

ANALYSIS OF WRITING ERRORS MADE BY GRADE 11 LEARNERS
IN ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS
IN THE OMUSATI EDUCATION REGION IN NAMIBIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF EDUCATION

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

FRIEDA L. N. KAPOLO

APRIL 2013

MAIN SUPERVISOR: PROF. M. L. MOSTERT

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR. A. D. MÖWES

ABSTRACT

English Second Language (ESL) writing is a challenge to most of the learners in the Namibian schools. It is against this background that this study deals with the analysis of writing errors that are made by grade 11 learners in ESL from the two selected secondary schools in the Omusati Education Region in Namibia. It aims at identifying and analyzing writing errors in 400 essays written in English by 400 grade 11 learners. Errors were also compared in terms of gender and mother tongue, as the learners had different first languages which are Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama, in addition to ESL. The researcher applied a mixed method which comprises of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative method was used to identify the writing errors while qualitative method was used to analyse the writing errors. Both approaches considered the first languages and gender in terms of errors made. Four hundred essays were analysed and errors were categorized into 16 types. The most common errors identified were poor choice of words, spelling, punctuation, tenses, word omitted, singular/plural and capitalisation.

The qualitative analyses of the errors clearly showed that learners made many errors in the identified categories and they were influenced by their first language. Intra-lingual transfer, fossilization and overgeneralisation were also observed in their writing. The results of the t test showed that female learners made more errors than male learners. It is vital that the Ministry of Education and teachers in particular consider the findings of this study and implement teaching and learning strategies that will improve learners' English writing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract.....	ii
Table of content.....	iii
List of Acronyms.....	ix
Acknowledgements.....	x
Dedication.....	xi
Declarations.....	xii
List of Tables.....	xiii
List of Figures.....	xiv
CHAPTER I.....	1-8
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Orientation of the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the study.....	3
1.4 Significance of the study.....	4
1.5 Limitations of the study.....	5
1.6 Delimitations of the study.....	6
1.7 Definition of terms.....	6
1.8 Organization of the study.....	7

CHAPTER II.....	9-24
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
2.2 Theoretical Framework.....	8
2.3 Writing and typical writing errors.....	10
2.4 Reasons for writing errors.....	11
2.4.1 Inter-lingual transfer.....	12
2.4.2 Intra-lingual transfer.....	12
2.4.3 Fossilization.....	13
2.4.4 Overgeneralisation.....	14
2.4.5 Carelessness.....	14
2.4.6 Modern Technology.....	15
2.5 The Namibian situation regarding ESL.....	15
2.5.1 The status of English in Namibia.....	15
2.5.2 Expected ESL writing competencies.....	17
2.5.3 ESL Assessment.....	18
2.5.4 ESL admission requirement at tertiary institutions and job qualifications.....	20
2.6 The case of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga.....	21
2.7 ESL writing by sex.....	23
CHAPTER III.....	25-36

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	25
3.1 Introduction.....	25
3.2 Research design.....	25
3.3 Population.....	26
3.4 Sample and sampling Procedures	26
3.5 Research instruments.....	28
3.6 Data collection procedures.....	28
3.7 Data analysis.....	29
3.7.1 Quantitative approach.....	30
3.7.2 Qualitative approach.....	31
3.8 Pilot study.....	32
3.9 Discussion on the marking of the essays.....	32
3.10 Reliability and validity of the study.....	35
3.11 Ethical considerations.....	35
CHAPTER IV.....	37-63
RESEARCH RESULTS.....	37
4.1 Introduction.....	37
4.2 Presentation of quantitative results.....	37
4.2.1 Identification and analyses of errors for the total sample.....	37
4.2.1.1 Frequency of errors per category.....	38
4.2.2 Identification and analyses of errors by sex.....	41

4.2.3 Identification and analyses of errors by language group.....	44
4.3 Presentation of qualitative results.....	49
4.3.1 Qualitative analyses of errors per category.....	49
4.3.2 Qualitative analyses of errors by sex and language group.....	50
4.3.1.1 General misunderstanding of the topic.....	51
4.3.1.2 Errors in poor choice of words.....	52
4.3.1.3 Errors in punctuation.....	53
4.3.1.4 Errors in spelling.....	54
4.3.1.5 Errors in singular and plural form.....	54
4.3.1.6 Errors in words omitted.....	55
4.3.1.7 Errors in tenses.....	56
4.3.1.8 Errors in capitalisation.....	58
4.3.1.9 Errors in paragraphing.....	59
4.3.1.10 Errors in subject-verb agreement.....	61
4.3.1.11 Errors in informal writing and SMS language.....	61
4.4 Conclusion.....	63
CHAPTER V.....	64-82
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	64
5.1 Introduction.....	64
5.2 Discussion of the categories and frequency of errors for the total sample.....	64
5.3 Discussion of results based on the qualitative analyses.....	66

5.3.1 Inter-lingual transfer.....	66
5.3.2 Intra-lingual transfer.....	69
5.3.3 Fossilisation.....	72
5.3.4 Overgeneralisation.....	73
5.3.5 Carelessness.....	74
5.3.6 Modern Technology.....	74
5.4 Discussion of results based on sex.....	75
5.5 Discussion of results based on language groups.....	75
5.6 Conclusion.....	76
5.7 Recommendations.....	79
5.7.1 Well equipped teachers required at the grassroots level.....	80
5.7.2 Emphasis on Positive transfer of L1 into L2.....	80
5.7.3 Compulsory Dictionaries.....	81
5.7.4 Teachers must be advised to teach the syllabus instead of the text books.....	81
5.7.5 Appointment of an expert team in L2 to train ESL teachers as per their level of teaching.....	81
5.7.6 ESL National markers experts should be appointed to train all the ESL teachers on marking ESL examination.....	82
5.7.7 Further research required.....	82
REFERENCES.....	83-87

APPENDICES	88-104
Appendix A: Exercise and Question selected for the sampled essay.....	88
Appendix B: Prescribed marking guide for teachers.....	90
Appendix C: Marking Grid for written work (Paper 1&2).....	91
Appendix D: Essay sample for Oshindonga female learner.....	93
Appendix E: Essay sample for Oshindonga male learner.....	96
Appendix F: Essay sample for Oshikwanyama female learner.....	99
Appendix G: Essay sample for Oshikwanyama male learner.....	102

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ESL-English Second Language

DNEA-Directorate of National Examination and Assessment

L1-First Language

L2-Second Language

MESC-Ministry of Education Sport and Culture

MoE-Ministry of Education

NSSC(O)-Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary level

NSSC(H)-Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Higher level

SMS- Short Message Services

UNAM-University of Namibia

CES-Centre for External Studies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I give my honour and gratitude to the almighty God, for his outstanding assistance and love, and who through thick and thin made it possible for me to produce this thesis.

My sincere thanks go to the Ministry of Education for granting me the opportunity to complete the degree of Master of Education.

My appreciation goes to my supervisors, Prof. Mostert and Dr. Mōwes who were always behind me to ensure I did a good job. My special thanks to Ms Norah Bennet who through her hard work I was always advised and motivated to do my best. The Director of Omusati Education Region Mrs. Anna Nghipondoka, the Elim and Okalongo circuits inspectors, Mr. Etuna Hamunyela and Mrs. Saima Teofelus, The two principals of the two schools, the entire staff members of the two schools, especially the English teachers, you are the reason why this thesis is a reality today.

I am also thankful for Mr. Gabez Uunona who was my computer technology advisor during the production of this thesis. A special word of thanks to my daughter Maria Ikumba and her caretaker Ms. Hertha Abisai for their patience and care throughout the time I was away for my thesis. Let me thank everyone who lend a hand of help, made a contribution and gave encouragement towards this thesis. Thank you all and God bless you.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late father Kuumekashe Eliander Kapolo who passed on while I was doing my first year of this study. His inspiration, encouragement, hard work and advice kept me going stronger and stronger up to the final production of this thesis. The dedication also goes to my daughter, mother, brothers, sister, and the entire family.

