that errors are part of the students' interlanguage, which is the version of the language which a learner has at any stage of development, and which is continually reshaped as he or she aims towards full mastery. In the same vein, Nazalia (2018) claims that making errors is an integral part of the language learning process, and an error takes form in a manner that its maker deviates from standard rules and norms for oral and written forms of any language. On the contrary, Brown (2007) believes that interlingual competence of a speaker advances more if some grammatical errors are being made and corrected. From the arguments above, it can be concluded that an error is a flawed side of a learner's speech resulting from the learner's level of language competence.

Moreover, the mastery of grammar is a crucial skill in writing that can help students produce meaningful sentences. According to Khairunisa and Nadrun (2018), grammar is the rule that stipulates how words are changed to effect different meanings, and how they combine into sentences. By implication, grammar is a way of forming different word meanings which are used to construct meaningful sentences in writing. Writing is a process which requires hard thinking to articulate ideas through words, combine words into sentences, and sentences into paragraphs without neglecting grammar. Haryudin and Argawati (2018) argue that writing is producing something in written form so that people can read, perform, and use it.

In addition, Mundriyah and Parmawati (2016) assert that learners can quickly develop writing skills if teachers take seriously the learners' concerns and interests and afford them opportunities to correct their errors. In this sense, learners must invest much of their time in gathering knowledge to become good writers. Learners can go through what they already know, and even study grammar books, read dictionaries and any reference material that will assist them to improve their writing skills. They can do the same or consult the same study materials so that they improve their knowledge about

grammar rules and how to write without making grammatical errors. Knowing or understanding grammatical rules is quite a crucial aspect needed for learners to express their concerns or express their minds in writing.

Haryudin and Argawati (2018) claim that people who study and eventually understand grammar often speak and write more effectively and clearer than those who do not or have less knowledge about grammar. This apparently shows that understanding grammar plays a very crucial and predominant role for meaningful communication since knowing grammar is similar to knowing how a particular language is used. Consequently, learners can effectively disseminate messages clearly, precisely, and be easily understood when they have mastered exceptional command of grammar rules. Most learners regard writing as challenging as they need to use grammatical rules in formal writing.

The English language is the most commonly used language in the world and a communication medium in many countries, organisations and institutions and, is used as a medium of instruction in South African schools. To support this, Estliden (2017) states that learning English has become greatly necessary to almost every single person who is often linked with working with different people and knows the importance of language in authentic communication contexts. Taking into consideration how important it is to be able to understand and know how to use English, there are so many people around the globe who have committed themselves to learning English, including countries such as China and Japan, where English is regarded as a foreign language. Being aware of the importance of English in business as well as in educational and social contexts, the South African government has made it compulsory that school learners learn, and pass English taught in formal education as First Additional Language (FAL) in schools except Afrikaans schools.

1.2. Research problem

The proposed study was motivated by the experiences as that learners tend to commit errors in both speaking and writing when they use English as a First Additional Language. Again, there are various recent empirical studies that proved that learners currently have a problem in respect to complying with grammatical rules when they

write EFAL essays. For example, a study conducted by Emvula (2020) revealed that learners commit numerous grammatical errors, including errors in relation to tenses, articles, prepositions, singular/plurals, subject-verb agreement and word choice when they write EFAL essays. Another study was conducted by Nndwamato (2017) which revealed that most learners in rural villages struggle to write and read coherently in English. Learners often do not realise it when they commit grammatical errors as it is an unconscious process. Hence, they fail to correct their grammatical errors when they are required to self-revise errors they have made. Although they may have studied grammar in class, they still commit grammatical errors (Nndwamato, 2017).

Furthermore, learners face problems when they are expected to follow grammatical rules when writing. They tend to forget about the generic grammatical structures when writing, have some problems regarding grammar and find it difficult to express their ideas in words or sentences, especially in written form. In addition, another study conducted by Mailula (2021) found that learners commit grammatical errors pertaining the use of informal language, paragraphing and incomplete sentences, and incorrect use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, and collocations in their EFAL essays. The researcher is also concerned about this problem faced by learners; hence the recent study has found that learners that are fluent and proficient in English often perform well academically, and universities and employers prefer candidates with good English written and spoken ability (Saneka & De Witt, 2019). Considering the extent and significance of the problem stated, it became important for the researcher to conduct this study which sought to investigate grammatical errors learners make in their EFAL descriptive essays.

1.3. Literature review

There are some researchers who have conducted researches in line with the envisaged study. According to Sumalinog (2018), making grammatical errors is inevitable for learners that are in the process of learning English, especially to learners who do not speak English as a home language. Putri and Dewanti (2014) conducted a study based on investigating grammatical errors made by students when they write narrative texts for English Diploma Program. The study found that the most common errors many learners make involve omission of suffix "–s/ -es/ -ed/ -ing." These findings are related this study.

1.3.1 Theory of taxonomy of errors

Ho (2005) categorises the grammatic errors that learners make; these are errors in respect of nouns, noun groups, verbs, verb groups, prepositions, and errors regarding sentence structure. Based on the above-mentioned categories, Putri's and Dewanti's (2014) study found that errors involving the use of verbs and verb groups are the most repeated errors (39.07 %). These are followed by the miscellaneous errors that were impossible to analyse using Ho's (2005) theory (32.11 %), then the errors involving nouns and noun groups which amounted to 13.02%, the errors involving the use of prepositions which constituted 9.08%, and lastly, errors of incorrect sentence structure that amounted to 6.72%.

Furthermore, Victoria (2009) used Ho's theory of taxonomy of errors to study error analysis. The study findings revealed that the most common grammatical errors that learners make when writing are related to nouns, verbs, sentence structure and prepositions, in the descending order of frequency. Further, Wijaya (2007) conducted research about grammatical errors involving fifth-year students at Santa Theresia II where research participants were required to construct interrogative sentences. The study relied on Richard's (1974) classification of errors, and the results of the study revealed that a majority of students had challenges with respect to the correct use of auxiliaries.

1.3.2 Common grammatical errors

Dean (2020) has identified several most common grammatical errors learners make when learning English. The commonly identified mistakes include the incorrect use of articles when formulating sentences, incorrect use of prepositions, using incorrect word order when asking questions, and the '-ing' and '-ed' suffix confusion. The research aimed to identify common English errors made by learners in Universiti Malaysia Kelanta (UMK) correspond with the findings of Dean (2020) in respect to the common grammatical errors learners make (Azlan, Shaharuddin, Berhanuddin & Berhanuddin, 2015). The research identified 5 (five) common grammar errors learners made, which are misusing prepositions, errors when using pronouns, spelling errors, confused word order and errors when using adjectives (Azlan et al, 2015).

Kirkgoz (2010) analysed errors made by Turkish adult English students when writing English texts. Kirkgoz invoked the theory of taxonomy of errors developed by Brown (1980). The inference drawn by Kirkgoz is that there were 220 grammatical mistakes made by Turkish adults. The use of article error was also the dominating grammatical error among all other errors made. In addition, Sa'diyah (2010) sought to research about grammatical errors by having learners participate in a competition for reviewing a bilingual magazine. When conducting the research, Sa'diyah used the theory of error analysis by Burt and Kiparsky (1974), and among all four grammatical errors identified, Sa'diyah found that the skeleton of English clauses was the prevalent error.

The above findings have the common theory of taxonomy. This study diverted from their adopted theory as it integrated Error analysis supported by Universal Grammar (UG), as well as Krashen's Second Language Acquisition (SLA). This study was also contextualised to South Africa since the problem is universal and is not only experienced by Indonesians. The study was carried out among high school learners in order to obtain valid findings different from Dewanti's.

1.4 The role of theory in the study

This study was underpinned by Behaviourism linked to Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) and Error Analysis (EA). The CAH is the comparison of the linguistic system of two or more languages, and it is based on the main difficulties in learning a new language that are caused by interference from the first language (Ara, 2019). The relevance of CAH in language learning is that very often the first language system is likely to be dominant during the process of learning a second language by a learner who has already been exposed to a home language (Dost & Bohloulzadeh, 2017). On the other hand, this can serve as the learning advantage.

The study used this theory to analyse how home language can influence the errors that learners make when they attempt to acquire or learn second languages. This theory was recently used by Emvula (2020) in the study on the influence of mother tongue on second language acquisition. Therefore, this theory can also be used to analyse how the grammatical rules in African languages influence learners to make grammatical errors in English FAL learning.

According to Emvula (2020), the CAH theory is significant for language error analysis but is not sufficient to be applied alone and it needs to be supplemented with other theories in language education. Emvula (2020) further states that the Error Analysis (EA) could perfectly supplement CAH. The EA theory was invented by Pit Corder in the 1960s and its significance in language learning is that it assists to explain different types of second language learners' errors such as syntax, grammar and phonological errors (Emvula, 2020).

Error Analysis theory posits that errors made by learners should not be considered as negative but rather that they are beneficial to teachers and learners (Nndwamato, 2017). However, it was Corder (1967) who initially highlighted the importance of considering errors as a positive step in the process of language learning. According to Corder (1967), an error is conceptualised as a systematic deviation and that ultimately both the teacher and the learner draw significant lessons from the errors (Emvula, 2020).

Additionally, a recent study demonstrated the significance of EA in language learning, that it makes researchers focus of analysing errors made by learners and use those errors to help learners improve their language by correcting those errors (Nndwamato, 2017). Furthermore, EA assists researchers to understand why learners made certain errors. This in turn helps researchers to develop well-informed strategy to help learners improve on their mistakes. Since errors are essential in language learning, the researcher has used EA to analyse errors that he found in learners' scripts. In addition, the EA helped the researcher to analyse the grammatical errors, while considering strategies to help learners not to repeat the same mistakes repeatedly.

Lastly, Chomsky's Universal Grammar (UG) theory has been used to analyse the influence of environment on second language learning. The UG theory posits that the ordinary rules and principles are being considered to be common to all human languages (Kim, 2018). It further states that children are born with inherent ability to learn any language and such ability is greatly influenced by an environment that forms their everyday life. The second language learning study conducted by Kim (2018) found that the UG theory applies differently when used for second language learning, as compared to first language acquisition. Kim found that the UG theory in first

language acquisition simply entails that children will adopt a language that is being used by their caregivers. However, when it comes to second language learning, learners follow the grammatical rules and learn language based on various factors such as teachers' competence, teaching strategies, access to material and school friends. The study has used UG theory to analyse how the English FAL class environment affects grammatical errors learners make when they write essays in English.

In addition, UG theory was used to determine how inherent grammar, which usually refers to grammatical rules for home languages, influence learners to commit grammatical errors in EFAL descriptive essay writing. Put differently, it was essential for elaborating how learners can substantially suffer from poor grammatical errors in instances where they are taught EFAL in a classroom wherein they speak their home language.

1.5 Purpose of the study and research question

1.5.1 Purpose of the study
The purpose of the study is to investigate grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays.

1.5.2 Research questions
The research project shall be driven by the following research questions:
- What grammatical error patterns are evident in the learners' descriptive essays?
- Which effective approaches can educators employ in order to trace the grammatical errors found in learners' descriptive essays?

1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 Research design

The research made use of the qualitative research method to obtain the required data. According to Jackson, Drummond and Camara (2007) qualitative research method involves the researcher obtaining data through observations such as interviews and technically presenting the findings in textual, rather than numerical, data. In addition, Creswell and Creswell (2018) define qualitative research study as an inquiry process to understand a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants and conducted in a natural setting.

The nature of data which the researcher sought to collect for this study is the motive behind choosing qualitative method as the relevant method for data collection. The researcher investigated grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays at Mmakgabo Senior Secondary school. The researcher used interviews and document analysis as data collection techniques. These kinds of data collection techniques and type of data collected were not appropriate for quantitative method and qualitative method was the suitable method. These methods necessitated the use of qualitative method since Bhandari (2022) claims that a qualitative method gives researchers an in-depth understanding of contextual data. Consequently, qualitative research design was appropriate for this study as it assisted the researcher to collect in-depth and flexible data. Furthermore, the design was crucial for developing strategies that will assist learners to overcome challenges they experience when they write essays in general.

1.6.2 Population

Population refers to a group of individuals taken from the general population who share a common characteristic, such as age, sex, or health condition (McCombes, 2019). The target population of the study was Koloti circuit in the Capricorn North district. Koloti circuit consists of 8 high schools where English is offered as a First Additional Language (FAL). Mmakgabo senior secondary school was purposively sampled since

the researcher worked there. The grade 12 learners were sampled randomly out of the five grades at the school.

1.6.3 Sampling

Sampling involves the researcher choosing a relevant part among a determined population for the purpose of conducting research and acquiring information through observation in order to infer an estimation about the entire population (Whitehead & Whitehead, 2016). Sampling is normally differentiated from the closely related field of experimental design. As an educator who teaches English at Mmakgabo Senior Secondary school, the document analysis was based on selecting random the scripts from the 57 English scripts that the researcher marked in the June examination. Thus, the study employed purposive sampling method, to select all the 57 English FAL scripts that the study marked. The researcher used purposive sampling method in order to provide all the variables (scripts) fair and equal opportunity of being selected for the study. The researcher also sampled 3 teachers who taught English for interviews and made use of 57 English scripts, based on the rationale that most pioneering study works in error analysis made use of 30 participants (Amuzu & Asinyor, 2016; Quibol-Catabay, 2016; Mireku-Gyimah, 2014 and Ulla, 2014).

1.6.4 Data collection

Data refers to information that a researcher collects for his/her study (Whitehead, 2016). In this study, the following data collection techniques were used: interviews and document analysis. These data collection techniques were used for gathering accurate, correct, true, meaningful and right data.

Whitehead (2016) suggests that the researcher may use instruments for data collection to accumulate and record information when observing the behaviours or aspects (or even factors) of individuals or groups in a certain circumstance. Thus, this research linked data collected from interviews and analysed documents with the primary goal of answering research questions. This process was made possible through the error analysis theory as discussed in the role of theory section.

1.6.5 Data analysis

Babbie & Mouton (2012) refer to data analysis as a path of breaking up the information into understandable links, atmosphere and themes. The study made use of the Error Analysis by Corder (1982) and procedural analysis by Ellis (1994) to explore the language errors of the grade 12 learners of Mmakgabo Senior Secondary school. After all learners had written their descriptive essays, the study immediately started to conduct the analysis of each essay script by following Ellis (1994) procedural analysis that consists of 4 stages, which are: "collection of samples of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors and evaluating the errors identified in the data that is document analysis."

In the process of analysing the descriptive essay scripts, the study examined the collected data through document analysis. The objective of data analysis was to create some kind of sense from each and every data collected, to extensively examine the patterns and relationships within both collection and also across collections, and to make ordinary discoveries about the phenomena the study was researching, to use an analogy, after sorting the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle into groups. It is a fundamental aspect of data collection to carefully examine individual pieces to find out how they accurately fit together and form smaller parts of the picture for example: the part of grammatical errors language. The study focused on the four following categories to scrutinise grammatical errors:

- grammatical
- syntactic
- lexical
- semantic and substance

According to Pope (2016), this is a labour-intensive series of events that mostly involves going through numerous trials and may involve error and frustration during the process. A relatively identical process usually occurs in qualitative data analysis. Data analysis requires the researcher to compare all the things that have been identified for the purpose that is none other than to discover existing differences and similarities, develop typologies, or discover important patterns or sequences of

variables. One may, in the process of doing so experience stumbling blocks across both wholes and, quite literally, find holes in the data.

1.7   Quality criteria

The trustworthiness criteria suggested by Korstjens and Moser (2018) to be used in a qualitative research approach include "credibility", "transferability", "dependability" and "confirmability". The study took quality criteria into consideration as follows:

1.7.1 Credibility

Credibility is to believe the research results are true (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). In other words, credibility can also be explicated as the accuracy of the identification and description of the subject of the study and determines whether the information given by the study is truthful or not. Credibility can also be referred to as a degree of reliability of the study, based on the correctness of the analysis of data and the participants' original views. In this sense, the researcher ensured that the study was genuine by interpreting data and findings obtained from the participants in a way that is correct.