DECLARATIONS

I Frieda Leena Ndeyapo Kapolo, declare hereby that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any other institution of higher education.

No part of this thesis may be reproduced, stored in any retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, or by means (e.g. electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the prior permission of the author, or the University of Namibia in that behalf.

I Frieda Leena Ndeyapo Kapolo, grant the University of Namibia the right to reproduce this thesis in whole or part, in any manner or format, which the University of Namibia may deem fit, for any person or institution requiring it for study and research; providing that the University of Namibia shall waive this right if the whole thesis has been or is being published in a manner satisfactory to the University.

FRAPOLO
Frieda L. N. Kapolo

Date: APRIL 2013

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1: Number and percentages of errors identified per category	40
Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of errors identified in terms of sex	42
Table 4.3: T-test for the equality of means by sex	44
Table 4.4: Frequency distribution of errors identified in terms of L1	45
Table 4.5: “l”, “r” and “n” errors by language groups	48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Total number of errors identified per category.....41

Figure 4.2: Comparison of errors in terms of sex.....43

Figure 4.3: Comparison of errors made in terms of First languages.....46

Figure 4.4: Comparison of ‘l’, ‘r’ and ‘n’ errors made by the two language groups.....49

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Orientation of the study

Writing is one of the most important language modes for school success, and is one of the four skill areas of the learning content in English Second Language (ESL), namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. According to Lerner (2000), these skill areas are interrelated in the sense that good listening skills promote speaking, good speaking skills enhance reading, and good instruction in reading improves writing, while good writing skills improve one's knowledge and skills in speaking and reading. This means that these skill areas enhance one another's growth in terms of communication.

Soanes and Stevenson (2008 p. 1666) define writing as "to mark letters, words or other symbols on a surface with a pen, pencil or similar implement". In line with this, Schmandt-Besserat and Erard (2008) refer to writing as graphic marks that represent the units of a specific language, which serve as functions of the language structure. In other words writing is an activity that puts letters, symbols, numbers or words together on paper in order to communicate, express and explain ideas in a language form. Writing sounds simple but it is complex, which is why Langan (2003) notes that writing is a skill that needs practice before a person can do it well. In written text, there is no negotiation of meaning, as Abi (2002, p.2) indicates: "the sentence is written and it is read, because there is no possibility of negotiating meaning of written documents like in spoken

conversation”.

This study focused on ESL writing of Namibian grade 11 learners. This is due to the fact that the

grade 11 learners’ performance in ESL is assessed mainly through their written work, and statistics show that grade 12 learners’ performance in ESL has been poor over the last few years (Ministry of Education: The Directorate of National Examinations and Assessment (DNEA), 2009). In addition to that, being an English teacher for almost ten years, it came to the attention of the researcher that grade 11 learners are making many writing errors which they carry to grade 12 and which affect their performance in ESL.

Since English is the official language of the country, as stipulated by the constitution of the Republic of Namibia, competence in English writing is necessary in all sectors of society. This is confirmed by Riddel (2003), who reiterates that writing is a very important skill for students’ own lives, jobs and examination preparation.

The Language Policy for Schools stipulates that English should be taught as a subject from grades 1 to 4 and be used as medium of instruction from grades 5 to 12 and also throughout tertiary education (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2003). Hence it is of great importance that writing errors made by learners in ESL are identified, analysed and addressed in order to find strategies to reduce or eliminate these errors.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to the literature, ESL students produce grammatical and lexical errors due to mother tongue interference, poor teaching, overgeneralization and choices of teaching materials or methods (Hubbard, Jones, Thornton, & Wheeler, 1983). The writing competencies expected from Namibian grade 11 learners are clearly outlined in the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) ESL Syllabus for grades 11-12. However, grade 11 learners are struggling with writing, as is observable in their writing tasks as well as the examination results. The DNEA (MoE, 2009) Examiner's Report pointed out errors made in ESL examination by the grade 12 learners of 2009 and emphasised that learners were penalised or not awarded marks due to writing errors. Statistics indicate that the ESL examination results of 2009 in the Omusati Education Region were very poor. Out of the total number of 2310 grade 12 learners who wrote the NSSC ESL ordinary level examination in 2009 in Omusati Region, no learners were awarded A* or A symbols. Only 3.3% of learners were awarded a B or C symbol. A mere 8.9% achieved D, and 24.1% an E symbol, while 42.7% obtained F or G symbols. About 20% of the learners were ungraded. These statistics are a clear indication that the writing skills of learners in this region are extremely poor (MoE: DNEA, 2009).

1.3 Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify writing errors made by grade 11 learners in ESL based on the prescribed marking guide for teachers (see Appendix B).

2. Compare the identified writing errors made by grade 11 learners with regard to mother tongue and sex.
3. Analyse a selection of the identified writing errors in more depth for better understanding of these errors.

Insight into the specific types of writing errors that are made by grade 11 learners is important in order to address the problem of English writing skills in Namibia. Therefore, this study aimed at identifying and analysing a selection of writing errors made by grade 11 learners in ESL at two selected schools in the Omusati Education Region. The writing errors identified were restricted to those stipulated in the prescribed marking guide for teachers, namely: spelling, grammar, punctuation, word omission, word order, new sentence, new paragraph, poor choice of words, vague and unclear writing (see Appendix B). These writing errors were selected because learners make most of these errors in their writing.

Of these identified writing errors, only a few were analysed in depth in an attempt to develop a better understanding of why these errors occurred. The study thus did not investigate aspects such as content, style, and creativity (see Appendix C) in ESL.

1.4 Significance of the study

Most of the grade 11 learners were not performing well in ESL, and this obstruct their chances of pursuing further studies at institutions of higher learning as well as getting

jobs after they complete grade 12. It is against this background that it was necessary to conduct the study on errors that learners make in their writing. The findings from the research may lead to a better understanding of the common writing errors made by learners and recommendations for intervention strategies can be made to enable learners to perform better in their writing.

In addition to that, teachers of English are playing a leading role in ensuring that learners are literate in writing and are empowered to face the future challenges in writing. It is hoped that this study will help teachers to create conducive environments of teaching and learning ESL to ensure the expected proficiency necessary for learners in their further studies and future jobs in a demanding and competitive environment.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study was limited to two selected schools in one region in Namibia. Furthermore, the study focused on the analysis of writing errors from only one essay per sampled learner. The types of errors analysed were restricted to those as explained earlier (i.e. spelling, punctuation, tenses, subject-verb agreement and singular/ plural). In this study, not all the language errors were analysed but only those found in the selected essays. It also focused only on those learners whose first languages were Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

Due to time and financial constraints, the study was only conducted at the two selected Senior Secondary Schools in the Omusati Education Region in Namibia.

1.7 Definition of terms

Below are a number of terms that have been used throughout the study.

Writing: “A sophisticated process of putting oral language into graphic symbols” (Lerner, 2000, p.468).

Errors: An error is made when the learners are not familiar with the correct form or its use, (University of Namibia-Centre for External Studies (UNAM-CES), 2004).

First language: “A person’s mother tongue or the home language that is acquired first” (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture (MESC), 2003, p.6).

Second language: “The language which the learner has some knowledge of and is exposed to regularly, because it is one of the major languages in the community” (MESC, 2003, p.8).

Official language: “The language used in government and for official business” (MESC, 2003, p.8).

Medium of instruction: “The language through which a subject is taught” (MESC, 2003, p.7).

Analysis: “A detailed examination of something in order to interpret or explain it” (Soanes & Stevenson, 2008, p.46).

1.8 Organization of the study

This study aims at analysing the writing errors of the grade 11 learners in ESL. The study is arranged as follows: Chapter 1 deals with the orientation of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study as well as the significance of the study. It also includes the limitations and delimitations of the study as well as the definition of terms and the organization of the study.