1.7.2 Transferability

Korstjens and Moser (2018) indicate that researchers can establish transferability for their studies by furnishing to readers evidence which prove that the findings of their research can also apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. It is vital to outline that it is much unlikely that one could, as a researcher, prove that the findings of their research conducted would be applicable to other contexts. It is of course the duty of the researcher to instead provide methods that may allow for repetition of the study in a different scenario. Mandal (2018) states that it is not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers.

Transferability has been considered to be a point to which the results of a given study can be transferred to a different surrounding or used with a different population (Mandal, 2018). In the current study, transferability was ensured by selecting a sample that was a representative of the wider population from which it had been extracted,

therefore making the results applicable to other situations within the designated population.

1.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is the likelihood or degree to which the researcher is logically of the opinion that the same findings of the study conducted would be produced if there is replication of the study Korstjens and Moser (2018). Thus, the study acknowledged the problems that could arise in appertaining the degree of dependability by doing a thorough study of the findings. In this sense, dependability was ensured by a thorough supervision of data and people can depend on this research project, since it was based on an interview that took place in a natural environment and not a laboratory research where scientific findings could be manipulated.

1.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the accurateness of qualitative research report, the extent of its unbiases, and the magnitude that it can be confirmed by others or a point in which all the data and the problem statement of the study can be confirmed or proven to be certain of a high degree of quality (Mandal, 2018). Thus, the study is reliable and cannot mislead the readers. Furthermore, the researcher in this study refrained from maliciously tempering with the findings of the study and distorting the information of the study to cater for the researcher's problem statement. The study aimed to support and establish the certainty of the findings, to verify their authenticity. This was done by keeping original records of interview recordings and transcripts for later reference.

1.8 Significance of the study

- The findings of this study will improve the teaching and learning of English language in South African secondary schools where English is learnt and taught as a First Additional Language. The study will achieve such improvement by determining the main causes of grammatical errors made by learners in writing English essays.

- By identifying the learners' grammatical errors in their English language, it can helpful for strategically developing writing skills and the challenges they come across when learning of English First Additional Language, appropriate intervention strategies could be designed by educational practitioners in order to alleviate the situation.

- Furthermore, the study will contribute valuable theoretical insights into the language learning process, which would be beneficial to modern classroom practice.

1.9. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.9.1 Confidentiality

Participants' identities and any other information that the participants felt uncomfortable to be disclosed were kept confidential.

1.9.2 Permission

Letters were issued to solicit permission to conduct the study. The researcher asked for permission to conduct this research from the principal of the school, learners' parents and selected participants in writing.

1.9.3 Anonymity

In guaranteeing the participants, the researcher maintained a high standard of confidentiality and privacy and no name or any personal details were disclosed to anyone. The data and views emanating from the study shall be presented anonymously. Where applicable, pseudo names were assigned, and no personal information will be shared with third parties.

1.9.4 Protection from harm

In order to guarantee the protection of participants from any potential harm, participants were afforded a choice to withdraw from the study at any point when they felt threatened in any way or for any other reason.

1.10 Conclusion

Learners find it difficult to follow grammatical rules when writing. They tend to forget about the generic grammatical structures when writing. Furthermore, they have some problems regarding grammar and find it difficult to express their ideas in words or sentences, especially in written form. Some researchers have conducted researches in line with the envisaged study. According to Sumalinog (2018), making grammatical errors is inevitable to learners that are in the process of learning English, especially to learners who do not speak English as a home language. Putri and Dewanti (2014) conducted a study based on investigating grammatical errors made by students when they write narrative texts for English Diploma Program. The previous studies contributed in answering all research questions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the study reviewed studies that have been conducted by other scholars on the similar problem researched by this study. This chapter reviewed literature from different sources related to the investigation of grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays, definitions of error analysis and other research studies on error analysis. There are previous studies that have been conducted in various nations across the world, which provided information about the investigation of grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essay. Thus, this chapter scrutinised and interpreted the literature relevant to the current study.

2.2. Theoretical framework

This study employs Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) theory to analyse grammatical error. The CAH is the comparison of the linguistic system of two or more languages, and it is based on the main difficulties in learning a new language that are caused by interference from the first language (Ara, 2021). There are various scholars that elucidated CAH theory and applied it in their empirical studies. For example, Ara (2021) has relied on CAH theory to investigate grammatical errors made by second language acquirers. The study concluded that the recent development in empirical evidence indicates that first languages often have influence of grammatical errors second language acquirers make during the early stages of second language acquisitions. This theory is relevant to the current study. It helped in answering the study's question by tracing learners' grammatical errors in their descriptive essays. This applies to learning EFAL as a second language in South African schools, which can be referred to as second language acquisition. Their grammatical errors could be influenced by their home languages. This is due to learners trying to do directly translate when they write texts in English, and they often use home language grammar and not English grammatical rules when they write EFAL essays.

To support the claim of Ara, the empirical study conducted by Emvula (2020) also revealed that some of the possible causes of grammatical errors committee by learners in their EFAL essays are due to first language (mother-tongue) interference.

To substantiate further, another empirical study by Ashour (2017) made a Contrastive Analysis between English and Arabic pronunciation systems and found that these two languages have very different pronunciation systems, with the former being a stress-timed language while the latter is a syllabic-timed language and that is a similar scenario to EFAL learners. This difference caused learners to face difficulties in distinguishing consonant sounds such as /p/ and /b/ and when they have to pronounce consonant clusters. This makes the CAH relevant to this study.

CAH theory also entail that there exist related or identical aspects between first language and second language, such as grammatical rule and phonics, may make the process of learning the second language easy and improve the pace of acquisition and adopting the new customs of the second language. On the contrary, when fundamental aspects of the first language and second language are totally different, the learnt language customs of a first language may interfere with (and mostly trump over), the new language rules of a second language (Ellis, 1995).

Second language learners therefore should determine the possible differences between first and second language and make new habits by reinforcement. As extracted from the strong version of CAH, the weak version is currently more acceptable and much common to cross-linguistic influence which mostly applies in areas where contradictions of fundamental attributes exist between first and second language, and to second language acquisition (Ashour, 2017). Furthermore, CAH made it a norm that second language errors are caused by a negative first language transfer but does not explain all errors of the second language. Rather than determining linguistic aspects between first and second language, Ara (2021) is of the view that one may actually consider material errors made by second language learners.

The Error Analysis (EA) and Universal Grammar (UG) theories have common perception since they both regard environment as the most influential factor to second language learning and acquisition. Dixon (2018) asserted that the influence of environment in language acquisition could be illustrated by a manner in which children acquire home language due to their family always using that home language. This entails that if a child lives in an environment where all or most family members and

community members speak Sepedi as their home language and use it at their homes daily, such children will acquire Sepedi as their home language. Sometimes an environment can render language acquisition to be challenging in case where a child is exposed to multilingualism environment. In this kind of an environment, a child often has a challenge in regard to which language to acquire and they often mix languages when they speak.

Maruma (2017) avers that EA is what educators in the rural context need to consider improving how learners can learn EFAL. Learners in rural schools find it difficult to master EFAL. According to Maruman (2017), the solution to grammatical error problems could be resolved through the application of EA. Mother Tongue Interference (MTI), the influence of technological devices and ignorance of language elements seem to be the dominating factors of spelling errors. Furthermore, educators should lay a strong foundation from Grades R-12 in order to produce the best results in essay writing.

In order to apply Chomsky' UG theory, the first step of analysing learner errors using UG theory is to identify the errors that learner make in their EFAL descriptive essays. To do this, it is essential to compare sentences produced by learners with what seem to be normal correct sentences in the target language which corresponds with them. In addition, the manifestation of errors does not only indicate that the learner has not learnt something yet, but also gives the linguist an idea of whether the teaching method applied was effective or it needs to be changed or adapted (Anefnaf, 2017).

2.3 Literature Review

Literature review is defined as compilation, classification, and evaluation of what other researchers have written on a particular topic. A literature review normally forms part of a research thesis, but it can also stand alone as a self-contained review of writings on a subject.

2.3.1 First Additional Language Learning and essay writing

The participants in this study are all English First Additional Language (EFAL) learners. In this respect EFAL learning becomes an important part of this study. School Census Preparation and Guidance (2007) refer to the term first language as the language to which the child was initially exposed during early development and continues to use this language at home and community. Therefore, English will not be a child's first language if a child has acquired English after his or early child development, regardless the extent of proficiency and fluency with which he or she may be able to write, speak and read English. According to Krashen (1981), language acquisition and language learning are the only two methods with which adults can develop language competence. There are various differences between language learning and language acquisition.

In addition, as learners engage in the process of EFAL learning, they are required to write countless essays in EFAL at school and usually in EFAL paper 3 examinations. Essay writing is in every language learning school subject and is crucial for pedagogical practitioners and learners to be knowledgeable about the meaning of essay writing and how to write different types of essays. According to Prasanna (2020), essay is basically a piece of writing that is purported to present the perspective of the author about a certain given topic or narrate a story.

Prasanna (2020) further claimed that a good written essay should comply with various fundamental aspects of good writing which include structure, compliance to grammar rules and creative writing that goes hand in hand with this study as descriptive type of an essay needs innovation. Since Prasanna (2020) reviewed literature is in line with this study as it included the factor of grammar, it means good written essays should have correct spelling and therefore learners cannot write good descriptive essays while there make lot of spelling errors and mistakes.

However, Patient (2019) claimed that a perfect essay has a good structure, correct word choice and written without obvious grammatical errors, spelling mistakes and sticking with a topic supporting this study. These claims entail that both Prasanna and Patient have one perspective in common, which is a good essay should be written with correct spellings otherwise all other aspects of writing a perfect essay would be

meaningless if an essay is written with many spelling errors. According to Prasanna (2020), there are various types of essays which include discursive, descriptive, argumentative, narrative, expository as well as analytical type of an essay. Learners write these kinds of essays despite learning first or second language and they ought to be familiar with them and the skills required to write good essays, depending on the type of essay.

Furthermore, various empirical studies have found and demonstrated that learners make many grammatical errors in general when they write essays in EFAL. For example, an empirical study that was conducted by Maruma (2017) which was purported to investigate errors committed by learners in EFAL essay writing has revealed that learners committed several types of grammatical errors. Nndwamato (2017) also conducted an empirical study which also sought to identify grammatical errors that learners make when they write EFAL essays. The study discovered that concord/subject-verb agreement was a challenge to the majority of the participants since not even a single question recorded a 100% correct entry. These two empirical studies indicate that grammatical errors in EFAL essay writing are a challenge to many students in various areas in South Africa.

Emvula (2020) recently conducted an empirical study that supports the claim that grammatical errors when learners write EFAL essays are still a challenge in South African schools. Emvula's (2020) empirical study aimed to investigate common EFAL grammatical writing errors among Namibian grade 7 learners schooling in South Africa. Research participants spoke their Namibian home language as their first and home language and were taught English at school as first additional language. This study found that learners made numerous grammatical errors in seven different error categories: tenses, articles, prepositions, singular/plurals, subject-verb agreement and word choice. The study further revealed that the possible causes of errors were attributed to first language (mother-tongue) interference, intralingual errors, lack of knowledge about the grammatical rules and overgeneralisation.

The research participants in Emvula's study are more related to the current study and therefore more relevant. The relation exists since research participants speak Sepedi as their home language and are taught EFAL as their additional language. This makes

the study findings of Emvula's study more relevant since their study is recent and will add more value on the analysis of the findings in the current study.

Another significant empirical study which is most recent was conducted in 2021 by Mailula which also investigated grammatical errors made by learners when they write EFAL essays. The study found that few numbers of learners committed grammatical errors pertaining to the use of informal language, paragraphing and incomplete sentences in their essays. This was followed closely by a reasonable number of learners that did not have correct use noun, pronoun, adjective, adverb, preposition, conjunction and collocation. Spelling and tense errors were slightly higher while punctuation errors were the highest (Mailula, 2021:101).

All the presented studies have commonly found that learners commit grammatical errors when they write essays in EFAL. The current study was also conducted by use of interviews and document analysis to investigate errors that learners made when they write EFAL descriptive essays.

2.3.2 Language acquisition

It has been articulated by Ogba et al (2020) that "language acquisition and language learning" are the only two methods with which children and adults can make use to develop language competence. There are various differences between language learning and language acquisition. Furthermore, Ogba et al (2020) defined the two concepts by stating that "language acquisition means acquiring the language with little or no formal training or learning while language learning refers to the formal learning of a language in the classroom. Linguistic scholars such as Krashen (1981) and Ellis (1986) have noted environment is the most influential factor that that influences language acquisition for every person. The two mentioned scholars stated that people should be patience in stages of language acquisition and therefore time is also essential for stages of development in language acquisition which is influenced by time.

In addition, language acquisition is described by Krashen (1981) as an unconscious process of acquiring a certain language and such process is unlike the manner in

which a child learns a language. Krashen further states that it is a norm that most people who go through the process of language acquisition and eventually become language acquirers who are often not consciously aware of the grammatical rules of the language, instead they develop a correctness feeling (Nordquist, 2020). In non-technical language, language acquisition simply entails picking-up a language.

This means the learner acquires language naturally by absorption. The Second Language Acquisition process differs from the first language acquisition in most cases. Apart from the situations in which a child is raised by parents using more than one different language daily or in a country in which there are more languages in common use, the most typical situation is learning a second language not from embryonic stage, but at school, or even later. This is a similar situation in South Africa as many of the first additional language learners start learning English at school level, while they have already become fluent in their first language from home.

In addition, Hussain (2017) claimed that children undergoing the stages of language acquisition often have a mountain to climb whereas adults undergoing the same stages usually have either a better progress or a smooth journey in language acquisition. In addition, children acquiring their first language, which is usually their home language, acquire it faster than children acquiring second and subsequent languages. This means acquiring English FAL as a second or third language could be challenging to school learners and during the stages of acquiring the said language, its common that they will make a lot of grammatical errors.

Taking into consideration the claims made by Hussain (2017) above, Nordquist (2020) argued that that it is of a paramount importance to understand that acquirers of second language will makes errors and mistakes during the stages of language acquisition and that is how they learn. This means that patience and time are essential for stages of language acquisition. Nordquist (2020) further claimed that making errors such as spelling errors, use of wrong grammar and poor vocabulary during the stages of language acquisition is the fundamental ladder that every person who learns any language has to climb.

It was indicated above where Dixon (2018) stated that the more the caregiver use words at home and the community uses the same words, the more the vocabulary of the children increases, and hence, language acquisition improves. This means that as time goes on, language acquisition on children improves and in time, some even learn the use of proverbs and figures of speech as they climb the ladder of language acquisition. Nordquist (2020) further stated that people undergoing stages of language acquisition complete most of the stages unconsciously. This entails that some are not even aware as to which stage of language acquisition they are and sometimes learners make grammatical errors unconsciously.

Additionally, to find out learning strategies which learners use in first additional language learning and identify difficulties they come across, error analysis must be carried out (Hasan & Munandar, 2018). Nordquist (2020) explains that language acquisition research can be described as the search for an appropriate level of description of the learner's system of rules. The very circumstances of language acquisition and first additional language learning are different. Because they already acquired a language, which is first language, this can have an impact on the process of first additional learning (Emvula, 2020).

According to Krashen (1981), language learning, on the other hand, involves a conscious learning of a language whereby a language learner is aware of the grammatical rules of the language they learn. Furthermore, it is relatively outlined by Askari et al (2021) that language learning should be defined as a conscious process in which learners attend to form, figure out rules, and are generally aware of their own process. Krashen's (1994) theory of language learning consists of five main hypotheses namely: "the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the monitor hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis and the input hypothesis."

The **Acquisition-Learning hypothesis**:
According to Ellis (1986), the acqusion learning hypothesis is the crucial component to Krashen's 1981 theory. Krashen (1994) identifies two independent systems of second language performance: the acquired system or acquisition and the learned system or learning. For this hypothesis, the term learning relates specifically to language and refers to the ways in which children develop first language competence

(Krashen, 1994). According to Richard-Amato (1996), the acquisition part of this hypothesis is hidden, while the learning portion is a conscious effort by the learner. This means language acquisition occurs unconsciously (Krashen, 1994) when they participate in ordinary conversations whereby, they only focus on the meaning of terms and understanding each other.

Richard-Amato (1996) further states that language learning consists of learning of all the vital aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and other important aspects for language; learning which should be taught extensively. This is due to the most important part of language learning which is knowing and understanding the language structures.

The **Natural Order Hypothesis**:
The natural order hypothesis states that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. For a given language, some grammatical structures tend to be acquired primarily, others late, regardless of the first language of a speaker (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). However, this does not mean that grammar should be taught in this natural order of acquisition. According to Krashen (1994), natural order patterns of second language acquisition do not follow those of the first language acquisition patterns. However, the first additional language acquisition patterns of a child are very similar to the second language learning patterns of an adult. According to Emvula (2020), errors made by first additional language speakers could be attributed to the fact that since they are not English native speakers, they have not yet acquired the necessary grammatical structures. However, Krashen (1994) points out that the existence of the natural order does not imply that we should teach first additional languages according to this order.

The **Monitor Hypothesis:**
The monitor hypothesis proposes that there is a monitor which functions to help the learners to filter their language. The learner uses the monitor to apply rules to the already learned knowledge, such as which verb, tense to use or which part of speech to use. Lightbrown and Spada (1995) explain that in order to use a monitor well, three factors must be met:

(1) Time: The learner must have ample time to think about and use conscious rules effectively. Taking time to think about rules may disturb the communication.

(2) Focus on form: The learner must focus on forms; the correctness of forms. He/she may be more concerned with what he/she is saying but not how he/she is saying it.

(3) Knowledge of the rules: The learner must know the rules of that language. For example, in the present study, the subjects need time to use the monitor hypothesis to fully understand the task and identify the time of the event so that they can decide on the appropriate tense, type of vocabulary and register to use, in order to respond appropriately to the tasks given. Through this process the knowledge of the rule is demonstrated.

Krashen cited in Lightbrown and Spada (1995) asserts that the use of the Monitor varies among different people. There are those who use it all the time and are classified as over-users. There are also learners who either have not learned how to use the monitor or choose not to use it and they are identified as under-users. Between the two groups are the optimal users. This group uses the Monitor only when it is appropriate to do so. In an ordinary conversation, an optimal user will not be extremely concerned with applying conscious rules to performance. However, in writing and in planned speech, learners will make any corrections which improve the accuracy of their output.

The **Affective Filter Hypothesis**:

The affective filter hypothesis is based on the theory of an affective filter, which states that successful first additional language acquisition depends on the learner's feelings, motivation and attitudes. This implies that it is easier for a learner to acquire a language when he or she is not tense, angry, anxious or bored. According to Dulay and Burt (1977), the Affective Filter Hypothesis describes the degree to which a person learns in a formal or an informal situation.

The three discussed hypotheses elevate insight for learning second language learning and the theories about SLA and FAL have outlined the essence of errors that language learners often make unknowingly, as they believe to have uttered a statement without any kind of grammatical error. It is argued by Nunan (2001) that it is of a paramount

importance that learners understand that making errors during the language learning processes is an ordinary and fundamental aspect that every person who learns language, especially a second language learner, has to go through. Further, making errors in the process of language learning happens to every person regardless of the age, gender and race and applies to learning any language in the world (Nunan, 2001).

Moving forward, Nunan (2001) implies that even people who have exceptionally mastered a certain language which they have learned have made errors during the learning processes, nevertheless, they learnt more and fixed their mistakes along the process by putting the necessary effort, as a result, they only made errors occasionally (Emvula, 2020).Therefore, if language learners are encouraged in this way, they can be hopeful and have confidence to continue and pursue their language learning. Krashen (1981) correspondingly claims that when language learners are focused on communication and not on form, errors by adult second language learners are quite similar to errors made by children learning English as a second language. Other studies in this field Mao and Yeukai (2021), Hasan and Munandar (2018), and Nndwamato (2017) confirm the occurrence of errors in the process of language learning. The current research has been motivated by the findings of these scholars in attempting to investigate the grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essay.

The **Input Hypothesis:**

The Input Hypothesis entails that there are three main elements to this hypothesis. The first key element is the Input Hypothesis, which claims that language is acquired, not learned. A learner understands a message or receives comprehensible input that has arrangements or structures just a bit ahead of his or her current level of acquired competence (Richard-Amato, 1996). The Input Hypothesis poses the concept represented by i+1; where the "i" represents the distance between actual language development and "i+1" represents the potential language development (Richard-Amato, 1996).

The second key element is that speech should be allowed to develop on its own. There is usually a silent period and speech will come when the acquirer feels ready. The state of readiness arrives at different times for different people (Krashen, 1994). It should not be taught directly, and a period of grammatically incorrect speech is typical.

The silent period may be the time during which learners build up competence by means of active listening through input. Krashen (1994) asserts that this idea helps minimise the feeling of uneasiness many learners have when they are asked to speak in the target language right away before they have built up adequate competence through comprehensible input. When they are forced to talk early, they tend to fall back on their first language (Krashen, 1987). First additional language learners need a silent period to internalise the input properly.

It is vivid that this is how all people learn because learning does not occur in a void. It is believed that when learning takes place, there is always an influencing factor, such as a guidebook, a teacher, a peer, or an instruction sheet present. If a learner is presented with information that is not the slightest bit comprehensible and no assistance for understanding is provided, chances are that the learner will struggle and will likely give up. The third key element of the Input Hypothesis is that the input should not intentionally have grammatically programmed structures. If input is understood, and there is enough of it, i+1 is automatically provided (Krashen, 1994). Therefore, language teachers do not need to intentionally teach the text structure along the natural order.

2.3.3 Error Analysis

This part focused on defining two concepts: "error and error analysis." It has also elaborated more about the difficulties and benefits of error analysis and lastly gave detailed explanations of the difference between an error and a mistake. The heading is elucidated under the following subheadings.

2.3.4 What is error analysis (EA)?

Hasan and Munandar (2018) define error analysis as the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners. EA compares learner English with English first additional language itself and judges how learners are oblivious to the grammatical and semantic rules of the target language (James, 1998). According to Tiarina (2017) error analysis may be carried out in order to: (a) find out how well someone knows a language, (b) find out how a person learns a language, and (c)

obtain information on common difficulties in language learning, as assistance in teaching or in the preparation of teaching materials.

Another stance of error analysis is provided by Pasaribu (2021), who defines error analysis as the process of observing, analysing, and classifying the deviations of the rules of the second language and then revealing the systems operated by a learner. Furthermore, Tiarina (2017) proposes that error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language. Tiarina's (2017) study to investigate the grammatical errors made by higher education learners when they write essays in English revealed that that omission was the most frequent error category followed by mis-formation, addition and lastly, mis-ordering. These are some of the grammatical errors the researcher will also consider in this study.

2.3.5 What characterises an error?

Hasan and Munandar (2018) define an error as the use of language in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as faulty or incomplete learning. An error refers to a systematic error of competence, both covert and overt, that deviates from the norms of the target language (Hasan and Munandar, 2018). Ellis (1996) and Askari, Satariyan and Ranjbar (2021) differentiate between covert and overt errors. They define covert errors to be grammatically correct but not interpretable within the context of communication, whereas overt errors refer to the obviously ungrammatical utterances.

Furthermore, Pasaribu (2021) defines an error as a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. Tiarina (2017) accedes and adds that errors are systematic deviations from the norms of the language being learnt. These two scholars use the phrase systematic deviation in their definitions of an error, which can be interpreted as the deviation which happens every now and then.

Researchers differentiate between errors and mistakes. Pasaribu (2021) defines a mistake as an inconsistent deviation, which means sometimes the learner gets it correct but sometimes not. Hasan and Munandar (2018) state that a mistake is made

by a learner when writing or speaking, which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or other aspects of performance. Therefore, mistakes are not necessarily a result of one's ignorance of language rules at all.

Errors can also be classified as interlingual or intralingual (Hasan & Munandar ,2018). Interlingual errors can be identified as transfer errors which result from a learner's first language features, for example, grammatical, lexical or pragmatic errors. On the other hand, intralingual errors are overgeneralizations Hasan and Munandar. (2018) in the target language, resulting from ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete applications of rules and false concepts theorised. Ellis (1996) states that overgeneralisation errors occur when learners yield deviant structures based on other structures of the target language, while ignorance of rule restrictions refers to the application of rules to inappropriate contexts. Ellis (1996) further claims that incomplete application of rules arises when learners fail to develop a structure fully, while false concepts hypothesised occur when learners do not completely understand a distinction in the target language. While the issue of errors in language learning is important, research in this area is still inconclusive. The definition of error could still be looked at from various points of view.

2.3.6 Benefits of error analysis

In the study on the significance of learners' errors, Corder (1974) emphasises the importance of studying errors made by first additional language learners (Cristia, 2021). The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. It provides a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give indications as to the learning process (Cristia, 2021). Cristia (2021) adds that remedial exercises could be designed and focus more attention on the trouble spots. It is the learner, that determines what the input is. The teacher can present a linguistic form, but this is not necessarily the input, but simply what is available to be learned (Cristia, 2021).

Some studies have confirmed Corder's and Critia's findings, as Fadloeli and Yusuf (2020) state that language errors provide significant information regarding the learners' progress, or language system. Furthermore, Nndwamato (2017) postulated

that correcting error is done if there is some understanding of why the error occurred, thus error analysis is the study of errors to see what processes gave rise to them. Emvula (2020) supports that error analysis is not only beneficial to teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers by showing them a learner's progress, but it is also important to researchers and to the learners. It can point out to researchers what strategies learners use to learn a first additional language and indicate the type of errors learners make and why. When a learner has made an error, the most efficient way to teach them the correct forms is not by simply giving the correction promptly to a learner, but by letting the individual discover the error and test different hypotheses themselves. Corder states that the learner should find the correct linguistic form by searching for it (Cristia, 2021).

Additionally, Fadloeli and Yusuf (2020) argue that understanding errors cannot be accepted as the only purpose of conducting error analysis per se, but the purpose is extended to also applying what is learned from error analysis and making use of it to improve language competence in diverse situations. Numerous studies, including Natalia (2020), and Fadloeli and Yusuf (2020) demonstrate how error analysis can be used to advance writing skills. They analyse possible sources of errors in non-native-English writers' work and attempt to provide a process approach to writing where the error analysis can be useful in helping to achieve better writing skills.

In conclusion, error analysis helps language specialists/linguists realise that although errors sometimes hinder communication, they can often facilitate first additional language learning, and they play a pivotal role in training teachers and helping them identify and classify learners' errors, as well as helping them construct correction techniques. So, this study intended to test whether the researchers' tools brought the correct core of these grammatical errors or not. Researchers' common ground is that grammatical errors must be given a blind eye as they also form part of learning in a way. Other scholars have left out a gap of involving EFAL learners throughout their comparative research and this this study hopes to fill in the gap.

2.3.7 Challenges of error analysis

Error analysis also has its own challenges that we cannot legitimately overlook and some of the challenges are that most teachers of English are not native English speakers or English is not their mother tongue. A challenge therefore arises in the sense that there is a high likelihood that many EFAL teachers may not be adequately proficient in English, they may fail to use English correctly and, in some instances, may teach incorrect content to learners.

Corder (1974) cited in Emvula (2020) argues that error recognition heavily relies upon the analyst (researcher), making a correct interpretation of the learner's intended meaning of the context with error analysis, it can be too difficult to decide what an error is and what is not. This is mostly the case when it is task dependent. An error cannot be one size fits all situations because what is seen as a grammatical error may not be an error in another language. For instance, vocabulary tests are generally geared to a particular set of items. Using another word with the same meaning might get the student marks for ingenuity but still be a wrong answer. Even if errors count in diverse situations, they may have different weights. For instance, a spelling error would count deeply in a spelling test, and probably little in an extended descriptive essay. Error interpretation and evaluation hinge on the weight given to an error, which varies from exercise to exercise.

Another point on weaknesses of error analysis according to Cristia (2021) is that there is a danger in too much consideration to learners' errors. For instance, in the classroom the teachers tend to become so preoccupied with noticing errors that the correct utterance in the first additional language will go unnoticed. Although the diminishing of errors is an important criterion for growing language proficiency, the final goal of first additional language learning is still the achievement of communicative fluency in a language.

Again, another shortcoming is the overstressing of production data than comprehension data, which is equally important in developing an understanding of the process of language acquisition. Fadloeli and Yusuf (2020) argues that error analysis can be deemed to only focus effectively on learner production, that is speaking and writing, but not on learner reception, which is listening and reading.

Emvula (2020) claims that error analysis does not account for learners to make use of communicative strategies such as avoidance, when learners simply do not use a form with which they are uncomfortable with. For example, a learner who for one reason or another avoids a particular sound, word, structure or discourse category may be assumed, incorrectly, to have no difficulty therewith. The absence of error, therefore, does not necessarily reflect native-like competence since learners may be avoiding the very structure that poses difficulty for them (Cristia, 2021). Ultimately, Cristia (2021) pointed out that error analysis can keep people too closely focused on specific languages rather than viewing universal aspects of language. Notwithstanding that researcher still use error analysis to study certain questions in EFAL, there has been a substantial neglect on arduous search for a comprehensive theory to learners' errors.

It has however been argued in this study that the drawbacks that the researcher articulated above are outweighed by the benefiting consequences of error analysis as the researcher has also presented the benefits of error analysis in this study. Error analysis is one of the vital aspects which teachers can make use of to effectively teach EFAL to learners, thus it is a crucial aspect of language learning.

2.3.8 Studies on error analysis

The following critically discussed different studies on error analysis. In keeping with the First Additional Language context that is characteristic of this study, the researcher will make use of this section to look at error analysis studies in Africa because of their relevance to the South African context. This is, however, not to suggest that what happens in other African countries is exactly the same as what happens in South Africa, but the studies in the continent do inform the current study. Studies from Europe and Asia as well are also reviewed with the purpose of informing this study on broader aspects similar to it (Achiri-Taboh & Lando, 2017). Taking into consideration the scope of this study, it would be very challenging to expound every single study of error analysis that was conducted in all parts of the globe.

2.3.9 Error analysis studies in Africa

There are many research studies that have been generally conducted to investigate error analysis in Africa and some of the leading researches were conducted by researchers such as Achiri-Taboh and Lando (2017); Mao and Yeukai (2021); Mapunda and Mafu (2018) and Nndwamato, (2017) that at some point concur to this study.

Additionally, Mapunda and Mafu (2018) claim that there is a deep chemistry that takes place when several languages come into contact, as well as the competition that is associated with the struggle for status and prestige. In the South African context this is between South African indigenous home languages (the dominant language) and English language (Emvula, 2020). Mapunda and Mafu (2018) concludes by noting that although one cannot deny that English has had a measure of influence on the indigenous languages, the latter have had a much greater influence on English learning. This has consequently influenced a formation of distinct English Language that can be construed to be of Cameroonian in flavour.

When investigating whether the English used in Zimbabwe resulted in formation of a new type of English, Mao and Yeukai (2021); Mao and Yeukai (2021) drew up an inference that the Zimbabwean English does not constitute a new type of English, because it has not been localised following the criteria [of] stability, native speaker norms and degree of compactness within the speech community, in line with what happened in Nigerian and Ghanaian English. Nndwamato, (2017) also argues on the South African language issue that the pragmatics of the varieties of South African English commonly referred to as Black South African English (BSAE) have been shaped, over time, by educated bilinguals, through the transfer of features from African languages.

Achiri-Taboh and Lando, (2017) argue that the very obvious deviations from Standard English may suggest that the speaker was translating directly from their mother tongue. The following deviations in syntax in Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan English were identified: Omission of function words; Semantic extension of certain lexical items from African languages to cover various meanings and functions in English; Occurrence of certain redundancies, including pluralisation of mass nouns; Retention

of anaphoric pronouns in non-subject relativisation; Use of affirmative to yes/no questions; Unusual word order in adjectival phrases containing demonstrative or possessive pronouns; omission of the element more in comparative constructions (Achiri-Taboh & Lando, 2017). The following section will articulate more about studies of error analysis studies based in Europe.