In Chapter 2, the literature review is presented. It emphasises Cummins (2007) theory of second language acquisition in the theoretical framework. The chapter says more about the writing errors and reasons for errors as well as the status of English and ESL in Namibia. It further outlines the writing competencies, assessment and admission requirements to tertiary institutions and job requirements in terms of ESL. The backgrounds of the first languages of the learners from the two selected secondary schools are also discussed.

The research methods used are explained in Chapter 3. The Chapter makes reference to the research design, the population, sample and sampling procedures of the study as well as the instruments used for the data collection. Furthermore the procedures of data collection and data analysis are discussed. Finally the pilot study, reliability and validity of the study as well as the ethical consideration are considered in this chapter.

The results of the writing errors analysis are presented in Chapter 4. The errors identified in terms of L1 and sex are also presented. Chapter 5 discusses the results in comparison with the literature. It also includes the recommendations in line with the objectives of the study. The conclusion follows thereafter.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The researcher's interest was in ESL research specifically in writing errors. This was because the researcher is a teacher by profession, an English teacher for that matter. Although a number of studies were carried out on English writing errors, little has been done specifically on ESL writing errors analysis in terms of L1 and sex in the Omusati Education Region. Hence, this section reveals information on the studies that have been conducted on writing errors and reasons for these errors. It also looks at the theoretical framework as well as the Namibian situation regarding ESL.

2.2 Theoretical framework

This study is based on Jim Cummins theory of Second Language Acquisition. Cummins (2007) states that first language knowledge is helpful in the second language acquisition, hence the cognitive and literacy skills established in the mother tongue is transferred to the second language. However inter-lingual transfer errors occur as learners transfer their first language in order to learn the second language. Cummins also emphasised that English proficiency of learners depends on the instruction they receive. If learners receive extensive comprehensible input then they are likely to acquire more English proficiency, but if they receive limited input then a lot need to be done for them to acquire more English proficiency. This goes together with the view of some researchers

which says “error is a symptom of ineffective teaching or as evidence of failure or due to mother-tongue interference” (Hubbard, et al., 1983, p.144).

The administered English Language Proficiency Test on all principals and teachers (Smit, 2011), supports Cummins Theory of Second Language Acquisition because if the English Language proficiency of teachers is up to standard, then the learners will perform well in ESL writing. If teachers had low levels of English Proficiency (Kisting, 2011), then something needs to be done to reverse the situation of writing errors into positive performance.

2.3 Writing and typical writing errors

Lerner (2000, pp.442-468), explains *writing as* “an active process and the most sophisticated process of putting oral language into graphic symbols and a complex achievement of the language system”. He further reiterates that competent writing requires many related abilities including spoken language, ability to read, skills in spelling, legible handwriting, skills and knowledge of the rules of written language, cognitive strategies and planning. Lerner (2000) further explains that a learners’ ESL often contains several errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, handwriting and grammar; hence their written products tend to be short, poorly organised and lack development of ideas. Similarly, Schunk (2009, p.424) explains that “writing, forms an important component of literacy although less research is conducted on writing”. He further concurs that less skilled writers make spelling, cohesion and punctuation errors because they do not spend time to plan, think, organize and revise their writing. On the

same note, some authors (Pritchard & Haneycut, 2005; Nakale, 2004) emphasised that for learners to write well they require enough time to think critically, to rewrite, select, revise and organise their ideas in order to do the real writing and re-writing. Learners should, thus, be assisted to achieve the basic competencies in writing as it is a prerequisite for educational achievement as well as job opportunities.

Abi, (2002, p.2) defines errors as “systematic” which means they are likely to happen repeatedly without being recognised by the learner. Similarly, the University of Namibia- Centre for External Studies (UNAM-CES) (2004, p.6) explains that “errors are made when the student is not familiar with the correct form or language use, and s/he needs intervention in order to produce the correct form”. Myles, (2002) reiterates that it is a fact that Second Language (L2) writing contains errors and it is the responsibility of the teachers to help learners to develop strategies for self correction and regulation. Elyssa (2009, p.3) concurs that “there is a systematic pattern of errors” in Namibian ESL and further suggests that Namibians’ English can be improved dramatically if the main errors are dealt with. This shows that learners need to be guided with regard to content, form, as well as the structure of writing.

2.4 Reasons for writing errors

The language errors that are made by learners might occur because of different reasons.

The following are the possible causes of ESL writing errors.

2.4.1 Inter-lingual transfer

According to Darus and Ching (2009), errors in ESL writing occur as a result of inter-lingual transfer. Inter-lingual transfer errors are errors caused by the interference of the learners' first language (L1), especially when the learners transfer directly or indirectly their first language (L1) to the second language (L2).

2.4.2 Intra-lingual transfer

Intra-lingual transfer errors are those that occur due to incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application because experiences in the L2 are very limited (Darus and Ching 2009). What contributes more to the intra-lingual transfer errors is the fact that some learners do not care with the rules of L2, but in most cases learners hardly read or hear English in their schools and communities. Makuwa (2005) explains that the reading competence levels of both learners and teachers, especially in the northern regions of Namibia, are generally low. To him, reading competence levels need to be identified and investigated due to the fact that low reading competence may affect writing. Reading is important since the two (reading and writing) are closely related as reading improves writing (Lerner, 2000).

The MoE (2007) also alluded to the reality that many learners hardly speak English outside the classroom and the English language proficiency of the English teachers, especially at the primary level, is severely limited. Appropriate reading and writing skills are required for a correct piece of writing. Sirakis & Alexander (2009) noted that

learners should read widely to develop a wider vocabulary and an understanding needed for good essay writing. They should ensure that they carefully read the essay instructions before they decide to write and they should understand what they have to write so that they avoid straying from the topic. Reading regularly benefits learners as they will know what happens in their country and in addition to that they will improve their vocabulary and this will help them to speak fluent English and write good essays in English examinations.

2.4.3 Fossilisation

Han (2004, p. 13) define fossilization as “the phenomenon of non-progression of learning despite continuous exposure to input, adequate motivation to learn and sufficient opportunity for practice”. He added that learners develop fossilization into permanent error patterns that cannot be changed by teaching or correction. From teaching experiences, the researcher agrees with the above definition to some extent. For example, it is very difficult to change the writing patterns of some grade11 learners from what they have been writing at their junior grades as they keep on repeating the same mistakes in their writing. Although the researcher agrees with the above mentioned statement, efforts must be made to change these errors and to rebuild the correct language usage.

UNAM-CES (2004) added that apart from inter-lingual transfer, fossilization is also causing ESL errors. Fossilization refers to the learning of an incorrect form as if it is

correct and making that error consistently. This refers to the mistakes made by parents, teachers and the community, which become fixed and later considered as correct e.g. the use of ‘many than’ instead of ‘more than’. Sometimes learners or any person would like to state that ‘there are more girls than boys’, instead they say “there are many girls than boys’. This shows no distinction in the use of ‘many’ and ‘more than’ and it becomes a habit. Children learn errors from poorly trained teachers and parents and these learned errors are difficult to correct as they are transferred from one generation to the other. This shows how important it is for teachers to use correct English in their classes.

2.4.4 Overgeneralisation

Another reason for language errors is overgeneralisation (UNAM-CES, 2004). This happens when learners hear certain language features and assume other examples follow the same rule. E.g. a learner can hear the following sentence “usually I cook early, but yesterday I cooked late”, and overgeneralise that to change a verb into the past, the rule is to add *ed* even to irregular verbs like *eat-eated*.

2.4.5 Carelessness

Learners’ carelessness and lack of concentration cause errors when learners are writing (Darus & Ching, 2009). In most cases they don’t care and are not even bothered to ensure that, for example they end their sentences with a full stop. It is not something that they do not know, but it might be due to carelessness.

2.4.6 Modern Technology

Mobile telecommunication brought updated services whereby people communicate wherever they are with their relatives and friends through mobile phones. Most people who are exposed to cell phones use Short Message Services (SMS) language. This is a disadvantage if learners make it a habit and also apply SMS language in their formal written work and examinations (MoE, 2005).

2.5 The Namibian situation regarding ESL

This subsection outlines (i) the status of English in Namibia, (ii) the expected ESL writing competencies, (iii) ESL assessment and (iv) ESL admission requirements at tertiary institutions and job qualification.

2.5.1 The status of English in Namibia

After Namibia gained its independence in 1990, the language policy document for schools in Namibia was adopted. It stipulates that learners should be taught in their mother tongue from grade one to three and English will be taught as a subject. Grade four is to be the transitional year where learners are switching from mother tongue to English. From grade five to twelve and throughout tertiary institutions, learners should be taught via English as medium of instruction (MESC, 2003). English is also the official language of the country (The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 2000).

Despite the fact that English is accorded the official status and recognised as a medium of instruction, several studies indicate that less than 2% of the Namibian population use English as the mother tongue or as the main language spoken at home (Haacke, 1990; National Planning Commission, 2004; Totemeyer, 2009; Ministry of Education, 2010). This might have an impact on the errors learners make in their writing as the majority learns English as their second language. In addition to this, a study that was conducted by the Ministry of Education in 1990 into the English proficiency of a representative sample of Namibian teachers showed that the majority of teachers had low levels of English proficiency (Philander, 2008). This tells us that if teachers, who are delivering the content to the learners are not well equipped, then learners are getting wrong information and carry these errors throughout their life.

It is the learners' poor performance in ESL that prompted the Ministry of Education to carry out a second study after 21 years and to administer an English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT) on all principals and teachers countrywide. This test was administered in September 2011 (Smit, 2011). On the English Language Proficiency Test conducted, Karamata (2011) states that the test results of the ELPT showed that the majority of teachers, especially from the Northern and Kavango regions performed poorly in the test. In other words it showed again that the majority of teachers had low levels of English Proficiency (Kisting, 2011). In addition to that, it was reported that teachers have difficulties "with capital letters, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural form, articles, punctuation, tenses", just to mention a few. The report further

explained that “this low performance of teachers and other educators overall has a negative impact on learners’ performance in English and all other subjects” (Kisting, 2011, p.2).

Shipanga (2012, p.3), reiterates that “the majority of employers are not satisfied with the level of written English of University graduates”. According to Shipanga, this was revealed in the study which was conducted by the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) in 2011. The study focused on graduates of the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia who completed their studies between 1999 and 2008. This means that teachers are also included as some are graduates of the University of Namibia and the Polytechnic of Namibia. This clearly indicates that not only teachers have difficulties in English, but people from other professions. These people are parents or persons close to the learners concerned and educators of the Namibian learners in general.

2.5.2 Expected ESL writing competencies

The NSSC ESL syllabus for grades 11-12 (MoE, 2005, pp.10-13), has outlined the competencies expected from learners in writing skills. These are: to write formal and informal letters, articles to local newspapers and school magazines, essays (narrative, descriptive and argumentative), summaries, speeches, diary entries and form completion. These should be done through competence in the use of spelling and punctuation, as well as appropriate vocabulary in different contexts and situations. It also requires correct

tenses and appropriate grammatical structures in writing and adherence to grammatical rules e.g. correct forms of verbs and articles. From the experience as an ESL teacher, the majority of learners do not have these competencies which affect the standard of learners formal writing negatively.

The major writing errors made by grade 12 learners in 2009 regarding all written papers outlined by the DNEA report on the examination in ESL were: wrong use of punctuation marks, wrong choice of words, unnecessary capitalisation and wrong word order. The examination report also indicated many spelling mistakes, grammatical errors and poor handwriting. It emphasised that learners also used inappropriate language e.g. Short Message Services (SMS) language: ‘wanna’ instead of ‘want to’ and ‘gonna’ instead of ‘going to’ which is against the formal standard of English. The DNEA Examination Report (MoE, 2009) also emphasised that learners were penalised or not awarded marks due to the errors they made. However, the mentioned reports do not give a systematic breakdown of the errors. Marks and grades are awarded on the basis of expected writing competencies hence, markers were urged to indicate different errors made using the prescribed marking guide for teachers (see Appendix B). If learners do not meet the required competencies, then it can affect their marks and grades.

2.5.3 ESL assessment

ESL is learned through four skill areas, which are: reading, writing, listening and speaking. ESL at the level of grade 11-12 is assessed through these skills i.e. reading and

writing in paper one (core) and paper two (extended), listening comprehension in paper three and speaking (oral) in paper four. Learners have the choice to write either the core paper or the extended paper.

The distribution of marks is as follows: For reading and writing, there is a total of 60 marks for core (paper one) and 90 for extended (paper two), whereby essay writing comprises of 22 marks for paper one and 38 marks for paper two. The listening comprehension (paper three) has a total of 30 marks and 10 marks are for speaking (paper four). The total marks for the ESL, core or extended paper is 100 marks, since the 90 marks for Paper 2 is converted to a mark of 60 (MoE, 2005, pp. 15-17).

Grade 11-12 learners normally write internal examinations during the first and second term (i.e. April and August), and for the third term grade 12 write an external examination (the NSSC Ordinary level/ Higher level Examination). This examination is taken care of by the DNEA since its localisation in the year 2007 (Wolfaardt, 2010).

The DNEA appoints qualified markers for ESL from different Secondary Schools. These markers use the prescribed Marking Guide for teachers to mark the correctness and clarity of writing (see Appendix B). For written work, especially essays, teachers also use the Marking Grid (see Appendix C) which considers the content written and the language used for the awarding of marks. The purpose of the Marking Guide is for the teacher to indicate the language errors made by learners in a written piece of work. This is done to pave the way or make the assessment a bit easier before using the Marking

Grid (content). The marks obtained by a learner will be determined by the level of the language structure as well as the level of the content and style (see Appendix B and C). This implies that, if a learner writes relevant content and followed the instructions, then that learner qualifies for level one or two on the side of the content which indicate good marks. But if a learner writes irrelevant content which is not according to the instructions, then that learner qualifies for level four or five which indicate low marks. The same applies to the language and structure part; if a learner writes a written piece of work with correct language use, few grammar errors and few spelling mistakes, then that learner qualifies for level one or two which display high marks. However, if a learner writes a written piece of work with many grammar mistakes, many spelling and punctuation errors then that learner qualifies for level four or five which show low marks. The marks awarded always depend on the number of errors made and the level of content which are guided by the Marking Guide and the Marking Grid respectively. After the marks for all the skills are added together, the final mark is determined (MoE-NIED, 2005).

2.5.4 ESL admission requirements at tertiary institutions and job qualifications

According to the UNAM General Information & Regulations Prospectus (2011), the minimum symbols to enter UNAM is 'C', 'D' and 'E' grades in ESL for undergraduate Degrees, Diplomas and Certificates respectively. To enter the Polytechnic of Namibia, the minimum symbol is an 'E' grade in ESL (Polytechnic of Namibia, 2011, p.7).

Apart from the tertiary institution requirements, employment opportunities also demand acceptable symbols in ESL, for example, a vacancy for a clerk in the Omusati Regional Council was advertised (New Era, 2010) and the requirement was a grade 12 certificate plus a D symbol in English. ESL is a challenge to learners, as it can be seen from the examination statistics which indicate that over the years only few grade 12 learners obtained D or better symbols in ESL.

2.6 The case of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga

Haacke (1990) explains the four major phyla in which African Languages are grouped. These major phyla are Congo-Kordofanian, Nilo-Saharan, Afro-Asiatic and Khoesan. According to him, the Niger-Congo family is the main branch of the Congo-Kordofanian phylum. It is the largest language family in Africa with more than 1000 languages and it is the third-largest family in the world after the Indo-European and Sino-Tibetan. One of the largest sub-families of the Niger-Congo family is *Benue-Congo* which contains the *Bantoid* languages. The *Bantu* languages are included in the *Bantoid* languages and Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama both fall under the Bantu languages.