2.3.10 Error analysis studies in Europe

The study by Stevens (2017) is on research respondents that speak Spanish languages as their mother tongue and English as a second language. Stevens (2017) conducted a mixed-method design on quantitative and qualitative differences in the production of lexical errors in the English written performance by young South Spanish learners. One pivotal aspect highlighted in Stevens's (2017) study was about the issue of length of the written work. They indicate that the lexical error production per composition was significantly lower. This implies that Spanish compositions happened to have a lower lexical error density, which means they contain a higher proportion of lexical errors than the essays of the Spanish learners (Achiri-Taboh & Lando, 2017). In order for the researcher to ensure that the length of this study is almost the same, this point was taken into consideration.

Furthermore, Stevens's (2017) analysis of a close procedure and reading comprehension test presented quite related or identical results for both language groups in respect of their linguistic competence in EFL. Considering these results, all mother tongue language groups were ascribed to the same proficiency level in English. Since it is not that clear in Stevens's (2017) findings why Spanish learners produced fewer lexical errors than their Spanish counterparts, further research needs to be conducted on this aspect, because there is a gap.

Again, Sasi and Lai (2021) also conducted a cross-sectional study with reference to Finnish-speaking and English-speaking learners of German. The researcher made use of learners' written output to analyse learner errors and identify reasons why different errors may have occurred. Sasi and Lai (2021) conclude that learners do not necessarily make the same errors in written and oral production of their work, due to different processing conditions and learners of one native language do not necessarily

make the same errors as learners of a different native language. The study also divulges that adult learners' errors result from cross-linguistic influence, that is, when one language influences another through borrowing, interference and language transfer.

Sasi and Lai (2021) argued that the age factor is not necessarily a decisive factor in second language learning or in cross-linguistic influence. Sasi and Lai's (2021) study is unique because the aspect of previously acquired languages other than mother tongue tends to be neglected in studies of error analysis in first additional language learning acquisition process. Studies that were conducted in Europe in the field of error analysis are common, but in this section, the study only discussed a few studies that contribute directly to this study. The next section discusses error analysis studies in Asia.

2.3.11 Error analysis studies in Asia

Songsukrujiroad, Xin and Kaewyod (2018) investigated the errors in the Chinese writing of the essay. This study also indicated several mistakes made by students in Chinese grammar. Xie (2019) also examined the students' linguistic accuracy in writing in Hong Kong. He found out that the Chinese students in this city made errors in academic writing due to the lack of knowledge of structure. Also, Amiri and Puteh (2017) studied the errors in academic writing made by students in Malaysia. They found that the students mostly made errors using sentence structures, articles, punctuation, and capitalisation. These studies confirmed that students in other countries encounter errors in academic writing at schools or universities.

In the Indonesian setting, several researchers also paid attention to the issues of errors in academic writing. The study of errors was conducted by Hasan and Munandar (2018) and the researchers which sought to also investigate grammatical errors learners make when they write essays in English Department at a university in Indonesia. The study involved students that were first years and never taught English at higher institution but wanted to test their level of English they obtained from secondary school. The key objective of Hasan and Munandar was to examine the kind of grammatical errors by observing a piece of writing from each learner with

intermediate level of English to learners with a proficient standard of English which are based in the English Department in Indonesia. All the learners involved in the study of Hasan and Munandar (2018) previously wrote International Communication (TOEIC) English test and their results proved that they were to be regarded as learners that are proficient in English and their results were compared with other results of learners that were regarded to be of Basic English level.

In addition, Hasan and Munandar (2018) analysed the length of learners' writings and errors in their writings to investigate if there was a correlation between the submitted writings and their TOEIC official tests' results. Hasan and Munandar (2018) assessed the subjects' writing and recorded all the statements found to be having errors for the purposes of identifying the types and frequency of errors. The study presented that an estimated 26% of errors found were influenced by first language transfer. Other major errors identified were wrong words (16%), prepositions (15%) and articles (14%).

There is a concrete correlation between the current study and Hasan and Munandar's (2018) study since both studies' focus is based on investigating the type of grammatical errors and the frequency of grammatical errors learners make when they write descriptive essays in English (Hasan and Munandar, 2018). This therefore makes Hasan and Munandar quite relevant to the present study. The difference between the current study and Hasan and Munandar (2018) study is that the current study focuses on all learners who write the essay question for the third term English paper 3 examination; Hasan and Munandar (2018) study only focused on analysing grammatical errors in essays scripts of learners that obtained higher marks for TOEIC test, that they had written at tertiary level (Hasan and Munandar, 2018). Therefore, the research findings that will be presented in Chapter 4 of the current study may demonstrate that Hasan and Munandar (2018) study has quite enough similarities with the current study.

Another study was conducted by Fauzan, Aulya and Noor (2020) that aimed to investigate errors that ESL students make when they write using English. While Hasan and Munandar (2018) focused only on learners whose English proficiency was excellent, on the other side, Fauzanet et al (2020) focused on investigating errors that learners with poor English language proficiency make when they write English descriptive texts. In addition, Fauzan et al (2020) investigated the errors by analysing,

describing, and providing explanations for the cross linguistic influences found in the 50 essays that were written by learners with poor English proficiency, that is, learners who obtained less than a half out of a 30-mark English essay. In addition, they investigated the manner and extent of influence which their mother tongue played (in their case, Bahasa Melayu) in acquisition of English.

The written pieces were analysed for substratum transfer in the areas of lexis, grammar and syntax produced. The analysis revealed items which had been wrongly used due to the interference from first, not additional language, and low proficiency of the target language. In their findings they identified items like approximation; local language (coined words and slang); code switch; medium transfer; inappropriate use of tenses; omitting articles and wrong usage of articles; adjective morphology errors; prefabricated patterns; and literal translation.

Other studies were conducted for error analysis to investigate the types of grammatical errors made by Taiwanese EFL students when they write in English (Alghazo &Alshraideh, 2020; Kraichoke, 2017). Qualitative research methods were deployed to collect data from Taiwanese EFL students and therefore may be at some point relevant to the current study since this study is also based on qualitative method. Alghazo and Alshraideh, (2020) conducted a study that involved 169 research participants from 53 Taiwanese college students whose English writings were analysed. The research findings presented that, 928 errors were found, and grammatical errors were the main errors found. Alghazo and Alshraideh also found that there were 66% semantic errors that occurred 18% of the time, and lexical errors that occurred with the least frequency of 16%. Kraichoke (2017) analysed 26 essays scripts that were written by Taiwanese EFL students at tertiary level. The findings of Kraichoke's study presented that there 4 most error frequencies were sentence structures (30.43%), wrong verb forms (21.01%), sentence fragments (15.94%), and wrong use of words (15.94%).

It was further found that the misuse of English articles is another grammatical error that Taiwanese EFL students commonly make when they write descriptive English essays (Alfaqiri, 2018). The rate at which Taiwanese EFL students frequently repeated grammatical errors of misusing articles motivated Alfaqiri (2018) to infer that using

English articles correctly may be one of the most challenging grammatical parts for Taiwanese EFL students.

On the contrary to the Alfaqiri, Alfaqiri's (2018) study investigated grammatical errors' and argues that if this is the case, then none should blame their first additional language for the challenges encountered by Taiwanese students in respect to correctly using English articles. The distinction from Alfaqiri's study is, the current one is solely on high school learners and not on tertiary students. As Taiwanese students are at tertiary level, their cognitive level with regard to language learning is quite enough to understand that their first language should not interfere when they learn a second language and they therefore can easily learn English grammatical rules such as using correct verbs and articles. Overall, all these 3 researches on Taiwanese tertiary students are compulsive and could be significant to the current study as its error analysis is also focused on the English article system.

Another related study was conducted by Miko (2018), who sought to investigate and analyse grammatical errors made in 32 written English tasks, by 36 first year students in a Japanese university. Miko (2018) identified three types of article errors: omission; unnecessary insertion; and confusion. Miko conducted this study by requiring that the students read an English short story first and thereafter write 4 tasks, each ranging from 200 to 250 words about the story they had read. These tasks consisted of making a summary, answering a question, creating an original sequel and writing a critique.

In addition, Miko's (2018) study investigated 2 error patterns committed by Japanese students that studied English as a second language: the genitive markers *"of/'s"* indicating possession, and the English article system *"a/an/the"*. The former was involved in examining the students' misuse of the English prepositions of which Miko (2018) claimed to have originated from the students' first language. Errors with regard to usage of articles was another type examined by Miko. The findings of Miko indicated that the challenge of struggling to correctly use articles was influenced by students' inadequate understanding of articles, deficiency of experience in using articles and relying too much on oversimplified textbooks. Miko (2018) agreed with the findings of Alfaqiri (2018) that another foundation of this challenge was on the fact that Japanese language does not have the article system and consequently Japanese encounter

challenges when they learn and use articles as their native language does not have language articles for grammar purposes.

Furthermore, Amir (2022) researched about the spelling errors that Singaporean primary school learners make when they write English phrases. The main objective of Amir's study was to determine whether the spelling errors made by primary school learners in Singaporean primary school could be in a manner than one may infer that their first language played a predominant influential role to them committing spelling errors, or whether they displayed related patterns to those made by native English speakers at the same level. Amir's (2022) found that the spelling errors the primary school learners involved in the study made were influenced by phonological matter, which is the study of the sound systems in language. The findings of Amir's further indicated that the Singaporean English had a major impact on spelling errors made in both classes. The study also found that this was not the case on native speaking counterparts. These findings are coherent with Sasi and Lai's (2021) findings as elucidated above that learners that are of monolingual language background do not necessarily make the same errors as learners who are of bilingual language background.

Hart (2017) conducted a compulsive study which analysed samples consisting mostly of small numbers of subjects. Hart (2017) made an observation on the writing samples of 4 adult ESL learners – Spanish, Italian, Vietnamese and Cambodian – with a focus on syntactic structures and considered errors made in semantics and spelling. The four learners were given two sets of sequential pictures, one at a time, and asked to write a story in English, beginning with the first picture and ending with the last, in the order presented in each set. Unlike in many other studies where subjects were given a limited time to do the tasks, there was no time limit for that task. However, the four subjects completed the tasks in an hour timeframe. The four learners were assessed before the tasks, using the Australian Second Language Proficiency Ratings (ASLPR) in order to determine their second language writing proficiency level in their writing skills. The study has similarities to the present study and a minimal distinction, because both studies involve different first language speakers, and researched on second language while this study focused on first additional language.

This study reveals that while some first language strategies may transfer to the second language writing process, lower proficiency writers struggle in utilising all strategies that could help their writing process in first additional language. Thus, this study suggests that first additional language writers faced with writing tasks requiring a first additional language proficiency level above that of the writer, do not transfer first language strategies to the first additional language writing process, even though the writer may have a multiplicity of strategies available when completing the same task in the first language (Achiri-Taboh & Lando, 2017). These findings could inform upcoming studies.

Sasi and Lai (2021) and Amir (2022) presented findings that young second language learners make more errors in their second language learning process than errors they make in their first language. All these studies discussed above are useful in guiding the aim of the present study. These studies did not only give insight into how a learner learns a first additional language and the factors that impact on that process, but also assist to understand some of the errors that first additional language learners make in the process of first additional language learning.

2.3.12 Synthesis of Error Analysis studies

Based on the foregoing discussions, it has been apparent that numerous studies that sought to address grammatical errors in first additional language learning are continuously conducted by various scholars. Some scholars such as Kraichoke, (2017); Alghazo and Alshraideh (2020); Hasan and Munandar (2018); Fauzan et al (2020); Alfaqiri (2018) and Miko (2018) based their studies on extensively analysing data collected from learners who studied English as a second language and shared a common first language.

In addition, some of the researchers, for instances, Sasi and Lai (2021); Hart (2017); Amir (2022) and Stevens (2017) focused only on learners that learned English Additional Language with distinct first language backgrounds, for example. There is a very limited number of studies that focused on other languages, such as Sasi and Lai (2021). Some empirical studies have shown first language transfer to be a recurrent cause of learners' errors, irrespective of data source, written or verbal (Hasan and

Munandar, 2018); Fauzan et al (2020); and Amir (2022). Most of these errors were influenced by mother tongue interference.

2.4 Conclusion

All the studies that the researcher has reviewed above are in one way or another relevant to this research. The researcher has however identified that the missing gap, which the researcher sought to address in the current study, is to conduct further investigation to examine the grammatical errors which grade 12 learners make when they write descriptive essays of English First Additional Language subject. The next chapter will describe the research methodology used to gather accurate data as aimed by the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research method is chapter 3 of this research. As literature review on the previous chapter provided a concise overview of the theoretical framework, this chapter is therefore providing a research design and methods that adhere to required ethics of research. This chapter gives a clear discussion of the research approach that was applied to investigate grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essay. The chapter begins with the description of the research approach and design, followed by the target population, sampling, data collection, ethical considerations related to data collection, data analysis, internal and external validity of the study and finally a conclusion.

3.2 Research Approach

The type of data that the researcher wants to collect influences the specific research approach for the study. This research project employed a qualitative research approach. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a qualitative study is defined as an inquiry process to understand a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of participants and conducted in a natural setting. A qualitative approach explains and interprets the comprehension underlying the reasons, sentiments and motivations of the data which is collected by the researcher.

Creswell (2018) further plots that huge segments in every definition are that the way to deal with research includes philosophical suspicion just as unmistakable techniques or methodology. Along these lines, at first the investigation of the study incorporates the one type of a methodology as a technique on the grounds that the meetings are directed, and of which a very number of participants are likewise being required and organized factually, which is a qualitative approach. In this way, the two approaches are very reasonable for the examination of this study.

The chosen research design is appropriate to investigate grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays at Mmakgabo senior secondary school. According to the study's best comprehension, the data about the participants and respondents of the

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study, sentiments can be noted down during the time of communication and interaction whereas the objective statistics as well as numerical analysis of the study can be drawn when interviewing and scrutinising the scripts of the participants. Therefore, the qualitative approach is the best in interrelating the participants' understandings, opinions, statistics, and numerical analysis, with the available literature and the theoretical frameworks to complete the study.

In addition, the researcher selected a case study as a method to organise and carry out the research (Leedy & Ormond, 2001). Similarly, Cresswell (2003: 15) defines a case study as a method that the researcher uses to explore in depth a programme, an event, an activity, a process, or one or more individuals. Leedy and Ormond (2001), on the other hand, further opine that a case study needs to have a defined time frame. This can be either a single case or a case bounded by time and place (Creswell, 1998).

3.3 Research Design

The study used a case study design. According to Creswell (2014), a case study can be defined as a research method that is used to investigate an individual, a group of people or an event. This allows the researcher to broaden the understanding of the research project and to go beyond the surface. The importance of the case study as one of the research designs is that it allows the researcher to comprehend a particular problem in a deep manner. It also allows the researcher to be open to rich and qualitative data. This approach was therefore appropriate for this research project since the researcher gathered information without manipulation of variables. Moreover, it can be helpful in order to describe the current conditions and situations based on the perceptions of the respondents of the study (Gulsecen & Kuba, 2006).

3.4 Population

A population refers to any collection of specified groups of human beings or of non-human entities such as objects, educational institutions, time units, geographical areas, prices of wheat or salaries drawn by individuals (Wani, 2019). It may be argued that a research population should be diligently selected so that the research topic, research

questions and research objectives may precisely link with the population so that even the research is found to be relevant.