English on the other hand is a Germanic language which is a branch of the Indo-European language family. English thus stems from Indo-European languages. The major languages of the Indo-European family are Indo-Iranian, Hellenic, Celtic, Italic, Balto-Slavic and Germanic. West

Germanic is a sub-branch of the Germanic languages and English developed out of the

West Germanic languages. It is thus clear that Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama on the one hand and English developed from two very different origins (Haacke, 1990).

Oshiwambo which is the mother of Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga originates from the Bantu languages. Oshiwambo has eight dialects, which are Oshikwambi, Oshikwaluudhi, Oshingandjera, Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbalantu, Oshimbandja, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama, but in Namibia only two dialects are recognised as official first languages, i.e. Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga (Haacke, 1990). These two languages are used at the two secondary schools selected for this study. The learners who speak Oshimbandja and Oshikwanyama normally take Oshikwanyama at school as a recognized L1, while the rest take Oshindonga as a recognized L1, but learners have choices on L1 at school.

Marsh (2002, p.23), pointed out that “the L1 interferes in English speech production, for example, the Oshikwambi speakers in Oshiwambo have a strong ‘r’ sound whereas Oshindonga speakers have a problem producing and differentiating between ‘r’ and ‘l’ as in mixing *red* and *led*”. This has been cited as a common reason for English writing errors, because learners can learn incorrect usage of English from the L1 transfer. This is in line with the observation made by the researcher when she used to mark the learners essays. Learners wrote “luling” instead of “ruling” or “expeliencie” instead of “experience”. Similarly, some learners have strong “n” sound in their English speech production, which is transferred to ESL written words such as “ngo” for “go”,

“andadvantages” for “advantages”, “mbackground” for “background” and “andd” for “add”.

Apart from L1 transfer, some learners have difficulties in acquiring ESL rules for writing. As an ESL teacher, I have also experiences of many learners whose ESL background is very disadvantaged, and at the level of grade 12, they commit a lot of errors in the language proficiency and this affects their performance as they break the rules of the L2. These errors might be due to intra-lingual transfer as explained by Darus and Ching (2009).

2.7 ESL writing by sex

The performance of ESL writing by sex refers. It is against this background that there is a limited literature in this field because a lot of studies focus more on sex differences related to speech production. Swann (1992, p.21) states that “there is little evidence available of systematic linguistic differences in girls and boys or women’s and men’s writing”. Hence several studies mostly on speech production and reading indicate that girls and boys produce different types of writing even when they are writing similar writing activities, and girls perform better than boys (Swann, 1992; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003; Edwards, 2009). They further stated that although girls perform better than boys, performance on language learning depends on culture, context and circumstances that boys and girls inhabit when they are young.

Chapter two gave an overview of the literature in the field of study. Chapter three deals with the research design and methodology. It presents the information on the procedures and techniques used to conduct the study as well as how the data was analysed.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the methods which were used to identify ESL writing errors and how these errors were collected and analysed. These include the research design, population, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, pilot study, reliability and validity of the study as well as ethical considerations.

3.2 Research design

The researcher employed a mixed method design for the purpose of this study in order to follow a suitable research plan and to gather the necessary data that would meet the research objectives.

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009, p. 462), “mixed methods research designs combine quantitative and qualitative approaches by including both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study”. Quantitative studies investigate whether there is a relationship between and amongst variables while qualitative studies seek thorough understanding of a situation or a state of being (Gay, et al., 2009).

The researcher identified and analysed various writing errors made by the grade 11 learners in their essays. The identification of ESL writing errors was based on

quantitative methods, while the analysis of the ESL writing errors was based on qualitative methods. This will give the researcher an in depth understanding of the errors made by the learners in their ESL writing examination.

3.3 Population

The population comprised a total number of 3,149 of the grade 11 learners of the year 2011 from 19 secondary schools in the Omusati Education Region. From the two selected secondary schools, the population encompasses of 627 grade 11 learners. All the learners were doing ESL ordinary level because this is a compulsory subject for all learners in Namibian schools.

3.4 Sample and sampling procedures

The sample was drawn from two secondary schools in the Omusati Education Region. The two schools were selected through *purposive sampling* which “is the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population” (Gay, et al., 2009 p. 134). The study focused on ESL writing errors analysis; hence the two schools were selected because they were of about the same average in terms of ESL performance. In addition to that, both schools offer Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama as first languages.

The total number of the grade 11 learners of 2011 at School A was 316 (eight classes, with the lowest consisting of 38 learners per class and the highest consisting of 40

learners per class). For School B, the population was 311 (eight classes, with the lowest consisting of 22 learners and the highest consisting of 44 learners). The total number of grade 11 learners at the two selected schools was 627, and the sample for the study was 400.

Purposive sampling was used to obtain equal numbers of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama speakers and also to obtain equal numbers of boys and girls. This means that from each school a sample of 200 essays were selected, whereby for each first language group (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama), a sample of 100 essays each were selected, (50 essays were from male and 50 essays were from female learners). There were thus 400 English examination essays which were purposively selected to be analysed for writing errors. In addition to this the researcher also purposively selected 40 essays from the sampled 400 essays to be examined and analysed qualitatively. Only those essays with many errors and with scores below 50% were selected for the qualitative analyses, while the “l”, “r” and “n” errors were specifically attended to. Purposive sampling was used whereby a total number of 20 essays for Oshikwanyama and 20 essays for Oshindonga were selected. An attempt was made to ensure that equal numbers of boys and girls were included in each language group, i.e. 10 boys and 10 girls from each group.

The essays were usually about 100 words each for the core papers and 150 words for extended papers, and both low and high performing learners in ESL writing were part of

the total sample. This was because even high performing learners made errors in the ESL writing.

3.5 Research instruments

According to Gay, et al., (2009, p. 144), research instruments are “tools that enable researchers to collect data”. The instruments which were used for this study were the prescribed marking guide for teachers (see Appendix B). This guide is used by the teachers to mark the ESL essay writing, hence it was one of the tools used to identify the errors. The essays of participants who wrote the December 2011 ESL examination paper, were also used. The researcher’s interest was on the identification of writing errors in ESL. The researcher thus thought of the examination essays as the most appropriate tool to identify the writing errors. This is believed to show reliable information because learners are studying hard and are very eager to pass their examination. The Marking Grid (see Appendix C) was also used to allocate marks to the essays in order to make it easy for the researcher to select the 40 essays with scores below 50% for further qualitative analysis. The researcher decided to use the above mentioned instruments, because they are thought to be the appropriate tools for this study.

3.6 Data collection procedures

The researcher got the permission from the Omusati Regional Council via the Director of the Omusati Education Region and the two selected schools to conduct the study. The

researcher consulted with English teachers to collect the written essays from the 400 sampled grade 11 learners during the December examination of 2011. Teachers were asked to assist with the grouping of the grade 11 learners (participants) in terms of first language and sex. All the invigilators of the English examination were asked to inform the learners to write their First languages and their sex on the cover page of their examination scripts, apart from their names and other information that appeared on the scripts.

This arrangement was carried out well as planned. It was of great assistance because it made it easy for the researcher to select the sample according to the first languages and sex as well as to transfer the details to the copies made. The researcher ensured that learners' information i.e. their names, sex and their first languages were transferred to the top page of the sampled essays. Moreover, the essays were duplicated before they were marked, because there were three independent markers namely: the teacher, the researcher and the third person who is an ESL qualified teacher. These markers marked the errors based on the prescribed marking guide for teachers (see Appendix B). Writing errors of each essay were identified when marking and care was taken by the markers to take note of the maximum words required to be written by the learners who wrote core paper (100 words) and those who wrote the extended paper (150 words).

3.7 Data analysis

The data was analysed through a mixed method as stated earlier. Since quantitative

approach focus primarily on numbers, it was applied for the identification of ESL writing errors. For the in-depth analysis of ESL writing errors, a qualitative approach was applied because it uncovers complexities and helped the researcher to understand why learners made the ESL errors. Lastly the language errors were also analysed in terms of sex (male and female learners) and first language (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama speaking learners) to determine if there were any statistically significant differences in the errors made between the two groups. The identified errors were analysed using descriptive statistics i.e. frequency tables, mean scores and t-test. The errors identified and analysed were presented in frequency tables and in bar graphs. Levene's test (Wielkiewicz, 2000) for equality of variance was also administered for comparison of means. Following is a description of how the two approaches were applied.