The target population of the study was Koloti circuit in the Capricorn north district. Koloti circuit consists of eight (8) quintile two (2) high schools where English is offered as First Additional Language. There are only two classes for language subjects at Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School in "Moletji Moshate" village and the researcher chose English learners, because it is his field of specialisation. Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School consisted of five (5) grades namely 10-12, with the total enrolment of four hundred and two (402) average learners in terms of performance where fifty-seven (57) were grade twelves (12s). There were thirteen (13) teachers at the school. The target population of the study was chosen purposively because it fell in a district considered to lack level sevens (grade average) in English First Additional Language **(DBE, 2020).** Therefore, it was imperative to conduct a study to investigate grammatical errors made by Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School learners in their descriptive essays. Research had been done on academic achievement in other subjects, but not specifically in English.

3.5 Sampling

According to Majid (2018), a sample means a selected group of some elements from the totality of the population while sampling refers to a process of selecting a sample from the population. The sampling method that was used in this study was purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is described by Patton (2002) as a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources. This includes identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell & Plano Clarke, 2011).

The sampling design of the study targeted the population of learners' descriptive essays scripts in Koloti circuit in the Capricorn north district. The study used purposive sampling to select 57 learners' EFAL descriptive essays scripts that the researcher had marked during the June tests since there were no mid-year examinations because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Three teachers were also sampled as they offered English First Additional Language at the school.

The motive behind purposive sampling was to ensure that the descriptive essays scripts that were analysed were not selected by looking at the cognitive level of learners. Instead, they were selected purposively so that the findings could be empirical, and outcomes of the analysis not determined by the researcher's desires, which would otherwise degrade the quality of the study (Kabir, 2016). In addition, the purposive sampling design implicates that all the fifty-seven (57) scripts were given fair and equal opportunity to form part of the study without leaving any document out. Furthermore, the very same technique was used to select 3 fellow colleagues that were also teaching English first additional language to participate in the study by interviewing them. Interviews included asking them questions relevant to grammatical errors that they would have identified when marking descriptive essays.

3.5.1 Ethical issues related to sampling

The study was not discriminating, therefore, anyone in the Grade 12 English class was purposively chosen. This criterion was the determining factor for participation, regardless of any population conditions.

3.6 Choosing of the sample

The fifty-seven (57) participants in the Grade 12 English class were chosen purposively to collect data. There were only two (2) Grade 12 English classes from which participants were chosen. Teacher number 1 is the first participant; there is no numerical interval between teachers used, therefore, each teacher was chosen. The second participant was teacher number 2 and the last participant was teacher number 3. If any of the chosen teachers was not prepared to participate, several teachers on the list would have been minimised to two (2), using the same purposive sampling method.

3.7 Data collection

According to Clerx et al. (2015), data collection involves a procedure by which a researcher gathers information on variable interest, using various research methods, for the purposes of answering research questions, testing hypotheses and evaluating research outcomes.

The study used the research methods outlined and elucidated above to collect data that was essential for the study and in accordance with the research design. The distinction between qualitative method and quantitative method has been clearly identified by Farnsworth (2019): qualitative research generates textual data (non-numerical) whereas quantitative research produces "numerical data" or statistical data that can be converted into numbers.

3.7.1 Data collection approach and method

James and Laura (2013) opine that data collection instruments are used to record information when observing the behaviours or attributes of individuals or groups in a specific situation. Thus, this study linked the results where it was conducted with the primary purpose of addressing the problems. The principal of the school, three (3) teachers, fifty-seven (57) learners and their parents completed consent letters prior to the conducting and recording of the individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis by the researcher. The research instruments were the semi-structured interview schedule and document analysis as descriptive essays, so each interview and analysed essays were recorded for validity purposes.

3.7.2 Characteristics of the data collection instruments

Research instrument is defined as a tool used to collect, measure, and analyse data related to the research interests. The research instrument can include interviews, tests, surveys, or checklists (Editage Insight, 2020). Davis (2021) states that research instruments are often prepared by the researcher and further outlined various types of research instruments which include rating scales, questionnaires, interview schedules/guides, self-checklists, tally sheets, attitude scales, flowcharts, personality inventories, performance checklists, achievement/aptitude tests, time-and-motion logs, projective devices, observation forms and sociometric devices.

For this study, the researcher prepared interview questions as the first instrument and the second instrument was document analysis of English First Additional Language Paper 3 June practice examination which comprised solely of descriptive essays. In addition, Davis (2021) asserts that the purpose of research instrument is to prepare questions purposefully;

designed to draw out or elicit responses from determined research respondents with the aim to collect data.

3.7.2.1 Interview

The researcher opted for structured interviews because they tend to be simple compared to other forms of data collection. They also enable participants to express themselves freely and with high concentration (Creswell 2014:127). According to Pollock (2019), a structured interview is a type of interview that is completely planned, which means every interviewee gets the same interview questions (appendix …). Interviews do not channel participants on what to answer, but how to be part of it. In other words, the interview was used as a data collection instrument for the researcher to meet the objectives of the research. Three English teachers were interviewed through the in-person question and answer type of interview. The English teachers were chosen for interviews in order to determine the grammatical errors that they had so far noticed when they marked the English First Additional Language essays scripts of learners. EFAL teachers were in a good position to provide answers for the research questions of this study. During the interview session, COVID-19 protocols were adhered to, such as encouraging the participants to observe social distancing, washing and sanitising of hands. No participant was allowed to participate without wearing a mask.

3.7.2.2 Document analysis

Document analysis is said to be a type of qualitative research strategy wherein documents are analysed and vigorously interpreted by the researcher to hand out a voice and meaningful views around a researched topic (Frey, 2018). The current study analysed the descriptive essays of Grade 12 learners as a data collection tool. The statistics and understandings were integrated in order to best describe the study. The study analysed scripts of the learners English 'descriptive essays to identify any possible grammatical error. The researcher evauated all the scripts and identified grammatical error.

3.8 Quality criteria

The researcher preferred to develop and test the data collection instrument through quality criteria using the concepts such as credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and Internal and external validity of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121).

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is to believe that the research results are true (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). In other words, credibility can also be explicated as the accuracy of the identification and description of the subject of the study and determines as to whether the information given by the study is truthful or not. Credibility can also be referred to as a degree of reliability of the study based on the correctness of the analysis of data and the participants' original views. The researcher ensured that the study was genuine by interpreting data and findings obtained from the participants in a way that was correct.

3.8.2 Transferability

Mandal (2018) indicates that researchers can establish transferability for their studies by furnishing readers with evidence which prove that the findings of their research can also apply to other contexts, situations, times, and populations. It is vital to outline that it is much unlikely that you can, as a researcher, prove that the findings of your research conducted will be applicable. It is of course the duty of a researcher to furnish methods that allows for repetition of the study in a different scenario. As Korstjens and Moser (2018) correctly state, it is not the naturalist's task to provide an index of transferability; but his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers.

Transferability has been considered to be a point to which the results of a given study can be transferred to a different surrounding or used with a different population (Mandal, 2018). In the current study, transferability was ensured by making sure that the selected sample was representative of the wider population from which it had been extracted, therefore, making the results applicable to other situations within the designated population. Transferability could be questionable in this research project, given the small sample size of 5 learners.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which the researcher believes that the same results would be produced if the study was replicated (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). Thus, the study will

acknowledge the problems that may arise appertaining the degree of dependability by doing a thorough study of the findings. In this sense, dependability was ensured by a thorough supervision of data, and people can depend on this research project since it is an interview that took place in a natural environment and not a laboratory research where scientific findings could be manipulated.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the qualitative research report is accurate, unbiased, and can be confirmed by others or a point in which all the data and the problem statement of the study can be confirmed or proven to be certain of a high degree of quality (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thus, the study was reliable and would not mislead the readers. Furthermore, the researcher in this study refrained from invading the research findings and distorting the information of the study for the suitability of the researcher's problem. In addition, the study was aimed to support and establish the certainty and validity of the findings in order to verify its authenticity. The findings of the research project can be confirmed through the original recordings of the interviews and the transcriptions thereof.

3.8.5. Internal and external validity of the study

Validity is the extent to which a concept or conclusion is well founded and likely to corresponds accurately to the real world (Webster, 2020). For this research study to be reliable, it also needed to be valid. The findings of the study were confirmed or verified by the original interview audio recordings as proof that no data had been fabricated. The research with a high validity index produced a result that corresponded with real-world experiences which might be present in the physical or social world.

3.9 Ethical considerations from the researcher

The research has taken into consideration the following ethical consideration for his study: anonymity, informed consent, permission, confidentiality and privacy, and voluntary participation.

3.9.1 Anonymity

The identity of all the participants will be kept confidential thus there is no personal information of the participants that will be revealed hence participation will be anonymous.

3.9.2 Informed consent

The researcher obtained consent from research participants before conducting the data collection. The letters were attached in the appendices at the end of this document as instruments used to obtain the necessary consent. The researcher also outlined the nature and purpose of the study to the researcher participants when obtaining their consent to ensure that the participants understand what the study entails.

3.9.3 Permission

The researcher also obtained permission from the school management. Practically, the researcher sent letters to the school principal to request a permission to conduct research at the school and on the sampled research participants. In addition, some letters were sent to parents of the learners and teachers in order to obtain the necessary permission.

3.9.4 Confidentiality and privacy

The data that were collected from the participants was treated with utmost confidentiality and the privacy of all the participants was upheld.

3.9.5 Voluntary Participation

The researcher also explained that the participation of all respondents was voluntary and there was no participant that was forced in any manner to participate. All research participants were protected that any kind of harm.

3.10 Data analysis

A transcript of the recordings was submitted to each participant for clarification purposes before the data was analysed. Kerlinger (1986) defines data analysis as the categorising and summarising of data in order to obtain answers to the research questions. This research project acknowledged proper data analysis of the research problem.

Mouton (2012:108) further refers to data analysis as a path of breaking up the information into understandable links and themes. Inductive coding was used for the analysis of the data and this refers to a process whereby the researcher reads and interprets raw textual data to develop concepts and themes to enable interpreting of the data (Thomas, 2006; Bradley & Jackson, 2013). The researcher read the data and found patterns for labelling and coding purposes. Themes emerged from the responses and were labelled to interpret the responses and to answer the research questions.

3.11 Conclusion

The focal point of interest for this chapter gave the exploration plan that was performed to collect data by using individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis. All the steps followed by the researcher were elucidated as recorded interviews and analysis of documents were used to collect data from a sample. The management and analysis of the data will be explicated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION, AND INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a report of the research findings conducted at Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School, Koloti circuit is elucidated. The primary purpose of the study was to investigate grammatical errors made by learners in written descriptive essays. Thus, this chapter linked the results where the study was conducted with the primary purpose of the study. This accomplishment was made possible through the analysis of documents and teachers' interviews. Furthermore, this analysis of data was followed by the conclusion of the chapter at the end.

Besides presenting the findings, the chapter will also precisely provide detailed discussion and interpretations of the findings. According to Serrat (2018), research findings encompass an empirical result that is rooted from the data the researcher collected for his/her research project and is independent from all opinions including the opinion of the researcher and expert opinions. As these findings require discussion and interpretations. The interpretation of the findings consists of the researcher's analysis of the data collected while the discussion of the findings makes use of the research interpretations to provide answers to research questions and substantiate them with scholarly work (Grant, 2020).

4.2 Analysis of learners' descriptive essays

The document analysis was the second method of data collection for this study. This method was used to emphasise and confirm the findings or responses obtained through interview method. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. It is deployed just like other analytical methods in qualitative research, it requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge from the proposed problem (Asdal & Reinertsen, 2020). Furthermore, documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's influence. Documents are 'social facts', which are produced, shared, and used in socially organised ways. As alluded

in literature review this method was presented in the form of subheadings and the researcher outlined and discussed the grammatical errors which were found when analysing learners' descriptive essays.

According to Mentan (2019), descriptive essay is one that describes something, defines something or paints a picture. A writer might describe a person, place, object, or even memory of special significance. The study chose this type of an essay because that is where learners are challenged to express themselves linguistically. The study focused on the four following categories to scrutinise grammatical errors:

- ➢ grammatical
- ➢ syntactic
- ➢ lexical
- ➢ semantic and substance

4.2.1 Appropriate academic register

In schooling, the concept register is based on different styles of writing such as informality, formality, familiarity and ceremonial type of writing. These styles differ in the context that they are used. According to Biber and Conrad (2019), an appropriate academic register refers to the scholarly language that is utilised in education for motivations behind learning. This language advances alongside the information understudies create over the long periods of tutoring and over distinctive branches of knowledge, ending up increasingly thick and theoretical as understudies advance. Since what happens in school is the advancement of new learning that is specific, the language used to understand that information takes on particular highlights that make it not quite the same as the language we use in living our regular daily existences. Students experience the etymological examples of scholastic language in the specific circumstances, assignments, talk, messages, and trial of school subjects. Scholarly language draws on talks of mathematics, science, history, language expressions, and different subjects, re-contextualized for motivations behind tutoring and winding up additional testing at each level.

The above exploration connects with what the study found while conducted. In the endeavour of investigating the use of grammatical errors, the researcher found that students mix up the registers. Thus, they use formal register, informal register, and

familiarity register collaboratively. The reason behind this might be because they lack knowledge, they made a mistake, or they lack clarity since they are still in the learning process hence, they are committing such grammatical errors. This is also in the same line with the study conducted by Emvula (2020). This study found that learners lack familiarity with the typical lexico-grammatical environment of words. In this sense, they use the informal register and the familiarity register in place of formal register. It is inevitable that proper academic writing has to be formally written in order to meet the grammatical rules of the context.

Furthermore, Peter & Singaravelu (2020) believe that if students lack knowledge in passing on a suitable level of capability in their academic essays or writings, they will be on the verge of using the informal language patterns, as they cannot differentiate between different registers that are available. All the above-mentioned findings answer the research question number 5.2.1 wherein the researcher shone the spotlight on finding the form of grammatical errors learners express the most in their descriptive essay writing.

Moreover, words such as 'maybe', 'a lot' and 'really' were found in the essays of the learners which are regarded as informal. According to Peter & Singaravelu (2020), these words are informal, and learners are mostly misusing them. These words are examples of the familiar register. This familiar register has to be utilised only when is grammatically correct. The impact of the utilisation of these words can be grammatically wrong because of the condition that learners wind up inside them. For example, Mmakgabo learners collaborate with each other in the social context. Thus, some of them take this language example and use it in their scholastic composition as though they are keeping in touch with somebody they know. Below is a further presentation, analysis, and interpretation of other grammatical errors found in the study.

The analysis of errors in this study is informed by various researches on errors in student writing (Nndwamato, 2017; Saneka & De Witt: 2019; Emvula, 2020 & Mailula, 2021). Firstly, the selection of a corpus of language was done followed by the identification of errors. Next, the researcher classified the errors according to their grammatical features. After categorising each error, percentage according to their occurrence were calculated.

From the written work of the learners, the study counted the errors in order to answer the research questions. The study concentrated on most grammatical errors found and compared the frequency of occurrence with the least repeated. In line with the Taxonomy of Error Analysis designed by James (1998), categories and sub-categories such as the following were used for this research to record all the grammatical errors made by the learners:

- grammatical (prepositions, articles, reported speech, singular/plural, adjectives, subject-verb agreement, irregular verbs, tenses, concord, informal, contractions and possessive case)
- syntactic (nouns and pronouns, pattern, sentence and word order)
- lexical (word choice)
- semantic and substance (capitalisation, and spelling).

The mentioned categories will be tabulated in their respective and relevant subheadings and their respective data will be also incorporated in their tables.

4.2.2 Contractions

Number of scripts	Number of learners that misused contradictions	Number of learners that did not misuse contradictions
57	38	19
Percentage	67%	33%
Words involved in contractions misuse	wouldn't, couldn't, isn't, shouldn't, don't, wasn't, didn't and can't, won't, it's, mustn't and so on	

Contractions refer to a shortened version of a written or spoken word by leaving other letters or speech sounds outside (Mailula, 2021). However, a written version is studied in this sense because the study focused on the essay writing of learners. Based on the findings of this study, the misuse of contractions was identified from the scripts of some participants. The findings presented in the table above prove that majority of learners misused contractions as out of the total number of 57 scripts that were

observed 38 scripts were found to have the misused of contractions, this includes the contractions such as, wouldn't, couldn't, isn't, shouldn't, don't, wasn't, didn't and so on. This implies that there are only 19 learners who did not misuse the contractions in their descriptive essay writing.

Furthermore, the above table assures that most grade 12 learners are still misusing the contractions that result in grammatical errors. This type of grammatical error appears to be common among high school learners. The findings of this study are supported by Mailula (2021) who also found the same kinds of contractions and also discovered that social media is the dominant cause of the use of these contractions. The above findings relate to Chomsky's UG theory that states that our daily environment influences our language acquisition (Kim, 2018). As it appears, learners could have been affected by the social media environment. This further relates to EA theory which states that sometimes learners reach a stage where their everyday language interferes with learning second language. The same appears to be the case in this kind of contractions (Nndwamato, 2017).

4.2.3 The misuse of personal language/first-person pronouns

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with errors when using personal pronouns	No. of scripts with no errors when using personal pronouns
57	22	35
Percentage	39%	61%

According to Kaufman & Straus (2021), personal pronouns are pronouns that allude to the speaker or author (Singular) or to a gathering that incorporates the speaker or essayist (Plural). The above table simply confirms that 22 learners committed errors when using first person pronouns, for example: Incorrect: "*I hate it when a customer doesn't know what they want.*" In the sentence above, the noun customer is singular. However, the pronoun they, used later in the sentence, is plural. Learners managed

to write committing personal pronouns for example: "*I hate it when a customer doesn't know what he/she want.*" As a result, this clearly shows that there is a smaller number of learners, who use the incorrect personal pronouns in their essay writing. Primary schools can be a contributing factor to this result. This is because most teachers neglect teaching the correct use of first-person pronouns. Thus, the incorrect use of first-person pronoun makes the work of learners to be more ungrammatically correct.

However, writing test graders are in general somewhat more adaptable in tolerating first-person pronouns since the prompts urge learners to write from personal grammatical experience. Therefore, since most papers learners write are not for a state test, they are advised to not to make use of these pronouns repeatedly to shun from wrong usage. Thus, it is critical to know when the first- or second-person pronoun is suitable in an exposition, and when it is not. Various studies including the study of Saneka & De Witt (2019), and Emvula (2020) support the findings of this study as they found that most learners do not misuse of personal language/first-person pronouns. This means that most learners do not have any challenges with regard to using first person pronouns.

4.2.4 The use of an informal spoken language in academic writing

Bussey (2022) asserts that spoken language refers to a person's order to communicate and influence the social world they are in, including using talk to learn and construct knowledge jointly with others in both formal and informal contexts. With regard to using the informal spoken language, it is when one uses the spoken language features in writing the academic works which may sometimes be considered ungrammatical. This is prohibited because academic writing requires formal grammatical writing which is objective or abstract.

The informal features of a spoken language include 'wanna' for, 'want to, 'gonna' for 'got to', 'they'd and so on. Furthermore, the gap fillers are also the examples of informal spoken language and they should not be used in academic writing. This includes words like 'um', 'uh-huh', 'I see' and so on. Relatively, the study conducted by Mailula (2021) found that learners used informal spoken language such as 'they'll for they will', 'don't and didn't' for 'do not and did not' and also used the ones mentioned above.

This is an indication that most learners still have a challenge with this aspect of grammatical rule in academic writing.

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with use of informal spoken language	No. of scripts with no use of informal spoken language
57	3	54
Percentage	5%	95%

The findings presented in the table above indicate that these learners used features such as, 'this essay wanna' to entail the role of the essay or what was anticipated to be done by the essay. This clearly shows that most learners know the difference between the use of the written language and the spoken language, hence, it is only few learners who are still using the language of a social world in a wrong context that leads to grammatical errors.

Moreover, these 3 scripts represent 5%. This shows that 95 percent of the population did not utilise the informal spoken language in their academic writing and the interpretation thereof clearly proves that most learners understand the standard of English to use in academic writing. The recent empirical studies of Emvula (2020), and Nndwamato (2017), concur with this study's findings as they found that many learners do not use informal language when they write, and this indicates that informal language usage is not a challenge to learners.

4.2.5 The use of home speech pattern

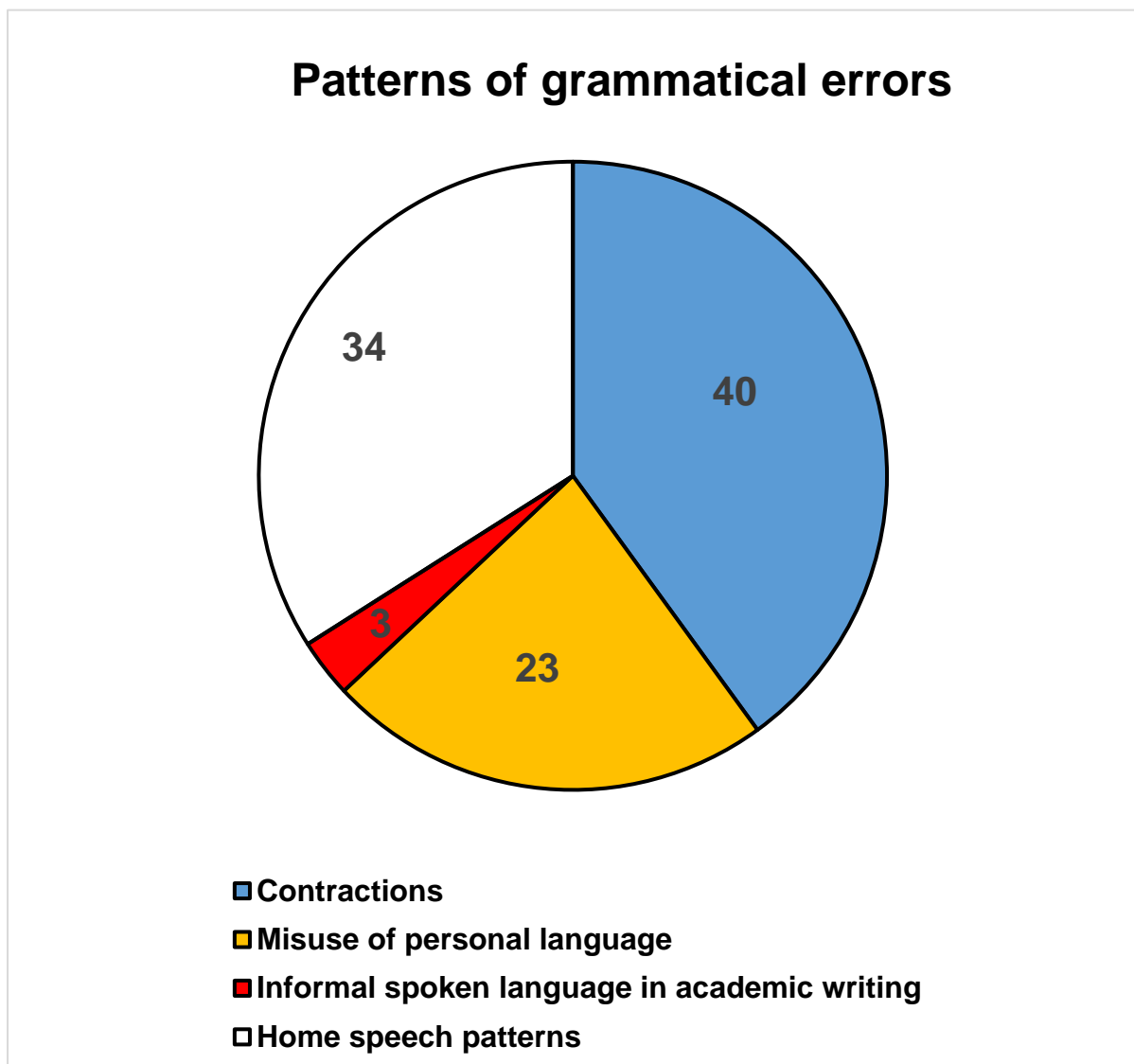| Number of scripts	No. of scripts with use of home speech pattern	No. of scripts with no use of home speech pattern
57	32	25
Percentage	56%	34%

The above table shows that 32 learners which translated to 56% used home speech patterns, where only 25 learners out of 57 that translated to 34% did not use home speech patter. In defining the home speech pattern, Mahan (2018) states that it refers to a language design of the learners or the way in which ones' home language is organised. These include the structure, parts of speech, grammatical rules, functions, and other language features. With regard to the study, the researcher found that the participants were using the home speech pattern when they write using the first additional language, English in this context. This finding is in the same line with what was found by Emvula (2020) after reviewing essay scripts of learners. In this study, it was found that home speech patterns stood out in student writing and that the patterns were most prevalent in the use of verbs. Learners committed a grammatical error by not changing the verb to correspond with the subject as it is done when applying the correct grammatical rule.

However, Emvula's study found the pattern of the correspondence between subject and verb whereas the current study found the pattern of using a noun and a pronoun consecutively. For instance, in Sepedi language, it is grammatically correct for one to say *'Mma o ruta bana'*, which means the mother teaches children. In this sense, the Sepedi language allows people to use the pattern of the noun and pronoun consecutively.

This, therefore, has a greater influence when learners write the first additional language. Thus, the researcher found that some learners have used double subjects in their writing, and that is grammatically incorrect in the English language. For instance, the researcher found that some learners were writing words such as "*people they are*", *"the teacher he is effectively teaching"* and *"Aristotle he stated that and so on"*.

Furthermore, the above proves that EA theory and Chomsky's UG theory apply to and are correct with regard to how a mother tongue or home language interferes with learning a second language (Kim, 2018; Emvula, 2020). In this study, Sepedi as home language of learners also contributed to some grammatical errors made by learners. Emvula (2020) found that the above-mentioned kind of grammatical error is due to learners' direct translation from their home language to English when they wrote English sentences. This direct translation consequently causes learners to commit

grammatical errors since English and home languages do not have similar grammatical patterns. The kinds of mistakes made by learners entailed that they did not understand the meaning of sentence subject or rules not to use sentence subject and pronoun, hence they made an error of using double subjects in their sentences. Therefore, this study closes a gap created by what Emvula's study did not find. The Pie Chart below contains the patterns of grammatical errors.

Patterns of grammatical errors

- ◫ Contractions
- ◫ Misuse of personal language
- ◼ Informal spoken language in academic writing
- ☐ Home speech patterns

4.3 Evidence of grammatical errors

4.3.1 Sentence initial conjunction

In simple forms, the sentence-initial conjunction is when a person initiates a sentence with a conjunction. The use of these conjunctions in initiating a sentence is very much restricted in most written genres. In addition, Bell (2007) states that the preferred addictive conjunctions to start a sentence includes moreover, furthermore, in addition, etc., whereas the preferred contrastive conjunctions to start a sentence include however, on the contrary, etc.

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with the use of grammatical sentence-initial conjunctions	No. of scripts with no use of grammatical sentence-initial conjunctions
57	24	33
Percentage	42%	58%

The above table indicates that most learners are still using the sentence-initial conjunctions such as 'but' and 'and' to initiate their sentences. The data showed that 24 learners used the grammatical sentence-initial conjunctions such as furthermore, however, etc., whereas 33 learners did not use the ungrammatical sentence-initial conjunctions throughout their sentences such as 'but' and 'and'. The number of those who used ungrammatical sentence-initial conjunctions represents 33 learners. This number is 58%, this means that only 42% of the participants did not use the ungrammatical pattern of sentence-initial conjunction. This finding is answering the second research question which aimed at finding the effective approach with which is can one trace the grammatical errors made by school learners.

The above table also indicated the overuse of grammatical error patterns in essay writing. In this sense, only a few have used the grammatical sentence-initial conjunctions to initiate their sentences. This can be because most learners still lack knowledge, or they are not reading books, or they were not well-informed about the

use of these conjunctions when they were still at primary schools and secondary schools General Education and Training (GET).

4.3.2 Sentence fragments

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with sentence fragment errors	No. of scripts with no sentence fragment errors
57	57	0
Percentage	100%	0%

According to Mailula (2021), sentence fragments occur when students write the sentences that are incomplete and lack some linguistic features. In this sense, a sentence should be well punctuated, be meaningful and meet the grammatical rules as required by the language that is used.

Since the study analysed learners' descriptive essays, the following types of errors in relation to segment sentences were found in all 57 scripts of the selected descriptive essays:

- incomplete sentences
- lack of punctuation
- lack of rendering the same idea and a complete idea on the sentence.

In this regard, there were instances where learners did not punctuate their content, and this made their sentences to be incomplete for examples: *"On my way home"*; On my way home is a prepositional phrase. There's no subject and no verb here, so this is an incomplete sentence and "*The events of Teddy Mson's A Mercy happen in the 90s."* The thought of the sentence is complete, there is no anticipation for more information Emvula (2020) remarks that the kind of fragment that learners write in their essays is a true reflection of what they understand about the syntax. Based on the study's findings, some of the sentence fragments did not happen because learners do not know, they happen because 100% learners make mistakes. This shows that more learners are still using sentence fragments in their writings.

Considering that all learners struggle with fragment sentences, Mailula (2021) states that aside from typographical errors, the two most common causes of fragments are the misuse of subordinators and the misuse of prepositions. This misuse of prepositions and typographical errors were among the dominant grammatical errors made by learners when they wrote English FAL descriptive essays (Mailula, 2021). This finding is very surprising since learners commit sentence fragments and that means they are not able to narrate a well-presented story or write a descriptive piece in English. This is because sentence fragments usually interfere with the reader's ability to understand his or her writing, thus sometimes it will be hard to make sense out of learners' sentences.

The sentence fragment problem appears to be a challenge to many learners globally. The same high rate of fragment sentences errors were found by studies across various contexts. For example, Mao and Yeukai (2021) studied error analysis involving Zimbabwean learners in Zimbabwe and found that almost 90 percent of learners did not know what a sentence fragment was, while 100 percent of learners committed sentence-fragment errors. Similarly, a study conducted by Songsukrujiroad et al. (2018) revealed that the majority of learners in China did not know the meaning of a sentence fragment and how to avoid it. Thus, the study found that learners always made sentence-fragment when they wrote because they were not aware that sentence fragments are grammatical errors.

Lastly, the same frequency of sentence-fragment errors was reported by Sasi and Lai (2021) stating that learners could not even understand why sentence fragments were considered grammatical errors and also made many sentence-fragment errors. Considering that this is global problem for learners that learn English as their additional language. It is not surprising that all learners committed sentence-fragment errors. However, this kind of grammatical error is common among acquirers of English as second language, English teachers need to be attentive to it when they teach.

4.3.3 Failing to use proper verb tenses

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with proper verb tenses	No. of scripts without proper verb tense
57	19	38
Percentage	33%	67%

The above table simply means that out of 57 participants, only 19 learners failed to make use of the correct verb tenses in some instances. The most evident verb tenses were 'been' and 'being'. This means that only 33% of learners failed to use the proper verb tenses whereas 67% managed to use the tenses properly. As far as writing proper verb tenses is concerned, the study found that learners stick with simpler verbs than fundamental because they are familiar with them for example: "*I will eat chicken for lunch and drank water.*" "Will eat" is a future tense verb, but "drank" is a past tense verb. Since the lunch is going to happen in the future, it is not possible that the water was drunk already. This normally means utilising the infinitive or basic current state.

Various studies in South Africa and other countries demonstrated that learners often do not have challenges regarding the use of verbs. For example, Mailula (2021) found that learners make grammatical mistakes than grammatical errors regarding the use of verb tenses and that they were able to correct incorrect verb tenses if they proofread their essays. However, Xie (2019) found that learners only struggled to use verb tenses which do not use –ed-, for example, the past tense of walk is walked but the past tense of 'read' is 'read'. Learners often struggled with latter verb tenses. Similarly, Amiri and Puteh (2017) found that learners did not use the correct verb tenses when required to write sentences with complex structures. Therefore, since, many learners do not commit this kind of grammatical error, it means many learners do understand how to use verb tense.