3.7.1 Quantitative approach

Firstly, the researcher read and re-read through the essays to identify the errors made. All the errors identified were counted and recorded as frequencies and percentages. Mean scores for each category were also calculated. This was done for the total group (N=400) and also separately for males and females (N=200 each) and for the two language groups (N=200 each). Subsequently, after ensuring equality of means, the t-test for the equality of means were administered to the data to determine whether there were any differences in the errors made with regard to sex and mother tongue. It should be noted that the researcher ensured that all the errors identified from the three markers

were compared, compiled, counted and recorded. The marks indicated were not analysed, but were used to make it easy for the researcher to select 40 essays for further analysis. Further identification of language group errors made in exchanging the “r” and “l” consonants as well as the overuse of the “n” consonants was done from the 40 selected essays (20 essays for Oshindonga speaking learners and 20 essays for Oshikwanyama speaking learners).

3.7.2 Qualitative approach

According to Gay, et al. (2009), themes and categories should be created in qualitative research; hence the researcher created categories for each of the writing errors selected for further analysis.

This was a big concern and an interesting issue for the researcher to further analyse these errors. In the end the majority of error categories for the quantitative data were also selected for further analyses.

Firstly, the researcher purposively selected 40 essays from the sampled 400 essays which were examined and analysed. Only those essays with many errors and with scores below 50% were selected. Secondly, the purposive sampling method considered the sex and mother tongue balance whereby a total number of 20 essays from learners with Oshikwanyama L1 and 20 essays from learners with Oshindonga L1 were selected. Equal numbers of boys and girls were included in each language group, i.e. 10 boys and 10 girls from each group. For the in-depth analysis of language errors the researcher

used the interpretive method to describe and interpret the data. The researcher did this through identification of themes and categories and grouped language errors. In addition to that, the 40 essays (20 essays for Oshindonga speaking learners and 20 essays for Oshikwanyama speaking learners) were also analysed to look at the errors made in “r” and “l” consonants exchange as well as on the overuse of the “n” consonant.

3.8 Pilot study

Before the study was conducted, a pilot study was conducted on a sample of 10 essays from another school to determine the errors made by the grade 11 learners in ESL writing. A small analysis of data was done to prepare for the final data analysis. This was also done to let the researcher become familiar with the procedures and to identify possible challenges regarding the data collection. It really helped the researcher to know how to go about the study and it was very useful to find information necessary for the study. At first, it was very difficult to convince the teachers of English to make an arrangement for the activity. Later the researcher was allowed to set an essay question and a date was set for learners to write the activity. In the end everything went well and findings from the pilot study were used to streamline the final study. This increased validity and reliability of the study.

3.9 Discussions on the marking of the essays

The researcher detected deviations from the MoE guidelines in the way that some of the teachers marked the essays. In some essays, marks were just allocated without any

indication of what type of errors the learners have made. In other essays, errors were just underlined and were not categorised. The researcher closely examined the marking of all the people involved and found that only few teachers, the researcher and the third person indicated the errors made per category. If teachers do not mark ESL writing tasks as expected it could either be that they do not take marking seriously or that they did not get information on how to mark ESL essays.

Appendices D, E, F and G displayed the answers of some participants. These are the essays which were marked out of the maximum of 12 marks. The researcher retyped these essays with all the errors as written by the participants because they were too unclear. The marking was exactly done as the three markers did it. It should be noted that the marks do not have a direct effect on this study, since the study is investigating the errors made. However, the marks were awarded based on the prescribed marking guide for teachers (see Appendix B) to pave the way for error analysis. This tool was used by the teachers to identify the errors made by the learners as these errors have an effect on the marks to be awarded. After the teachers identified the errors, they used the marking grid (see Appendix C) to determine the level of the learner's essay writing, and the level automatically determines the marks awarded. Here the teachers judged or evaluated the essays of the learners and decided the level of the content and style as well as the language and structure of the learners' essays. After that, the level determined the marks which were awarded to the learners' essays.

The awarding of marks depends on whether the content is well arranged and whether the learners followed the instructions. The grammar is also being considered and in addition to that, the markers always look at whether the essays are well structured with correct grammar usage and few spelling errors. If a learner writes a good essay, the possibility of getting the maximum marks is always high. However, if a learner writes an essay which is not well structured or out of the topic with a lot of grammatical errors, then the possibility for that learner to get zero is very high. Therefore many writing errors affect the performance of learners in ESL.

From these appendices (D, E, F and G), it can be observed how different markers marked or indicated the errors made by the learners. Although there is a marking guide this is how different teachers mark the essays of learners. Despite differences in marking style, the three markers, in most cases arrived at the same mark, (see Appendices D, E, F and G). The prescribed marking guide for teachers is very clear and it is even written “All mistakes must be indicated, even if they are repeated several times”, “Indicate the different mistakes-do not just underline!” and “Correct and precise indication of mistakes will lead to accurate evaluation” see (Appendix B). If teachers are not showing the errors made, the learners will not be aware of their errors and they will continue to make the same errors. The researcher is not aware if this happens only during examination or for all the activities written by learners throughout the year.

Learners cannot correct their errors if the teachers are not doing their part. Hence efforts are required from all the stakeholders especially the decision-makers in education. All the required resources should be put into place and utilized effectively to eliminate

writing errors and to let the learners perform well.

3.10 Reliability and validity of the study

The study focused on the writing errors analysis which was based on the December examination of 2011. The reason being, grade 11 learners from schools in the Omusati Education Region write the same examination during December 2011. The following strategies were built into the study to ensure validity and reliability. Firstly, the research instrument was an essay from the final examination of the grade 11 learners where there was expectation that the learners tried their best in the final examination as they would be motivated to pass and proceed to the next grade. Examinations for ESL writing are always requiring the same writing skills although the topic for essays might differ. Secondly, there were three markers who all marked the same essay for the learners. The researcher and the third person marked the learners' essays before they had access to the essays marked by the teacher. All these strategies were used to ensure the study is reliable. The work from the three people was compared to ensure agreement, after that the errors were recorded and analysed. This again added value in the sense that if one marker omits some errors, the other markers could pick up the errors. These procedures were put in place to ensure high levels of validity and reliability of the research results.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Procedures were followed by the researcher to gain entry to the two schools through formal approval processes from the relevant authorities. Participants' consent was

obtained and the participants were treated with respect. The study was conducted through professional obligation, with high integrity and confidentiality at the two schools as the names of the learners were kept confidential. Participants were involved equally and discrimination was avoided at all times.

The next Chapter, (Chapter 4) presents the results of the study. The results are presented using descriptive statistics in the ways of tables and graphs.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study. Firstly, the quantitative results are presented. As discussed earlier in chapter three, the sample for the quantitative study comprised of 400 essays from grade 11 learners. From each school, a sample of 200 essays was selected, and the sample reflected a sex and first language balance. Firstly, the categories and frequency of errors identified from the English examination essays are presented. This is followed by the errors identified in terms of sex and then errors identified in terms of L1.

The qualitative analysis was done based on the 40 essays selected for this purpose. These essays were selected from the original sample of 400 essays. Hence after the presentation of identified ESL writing errors, the analysis of errors per category are presented, followed by errors made in terms of sex and then errors made in terms of L1. The results are presented in the narrative, followed by frequency tables and bar graphs.

4.2 Presentation of quantitative results

4.2.1 Identification and analyses of errors for the total sample

The topic of the written essay was about a speech that learners were supposed to give on the retirement of the school principal, (see Appendix A). The question gave hints of

what learners should write about. After collection and duplication of the essays, the marking was done by three independent markers (researcher, teacher and a third qualified person). Based on the prescribed marking guide (Appendix B) all errors identified by the three markers were recorded.

The researcher ensured that all the errors identified from the three markers were compared, compiled and recorded. The errors identified in the marking guide were poor choice of words, spelling, punctuation, tenses, word omitted, singular /plural form, capitalisation, paragraphing, subject verb agreement, informal writing, SMS Language, new sentences, unclear writing, word limit (writing more or fewer words than the 100/150 words required).

4.2.1.1 Frequency of errors per category

Table 4.1 shows the categories of errors made, frequencies of the errors made, average and total number of errors identified for each of the categories. Sixteen categories of writing errors were identified and the category where the most errors were recorded was poor choice of words which made up 24.3% of the total number of errors. It was the largest category followed by punctuation which made up 14.1% and then spelling with 12.8%. The fourth category was singular/plural form which made up 8.1% followed by words omitted which was the fifth category with 7.4% of the total number of errors. Incorrect tenses were the sixth category with 7.4% followed by capitalisation as the seventh category which made up 6.7%. Categories eight and nine were paragraphing with 6.1% and subject-verb agreement with 2.9%. Informal writing came as the tenth

category which made up 2.7% of the total number of errors. The eleventh category was unclear writing with 1.9%. New sentence and SMS language were at categories twelve and thirteen with 1.7% each. The fourteenth and fifteenth categories were more than 100 words and more than 150 words with 0.9% and 0.6% respectively. The last category of the errors made was too few words which made up 0.1% of the total number of errors. Examples of mistakes made in each category are indicated below. These examples are quoted as they appear in the essays, hence different errors can be observed in one sentence/statement.

spelling→“quality education wich he provide us.”

Tenses→ “Our school successes to came up with good development.”

Punctuation→“I am thank you for cooperation

Word omitted→ “It built a new laboratory_science.”

Subject verb agreement→“First I would like to thanks the chairperson”

Poor choice of words→“To the Principal and all protocol I great you.”

Unclear→“I am grant to give my poor and unplanned speech to you.”

SMS Language→“I have for u today”

Singular/Plural→“He was working for 15 year old.”

Capitalisation→“looking at the histry, Qur principal has been In Charge for 40 years.”

Informal→“I am here infront of you guys”

It is vital to note that some participants made more errors than others but most of the errors made were similar, for example many learners made the same spelling errors and failed to divide their essay into different paragraphs. Marks were awarded based on the prescribed marking grid (see Appendix C). The marking grid guides the teacher to determine the marks awarded for the essay. It should however be noted that the marks awarded did not influence the errors identified, but were used to make it possible for the researcher to select 40 essays for further analysis.

Table 4.1: Number and percentages of errors identified per category

Short Annotation	Long Annotation	Number of errors	% of errors per category	Average number of errors per paper
SP	Spelling	488	12.8	1.2
T	Tense	281	7.4	0.7
P	Punctuation	539	14.1	1.3
WO	Word omitted	306	8.0	0.8
SVA	Subject-Verb Agreement	109	2.9	0.3
NS	New Sentence	65	1.7	0.2
NP	Paragraphing	234	6.1	0.6
PCoW	Poor choice of words	928	24.3	2.3
UC	Unclear	72	1.9	0.2
SMS	Short Message Services	64	1.7	0.2
S/P	Singular/Plural form	305	8.1	0.8
C	Capitalisation	254	6.7	0.6
Inf.	Informal	105	2.7	0.2
	More than 100 words	36	0.9	0.1
	More than 150 words	23	0.6	0.1
FW	Few words	6	0.1	0.0
Total		3815	100	9.4

N=400

Note: Short annotation is the short form used when the papers were marked.

Graphically the scores of Table 4.1 look as follows but ordered from the category with the most errors to the category with the least number of errors.

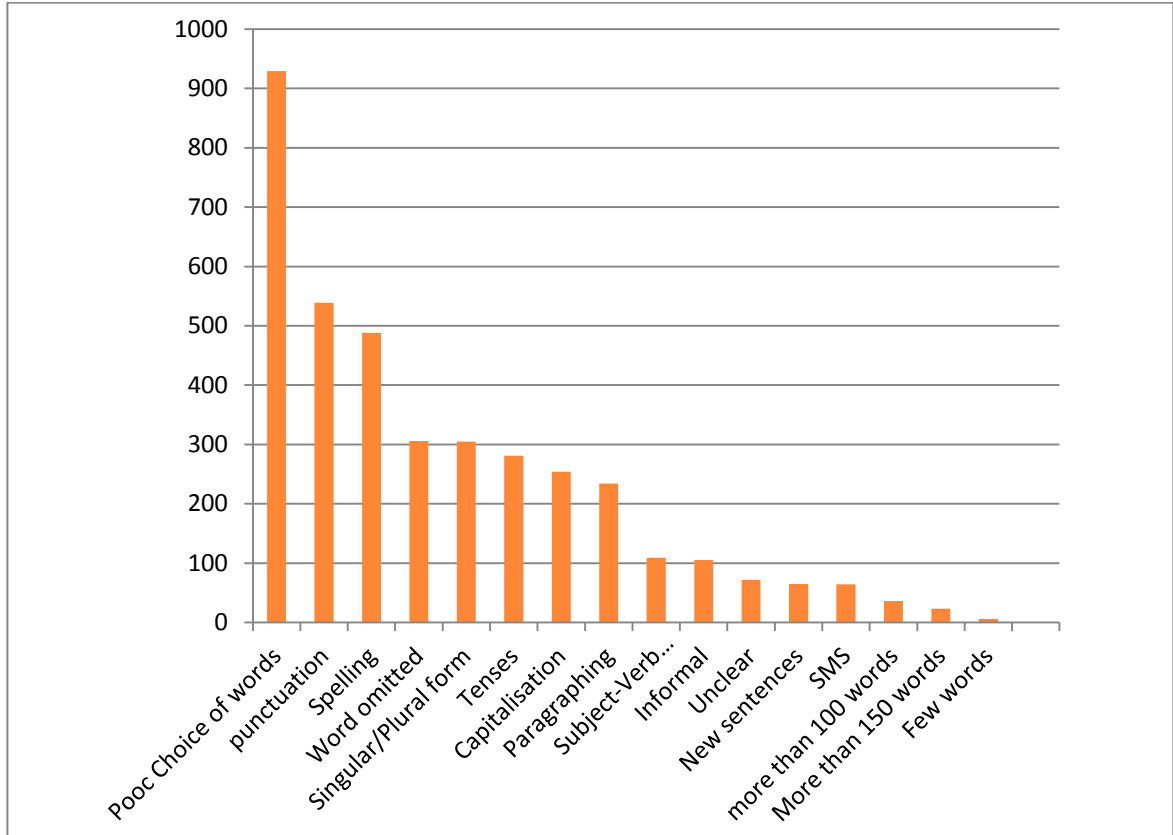


Figure 4.1: Total number of errors identified per category.

4.2.2 Identification and analyses of errors by sex

This section presents the errors identified in terms of sex and compares the errors identified per male and female. It can be seen from the Table 4.2 and examples of errors made below, that for most categories female learners made more errors than male learners but most of the errors made by both sexes are similar.

Table 4.2 shows that females made more errors than males in the following categories, (the mean difference between males and females are given in brackets): poor choice of words (0.76), spelling (0.45), word omitted (0.41), punctuation (0.37), paragraphing (0.35), capitalisation (0.29), singular/plural form (0.25), tense (0.17), more than 150 words (0.11), subject-verb agreement (0.09), new sentence (0.06), SMS language (0.05) and unclear (0.01). The few categories where males made more errors than females were: Informal (-0.08), more than 100 words (-0.05) and few words (-0.02). For some categories the difference in mean scores was relatively big and for others it was small or even negligible. For example for poor choice of words, it was 0.8 while for SMS it was 0.1 which is very small (negligible).