4.3.4 Misusing vocabulary

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with misuse of vocabulary	No. of scripts without misuse of vocabulary
57	31	26
Percentage	55%	45%

It is inevitable that most students regularly abuse jargons (Lord, 1974). With regard to the findings of this study, the table outlined that out of 57 learners, 31 misused the use of vocabulary. Thus, they would use these words in an inappropriate way. For instance, 55%, seemed to be confusing 'there' and 'their' whereas some confused *'were'* and *'where'*. This clearly shows that these words still need attendance to when it comes to emphasising their functions. The results show that most learners are still stuck with grammatical language patterns. 45% of the population did not misuse the vocabulary, hence they stuck with a simple and concise way of writing. In this sense, they retain words and chances are, they may know the significance of the words, yet in the event that one is talking or writing rapidly, he/she may sometimes slip up and misuse a word or forget it altogether.

4.3.5 Subject/verb agreement

Number of scripts	No. of scripts with errors of subject-verb agreement rule	No. of scripts with no errors of subject-verb agreement rule
57	37	20
Percentage	74%	26%

With reference to the table above, being compliant to subject-verb agreement rule was a challenge to many learners as out of the 57 scripts of essays that were analysed, 37 of them were found to not have followed the subject-verb agreement rule. Only a minority of learners that did not have this challenge and that minority amounted to 20 scripts of learners. In addition, the scripts which did not have the subject-verb agreement were 74 when converted to percentages whereas those that did not have

subject-verb agreements were 24%. The results clearly show that learners are still having a problem in terms of the subject-verb agreement rule. The main reason is that they use English as their medium of instruction whereas this language is their first additional language.

Their verbs were not agreeing with their subjects. For instance, one would say *'Johannes state that'* instead of *'Johannes states that'*, *'Johannes and John states that'* instead of *'Johannes and John state'*, *'students likes instead students like'* etc. This finding is in line with what was found by Kim (2018). In this study, Kim found that students are committing such grammatical errors. Thus, the learners do not change the verb to correspond with the subject as it is done when applying the correct grammatical rule. Consequently, their grammatical errors rely mainly on the context of a sentence or paragraph, rather than by altering words to convey possessiveness, tense and plurality. The proposed findings are closely related to the study because it was found that the grammatical errors were influenced by how learners used their home language in English first additional language writing. This means that the manner in which they speak might be at home or when interacting with friends, determines what they are likely to write, which is normally ungrammatical.

A relevant study to this one was conducted by Nndwamato (2017) which discovered that concord/subject-verb agreement was a challenge to the majority of the participants since not even a single question recorded a 100% correct entry. This kind of grammatical error is also a challenge to learners and teachers need to be attentive when they teach it. The pie chart below demonstrates other forms of grammatical errors which were rarely made.

Other forms of grammatical errors

Pie chart:

- Sentence Initial Conjuction: 19
- Sentence fragments: 32
- Failing to use proper verbs: 11
- Misusing verbs: 17
- SVA: 21

Legend:
- ■ Sentence Initial Conjuction
- ■ Sentence fragments
- ■ Failing to use proper verbs
- ■ Misusing verbs
- ■ SVA
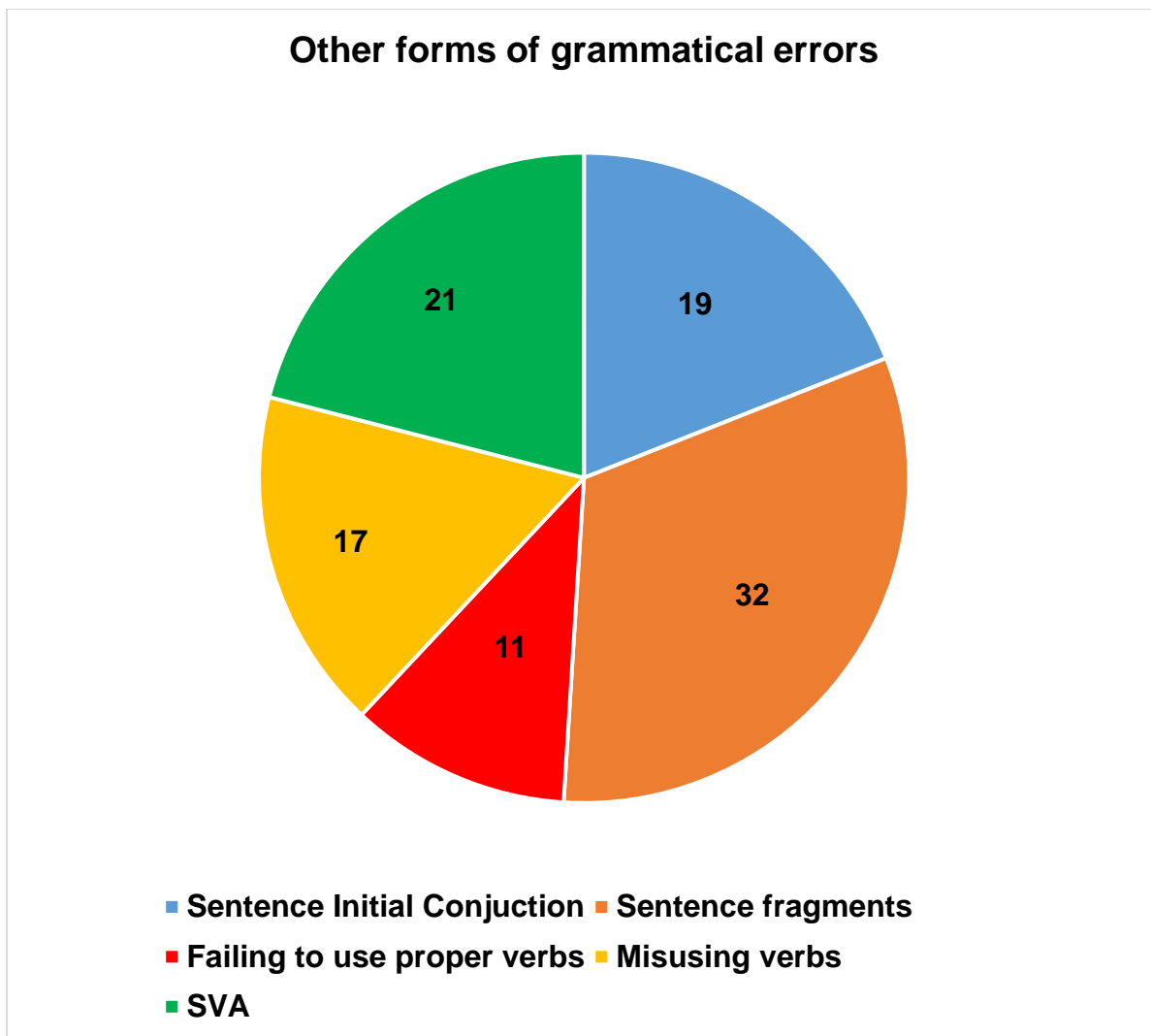
4.4 Social media as the root to the increase of grammatical errors and informality in academic writing

With the ever-increasing use of social media among learners, especially teenagers, there has been a growing concern and support for social media among educators, parents, researchers, and the general public that this practice has a huge impact on the use of language in speaking and writing. It is clear that social media is one of the most important sources of communication in this dispensation and it enables people to share their thoughts and views with other friends, relatives, colleagues, class fellows and teachers without any problem of distance and time (Kim, 2018). Consequently, this leads to slang language and broken syntax which are the variety of grammatical errors which are formed in the social media practice and used in the school context, English language in this context.

The study found that learners were not making use of the abbreviated words that they use on the social media platform. This can be due to the grammar apps such as Grammarly because learners are able to check the errors that appear on their papers through this app. In addition, the other contributing factor towards this finding might be because Grade 12 learners in this study already had about 10 months in this grade, and surely their different teachers could have condemned the use of the social media language in the academic writing. These results are similar to what was found by Nndwamato's (2017) study. The study found out that the unofficial abbreviations and texting language were appearing in students' academic work. This was not evident in the study.

4.5 Interview findings

This part will present, interpret, and analyse the interview data. In this part, the researcher will synthesise the responses of the participants in cases where they gave answers that were closely related, or answers given in different ways but with the same meaning.

4.5.1 Introduction

This part deals with the analysis of grammatical errors through interviews and it involves three participants as interviewees referred as participant 1, 2 and 3. All the participants were issued with letters to request their permissions to participate as ethical considerations in these interviews. The interviewer was the researcher and all the questions and answers given were recorded in audio format and saved in a manner that was compliant to the ethical rules and policy of the University of Limpopo as indicated in Chapter 2 of this study. The interviews were in a manner that all the participants were asked about the grammatical errors that they have identified as teachers of English First Additional Language, particularly when marking English FAL descriptive essays of learners. Interviews were conducted using the question-and-answer format.

4.5.2 Interview questions and answers

Question 1. What do you understand by grammatical errors?
This question sought to find the understanding of grammatical errors from teachers as it enabled the study to get the valid responses for other interview questions.

> *Participant 1:* "Are the mistakes that learners make when constructing a sentence"

> *Participant 2:* "Grammatical errors can be seen or shown when someone is listening to as we are doing English second language, for example, the use of tenses, first person, singular and second person, plural, that people do not master it, the use of tense"

> *Participant 3:* "According to my understanding, grammatical errors are referred to incorrect use of normative words when constructing a sentence, for example, incorrect use of tenses, like instead of using a past tense, you use present tense and punctuation and wrong spelling"

The findings of the study show that grammatical errors are mistakes that learners make when constructing a sentence and they can also be seen or shown when someone is listening to as one does. Some of the examples of grammatical errors found are: first person, singular and second person, plural, the use of tense. Incorrect use of normative words in sentence construction are also grammatical errors, for example, incorrect use of tenses, like instead of using a past tense, you use present tense and punctuation and wrong spelling. The findings of the study are supported by Pasaribu (2021) who found that grammatical errors as systematic deviation when learners consistently write or use incorrect words when they construct sentences.

Question 2 – Describe all the grammatical errors you have identified in learners' scripts when marking their English FAL descriptive essays.

This question sought to find the types of grammatical errors that are evident in learners' essays. Respondents indicated the following grammatical errors that are evident in their descriptive essays: The below responses are reported.

Participant 1: "Tenses, incorrect capitalisation, subject-verb agreement"

Participant 2: "Firstly, they mostly do what we call 'direct translation' from their mother tongue, 'Sepedi'. Like when they show respect in Sepedi they translate to English mostly and that is what can be seen or understood better than English, they use the word 'they' instead of talking to a single person, is a sort of respect that person and you"

Participant 3: "Tenses, punctuation, incorrect spellings. Errors relating to tenses include when you are supposed to use a past tense, but you use present tense. Use of incurrent tenses and that is the mistake they make. Use of small letters when starting a sentence and sometimes they use capital letters in the middle of the sentence, wrong comma when unnecessary, those are errors in punctuation"

The findings indicate that the participants mostly deploy direct translation from their Sepedi as first language (mother tongue), this is drawn from their scripts when they respect also in English. Furthermore, misuse of tenses, incorrect capitalisation, subject-verb agreement, punctuations, incorrect spellings, use of incurrent tenses these are other forms of grammatical error findings. Learners use small letters when beginning a sentence and sometimes they use capital letters in the middle of the sentence also was a major concern. There is an explicit interlink between grammatical errors found in the document analysis and the ones discovered above. Most of grammatical errors found by the study concurs to what the study of Mailula (2021) found. Mailula found that learners commit grammatical errors pertaining to the use of informal language, paragraphing and incomplete sentences and incorrect use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions and collocations in their EFAL essays. This is another indication that teachers are aware of the kind of grammatical errors learners commit.

Question 3 – What are the most repeated grammatical errors?

This question sought to find the most repeated grammatical errors from all learners when writing their descriptive essays.

Participant 1: "Subject-verb agreement, even tense, they do not know how to differentiate between past tenses and present tenses"

Participant 2: "in most cases, the repetition in part of the question answering the question, for example, if a question says 'give the figures of speech in this paragraph', they will answer it by saying, 'the figures of speech in this paragraph are' and this consumes much of their time stipulated for that question"

Participant 3: "Punctuation marks, spelling errors and wrong tenses"

The findings of the study show that fragment sentence appeared to be the most challenging grammatical error, followed by subject/verb agreement. The tenses were also found to be misused by learners. The findings correspond to what Mailula (2021) found in the recent study. Mailula (2021:101) presented that learners made grammatical errors with the use of informal language, incomplete sentences and incorrect use of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. All of the most repeated grammatical errors that each teacher identified were different from what other participants identified. However, learners seemed to struggle with correct use of tenses as participant 1 and 3 have\ commonly stated, that the incorrect use of tenses was the most repeated grammatical error their learners made when writing and speaking English First Additional Language.

Question 4 – What are the least repeated grammatical errors?

This question wanted to find the least committed grammatical errors in learners' essays specifically descriptive type.

Participant 1: "At least they know how to put capital letters, when they start a sentence, they know that they have to start with a capital letter, especially in nouns"

Participant 2: "Punctuations, use of capital letters when starting a sentence, most understand that"

Participant 3: "The use of inappropriate commas, they usually do not use commas but when they do, they use them in a bad or incorrect manner"

This study indicate that learners were commended well when coming to the use of punctuation very well, as they knew where to use capital and small letters in a sentence. This denotes that as punctuation marks had also been identified as one of the grammatical errors made, incorrect use of punctuation marks were the least repeated grammatical errors learners made. Punctuation marks error as the least grammatical errors learners made when constructing sentences in writing descriptive essays for English First Additional Language. Incorrect use of punctuation, especially where or how to use commas was the least grammatical errors was commonly identified. The above least repeated grammatical errors contradict from what the cited studies and findings in document analysis presented. For example, Mailula (2021); Xie (2019) and Amiri and Puteh (2017) found that the least made grammatical error is the use of verb tenses. However, different experiences often lead to different opinions, hence even all the three participants mentioned different verbs as least repeated verbs.

Question 5 – On the scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the learners' overall adherence to grammatical rules and why?

This question aimed in grading of learners in a scale of 1-10 throughout their language use as far as grammatical errors are concerned in order to get a picture of their essay writing competency.

> *Participant 1*: "5/10, at least when coming to articles, they know where to put 'A' and 'An' although I did not talk about this"

> *Participant 2:* "5/10, as we are practicing, hence it's the second language, putting more effort in practice, this is what needed more"

> *Participant 3:* 8/10. Is because in question 3, you asked about least errors made and it's only a few"

The findings of the study reveal that based on the ratings provided it is quite clear that learners have poor adherence to grammatical rules and often make grammatical errors. The overall ratings when integrated proved that learners and teachers still have a lot of work to do to improve English First Additional Language for learners in

regarding correct use of grammar rules. The ratings proved that on average, 50% of the learners had a challenge of making grammatical errors. With the statistics presented by the tables above, findings in most tables displayed clearly that most learners still needed more lessons about grammatical errors as their percentage of compliance to grammatical rules mostly fell on a negative percentage. The grammatical errors appear to be a challenge to many learners globally too. The same high rate of grammatical errors was found by studies across various contexts. For example, Mao and Yeukai (2021) agree with this study as they studied grammatical errors involving Zimbabwean learners in Zimbabwe and found that almost 90 percent of learners did not know what a sentence fragment was as one of the grammatical errors, while 100 percent of learners committed sentence-fragment errors.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has articulated the research results for both interview analysis and errors identified in learners' scripts for the population identified in Chapter 3 of this study. The research conducted was based on investigating the grammatical errors of grade 12 learners in Koloti circuit in the Capricorn North District, in Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School. The research findings were presented based on the results obtained from document analysis and interview interpretations. The research results were then interpreted, using Ellis's procedural analysis to analyse learners' scripts and teachers' interviews. The Ellis' procedural analysis comprises of four stages, which are – collection of samples of learner language, identification of errors, description of errors and evaluating the errors identified in the data that is document analysis (Ellis, 1994). The chapter that follows will provide the research summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter of the study. The main purpose of this chapter was to summarise, give recommendations and draw conclusions appertaining the results which were found from the grade twelve learners and few EFAL teachers and discussed the recommendations relating to the findings or results which have been considered in the study. The limitations of the study are also outlined at the end of the chapter. The present study sought to answer questions outlined in Chapter 1 of this study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

The research findings were presented, analysed and discussed in Chapter 4 of this study. The research was conducted at Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School, Koloti circuit and the qualitative method of research was deployed to collect data. The researcher used interviews and document analysis through essays as research instruments and the research findings are summarised under the following subheadings.

5.2.1 Analysis of learners' descriptive essays

The findings of this study regarding document analysis were based on identifying and analysing various grammatical errors in the learners' descriptive essays. The identified and analysed grammatical errors included contractions, misuse of personal language, informal spoken language, home speech pattern, sentence initial conjunction, sentence fragment, failing to use proper verb tense, misusing vocabulary and subject verb agreement.

(a) Contractions

The study found that most learners misused contradictions, and the commonly misused contractions were *'wouldn't, couldn't, isn't, shouldn't, don't, wasn't, didn't and*

so on'. Among the 57 analysed scripts, 38 scripts were found to have the misused of contractions and only 19 scripts were without the misuse of the contractions. This means that majority of learners do not understand how to use contractions when writing essays as 67% of them misused contractions and only 33% did not.

(b) The misuse of personal language/first-person pronouns

According to Kaufman and Straus (2021), personal pronouns are pronouns that allude to the speaker. The research findings in respect to misusing first-person pronouns indicate that 39% of the scripts had errors when using first-person pronouns and 61% number of scripts had no such errors. Consequently, it is apparent that there were only a few learners who used the incorrect first personal pronouns in their essay writing and this implies that learners are familiar with this aspect of grammar.

(c) The use of an informal spoken language in academic writing

The study findings presented that 95% of learners did not make use of informal spoken language when they wrote their descriptive essays. This implies that almost the majority of the participants have learnt the difference between formal and informal language. Only 5% of learners used slang terms and concepts in their essays and did not differentiate the standard language from informal writing.

(d) The use of home speech pattern

The study found that the participants were using the home speech pattern when they wrote in the first additional language It was found that some learners used the noun and pronoun consecutively in their essays and that is grammatically incorrect in the English language. For instance, the researcher found that some learners were writing words such as "*people they are*, *the teacher he is effectively teaching and Aristotle he stated that"* and so on.

(e) Sentence initial conjunction

After conducting extensive analysis of the learners' scripts, the study found that the majority of learners were still using the sentence-initial conjunctions such as *'but'* and

'and' to initiate their sentences. In addition, it was found that 24 learners used the grammatical sentence-initial conjunctions such as furthermore, however, etc., whereas 33 learners used the ungrammatical sentence-initial conjunctions throughout their sentences such as *'but'* and *'and'*.

(f) Sentence fragments

As the researcher thoroughly went through the descriptive essays of 57 learners, it was evident that all had sentence fragments. The following types of errors in relation to segments sentences were found in all 57 scripts of the selected population - incomplete sentences, lack of punctuation and the lack of rendering the same idea and a complete idea on the sentence. The study opined that some of the sentence fragments do not happen because learners do not know how to avoid it, they happen because learners make mistakes.

(g) Failing to use proper verb tenses

Based on the analysis of the learners' descriptive essays, the study found that as far as writing proper verb tenses is concerned, learners stick with simpler verbs over fundamental ones because they are familiar with them. This normally means utilising the infinitive or basic current state. Out of the whole population, only 19 learners failed to make use of the correct verb tenses in some instances. The most evident verb tenses were 'been', 'being'. This means that only 33% of leaners failed to use the proper verb tenses whereas 67% managed to use the verb tenses properly.

(h) Misusing vocabulary

The researcher found that out of 57 learners analysed, only 31 misused the vocabulary and that 55% seemed to be confusing 'there' and 'their', as well as 'were' and 'where'. Most learners misused vocabulary, for instance, using the word 'were' in a sentence where they were supposed to use the word 'where'.

(i) Subject/verb agreement

The findings of this study presented that majority of learners (37), out of 57 learners made errors of subject-verb agreement. It was further found that the essays, which did not have the subject-verb agreement, constituted 74% whereas those that did not have this correspondence are 24%. The results show that learners were still having problems in terms of the subject-verb agreement rule and the major reason is that they used English as their medium of instruction whereas this language is their first additional language although this does not justify their grammatical mistakes.

5.2.2 Interview findings

The interviews were based on asking 3 English First Additional Language teachers questions regarding grammatical errors that they come across when they teach and mark learners' essays for English FAL. The findings of the study outlined that the common grammatical errors that learners make are the use of home speech pattern and error regarding contractions when they speak and failure to use correct tenses when they write descriptive essays. However, teachers have alluded that there were some grammatical errors that learners have learnt and no longer commit when they write. Such grammatical errors that learners no longer make are incorrect use of punctuation and use of informal language. The participants' ratings proved that on average, 50% of the learners struggled with grammar.

5.2.3 Conclusion for summary of findings

The research conducted was based on grammatical errors of grade 12 learners in Koloti Circuit in the Capricorn North District, in Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School. The research findings have been presented, based on the results obtained from document analysis through descriptive essays and interview interpretations. The study's results were thereafter interpreted using Ellis's procedural analysis to analyse learners' descriptive essays and interviews. Findings on error analysis can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. They provided the necessary information about what is lacking in their competence, writing skill in particular.

The findings of the present study pointed out the significance of learners' errors, for they provide evidence of how language was learned and what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in learning the language. For instance, this study shows that spelling and tense errors are the most common errors, followed by contractions, misuse of personal language, informal spoken language, home speech patterns, sentence initial conjunction, sentence fragments, failure to use proper verb tense, misuse of vocabulary as well as subject verb agreement. However, it is necessary to be aware that different types of written material may produce a different distribution of errors or a different set of error types (Corder, 1974). Therefore, teachers should train and guide the learners to apply the right strategies to become better language users.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Making use of the Library and Computer Labs services

The learners are privileged as they have learning and teaching materials that enhance their learning. In this sense, learners can make use of both the electronic books and the manual books available in the community library. These materials can create an awareness of what language style is considered academically accepted, and which language is totally not academically accepted when writing the academic texts and how the structure of sentences must be constructed.

5.3.2 Use of the grammar apps

It is inevitable that the use of technology has become part of our lives. Therefore, is at our disposal and learners are advised to make use of the grammar apps such as Grammarly-APP which can be installed on their smart phones in order to check the kind of mistakes and errors the App teaches after the writing of any creative piece in general to improve their grammar skills. This app will help them to construct good grammatical sentences as well as to differentiate between the formal and the informal language. They will also realise the kind of errors they make in their academic writing; these errors will be projected by the comments that are given by the app.

5.3.3 Forming the writing retreats

The high schools should come up with the idea of writing essays whereby learners come up with their own ideas as this can improve their creativity in language learning. Thereafter, an elected language specialist can go through the writings of learners and advise them where they went wrong and what they can do to solve these kinds of problems. A differentiation between the formal and an informal language can also be outlined so that the learners can always remain relevant when they are writing and pay adequate attention on the grammatical rules.

5.3.4 Areas of further research

This study identified errors in Mmakgabo Senior Secondary School learners' written work. Thus, it is recommended that this study be extended to investigating the origin of certain error patterns found in first additional language written work of learners with different mother tongues. An exploration of the writing process and determining the strategies learners use in first additional language learning has not been considered in this study. In order to learn more about first additional language writers' usage of language, it is recommended that further research be conducted.

Lastly, in order to explore the composing process of first additional language writers meaningfully, it is important to understand how learners construct sentences in both their native languages and in English. Therefore, the researcher recommends that further studies in the first additional language writing be conducted to examine the writing process, along with the acquisition of communicative competence.

5.4 Conclusion

In first additional language teaching and learning errors tend to be viewed negatively. Errors are usually considered a sign of inadequacy of teaching and learning. However, it is now generally accepted that error making is a necessary part of learning and language teachers should use the errors with a view of improving teaching. Ravem (1974) points out that the more we know about language learning the more likely we are to be successful in our teaching of a second language. As Lightbrown and Spada (2000:176) argue that when errors occur frequently, it is useful for teachers to bring

the problem to the learners' attention. The significance of this study is, therefore, to inform educators, and language study material developers about the kind of errors that their target learners make.

Further, the findings and data analysis of the study confirm and support that there are grammatical errors by the grade twelve learners when writing their descriptive essays. This was proven by the finding of the collected data. The data has answered all the research questions; the researcher's investigation of grammatical errors made by learners when writing descriptive essay. Question number 1.2.1 and 5.2.2 were answered. With research question 5.2.1, the researcher sought to find the patterns of grammatical errors that were there in learners' documents, whereas with research question 5.2.2 the researcher sought to find out which effective approach one could use to trace the grammatical errors made by school learners in the essay piece of writing. In order to substantiate the answers derived from document analysis for answering research questions of this study, the researcher also relied on interview findings after interviewing English FAL teachers about grammatical errors their learners make, and answers given during interviews supported answers obtained from document analysis. All the above research questions were sufficiently answered by the data that was found in the study.

The researcher found the utilisation of various registers in the examination; however, the zone of the spotlight was on grammatical errors and some informal language register. Learners were found to utilise the examples of a casual language, for example:

- contractions,
- the use of personal language/first-person pronouns,
- home speech patterns,
- sentence-initial conjunction
- sentence fragments
- failing to use proper verb tenses
- misuse of vocabulary, and
- subject/verb agreement

As far as the above grammatical errors are concerned, the sentence fragment pattern was found to have been the most used grammatical pattern than any of the above-mentioned grammatical error patterns. According to Mailula (2021), sentence fragments occur when students write the sentences that are incomplete and lack some linguistic features. In this sense, a sentence should be well punctuated, be meaningful and meet the grammatical rules as required by the language that is used. It is therefore possible that some of the sentence fragments do not happen because learners do not know how to avoid them, but they happen because learners make mistakes since they write using English while it is their first additional language.

As interviews served as supplementation of the research findings from document analysis, it was found after interviewing 3 English FAL teachers that the teachers did not commonly identify a single type of grammatical error that learners in different grades made. However, the teachers identified direct translation, spelling errors, incorrect use of tenses and incorrect use of punctuation as types of grammatical errors learners made frequently. It can therefore be deduced that after careful appraisal of interview answers, learners from different grades make different types of grammatical errors.

Furthermore, after the document analysis on the scripts, the researcher found that there was no script of learners that showed social media as the root to the increase of the grammatical errors nor informality in academic writing. This can be because learners are now aware that the informal language and the use of the social media language is not allowed in academic writing. It can also be because of the grammar apps such as Grammarly App that some learners may be using to check their errors.

Finally, the researcher asserts that the research of this nature is ongoing and therefore no definite conclusions can be made because teaching and learning are both complex processes. While the results of the present study have given an insight into what types of errors made by learners and their approach of tracing them, the findings can only be considered as suggestive. As Sasi and Lai (2021) clarifies, the results of studies of this nature cannot really be generalised and regarded as representing an entire population, since the study focused on one secondary school only. Although much work remains to be done in the area of error correction in first additional language

writing, it is hoped that this study will contribute to the quest by teachers, learners and material developers to improve the standard of English language proficiency in South African schools.

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APPENDIX A Interview responses

Question 1. What do you understand by grammatical errors?

Question 2 Describe all the grammatical errors you have identified in learners'

Question 3. What are the most repeated grammatical errors?

Question 4. What are the least repeated grammatical errors?

Question 5. On the scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the learners' overall adherence to grammatical rules and why?

APPENDIX B – Principal's letter of consent

Enq: CHAUKE T

Email address: blakkieswart90@gmail.com

Box 4051

Giyani

0869

THE PRINCIPAL

………………………………………

………………………………………

Sir

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am a student at the University of Limpopo currently conducting a research project aimed at investigating the grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays. It forms part of my post-graduate degree. I am pleased to inform you that I have chosen your school based on its history of having well-mannered learners as an ideal research sample.

I wish to administer the research instrument (one recorded individual interview after school hours) to five learners. The research findings will be used for completing the research project and for no other purposes. Participation in this proposed study is voluntary, which means that there is no penalty to you or the teachers or learners if they choose not to participate. The learners may withdraw at any time during the study with no consequences.

I, _____ (the principal), hereby give permission that the above - mentioned research study may be conducted at this school by Mr Chauke, a post-graduate student at the University of Limpopo. The research findings will be made available to the school upon request.

_____   _____

Principal   Date

Researcher: _____ (CHAUKE T)

APPENDIX C – Parents' letter of consent

Enq: CHAUKE T

Email address: titusblakkieswart90@gmail.com

Box 4051

Giyani

0869

THE PARENTS

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW WITH YOUR CHILD

I am a student at the University of Limpopo, currently conducting research project aimed at investigating grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays. It forms part of my post-graduate studies. I am pleased to inform you that I have chosen your child to assist me in completing this research project. The research will be conducted using one recorded individual interview after school hours. The interviews details will be kept confidential, and the data will be destroyed after the writing up of the findings.

The research findings will be used for completing the proposed study and not for any other purposes. Participation in this proposed study is voluntary, which means that there is no penalty to you or your child if he/she chooses not to participate anymore. The learners may withdraw at any time during the study with no consequences

I, _____ (parent / guardian) of _____ hereby give permission that the above-mentioned research study may be conducted by Mr Chauke, a postgraduate student at the University of Limpopo.

_____   _____

Parent / Guardian   Date

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D – Participant's letter of consent

Enq: CHAUKE T

Email address: titusblakkieswart90@gmail.com

Box 4051

Giyani

0869

LETTER TO THE LEARNERS

The Learner

………………………………………

………………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW SESSION WITH YOU, A LEARNER OF THIS SCHOOL.

I am a student at the University of Limpopo currently conducting research aimed at investigating grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays. I am pleased to inform you that I have chosen you, based on your history of being a well-mannered learner. The research involves one recorded individual interview conducted by me, the researcher, after school hours. The interview recording will be anonymous and destroyed after the writing up of the findings. The research findings will be used for completing this study and not any other purposes. Participation in this proposed study is voluntary, which means that there is no penalty to you if you choose not to participate. You choose to participate on a voluntary basis and may withdraw at any time during the study, with no consequences.

I, _____ (participant) in this research study, hereby give my permission to be interviewed and recorded by Mr Chauke. My participation is voluntarily, and I may withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Any harm or risks will be minimised by the researcher.

_____   _____

Participant   Date

Researcher: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E – Participant's letter of consent

Enq: CHAUKE T

Email address: titusblakkieswart90@gmail.com

Box 4051

Giyani

0869

LETTER TO THE TEACHERS

The Teacher

…………………………………………

…………………………………………

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH INTERVIEW SESSION WITH YOU, AN ENGLISH TEACHER OF THIS SCHOOL.

I am a student at the University of Limpopo currently conducting research aimed at investigating the grammatical errors made by learners in writing descriptive essays. I am pleased to inform you that I have chosen you, based on your history of being a hardworking teacher. The research involves one recorded individual interview conducted by me, the researcher, after school hours. The interview recording will be anonymous and destroyed after the writing up of the findings. The research findings will be used for completing this proposed study and not any other purposes. Participation in this proposed study is voluntary, which means that there is no penalty to you if you choose not to participate. The learners participate on a voluntary basis and may withdraw at any time during the study, with no consequences.

I, _____ (participant) in this research study, hereby give my permission to be interviewed and recorded by Mr CHAUKE T. My participation is voluntarily, and I may withdraw at any stage without any consequences. Any harm or risks will be minimised by the researcher.

_____ _____

Participant   Date

Researcher: _____   Date: _____

APPENDIX F Keys

The following key will be used for all the pie charts in this paper. Please refer to the key on the data collected when reading the tables.

KEY C – Contractions MoPL – Misuse of Personal Language ISL – Informal Spoken Language HSP – Home Speech Pattern SIC – Sentence Initial Conjunction SF – Sentence Fragment FTUPVT – Failing To Use Proper Verb Tense MV – Misusing Vocabulary SVA – Subject Verb Agreement