Table 4.2: Frequency distribution of errors identified in terms of sex

Categories of errors	F		(%)		Mean		Mean differences	Std. Deviation	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female
Spelling	200	288	12.5	13.0	1.1	1.4	0.5	1.2	1.6
Tense	124	157	7.8	7.1	0.6	0.8	0.2	1.1	1.1
Punctuation	234	305	14.6	13.7	1.2	1.5	0.4	2.0	1.4
Word omitted	112	194	7.0	8.7	0.6	1.1	0.4	1.0	1.1
Subject verb agreement	47	62	3.0	2.8	0.2	0.3	0.1	1.1	0.7
New sentence	27	38	1.7	1.7	0.1	0.2	0.1	1.0	0.6
paragraphing	81	153	5.1	6.9	0.4	0.8	0.4	1.0	1.0
Poor choice of words	390	538	24.5	24.2	1.9	2.7	0.8	2.4	2.5
Unclear	36	36	2.3	1.6	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.5	0.5
SMS Language	27	37	1.7	1.6	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.4	1.0
Singular/Plural	129	176	8.1	8.0	0.6	0.9	0.3	1.2	1.0
Capitalisation	99	155	6.2	7.0	0.5	0.8	0.3	1.0	1.1
Informal	61	44	3.8	2.1	0.3	0.2	-0.1	1.1	1.1
More than 100 words	23	13	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.3	0.2
More than 150 words	-	23	-	1.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
Few words	5	1	0.03	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.0	0.2	0.1
Total	1595	2220	100	100	7.9	12.2	3.6	15.6	15.2

Graphically, the scores of table 4.2 look as follow:

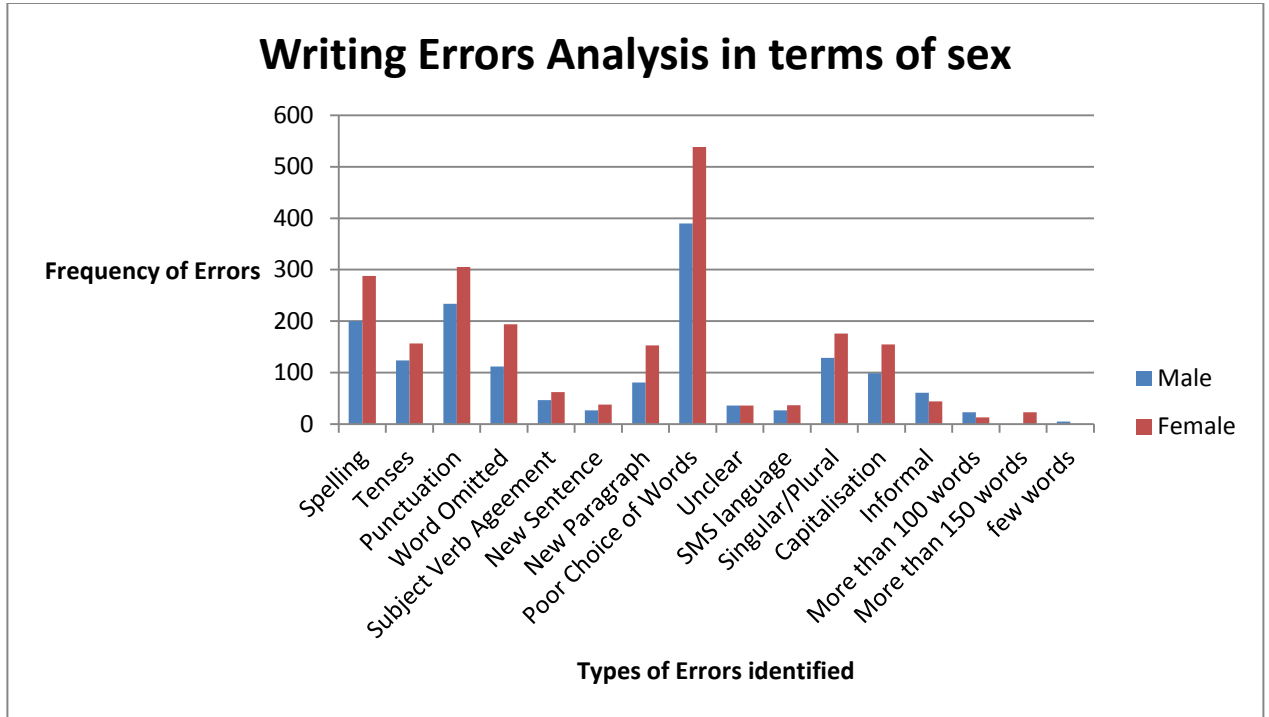


Figure 4.2: Comparison of errors in terms of sex

In addition to this, Levene's test (Wielkiewicz, 2000) for equality of variance was administered to compare the mean scores of the two sexes. This test was based only on the total number of errors per essay. Homogeneity of variance for the groups was such, that a test for comparison of means could be administered. Subsequently the t-test was administered to determine differences in the mean scores of the two groups and also to find out if these differences could be considered to be statistically significant. Since it was concluded that the variances were equal, a normal t-test was used to test for the equality of means between the two sexes with regard to total errors. Based on the test it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean total error

scores between boys and girls. This difference was quite big, showing an average difference of 3.2 errors (see Table 4.3), with boys having fewer errors than girls ($t = 5.322$; $p < 0.05$). This implies that for the two selected schools in the Omusati region female learners make more ESL writing errors than male learners.

Table 4.3: T-test for the equality of means by sex (male and female)

		T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Sex	(Male and Female)	5.322	398	.000	3.195

4.2.3 Identification and analyses of errors by language group

This section presents the errors identified in terms of L1, i.e. Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga. The identified errors were compared to find out whether there was a significant difference in errors made by the two language groups.

Table 4.4 shows that Oshindonga speaking learners made more errors than Oshikwanyama speaking learners in the following categories, (the mean difference between Oshindonga speaking learners and Oshikwanyama speaking learners are given in brackets): spelling (0.11), informal writing (0.09), paragraphing (0.08), new sentences (0.07), SMS language (0.03), subject verb agreement (0.02) and more than 150 words (0.01).

The categories where Oshikwanyama speaking learners made more errors than Oshindonga speaking learners were: punctuation (0.45), singular/plural form (-0.32), poor choice of words (0.27), words omitted (-0.25), capitalisation (0.10), more than 100 words (-0.06), tense (-0.05), unclear writing (-0.02), and few words (0.02). The total number of errors made in terms of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama first languages are shown in the Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Frequency distribution of errors identified in terms of L1

Categories of errors	Total number of errors per L1		Percentage per L1 (%)		Mean		Mean difference	Std. Deviation	
	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama		Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama
Spelling	255	233	14.1	11.6	1.3	1.2	0.1	2.1	1.2
Tense	136	145	7.5	7.2	1.1	1.0	-0.1	1.1	1.1
Punctuation	226	313	12.5	15.6	1.1	2.1	-0.5	1.4	2.0
Word omitted	128	178	7.1	8.9	1.0	1.1	-0.3	1.1	1.3
Subject verb agreement	58	51	3.2	2.5	0.2	0.3	0.0	1.1	1.1
New sentence	40	25	2.2	1.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.4
Paragraphing	127	107	7.0	5.3	1.0	1.0	0.1	1.0	1.0
Poor choice of words	439	489	24.3	24.3	2.2	2.5	-0.3	2.5	2.4
Unclear	34	38	2.1	2.1	0.1	0.2	-0.0	0.5	0.4
SMS Language	35	29	1.9	1.4	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.4
Singular/Plural	122	183	6.8	9.1	1.1	1.0	-0.3	1.0	1.3
Capitalisation	117	137	6.4	6.8	1.1	1.1	-0.1	1.1	1.1
Informal	62	43	3.4	2.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	1.1	0.5
More than 100 words	12	24	0.7	1.2	0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.2	0.3
More than 150 words	13	10	0.7	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.2
Few words	1	5	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.0	-0.0	0.1	0.2
Total	1805	2010	100	100	8.92	10.06	-1.13	14.041	14.01

N=200

Graphically, the scores of Table 4.4 can be seen as follows:

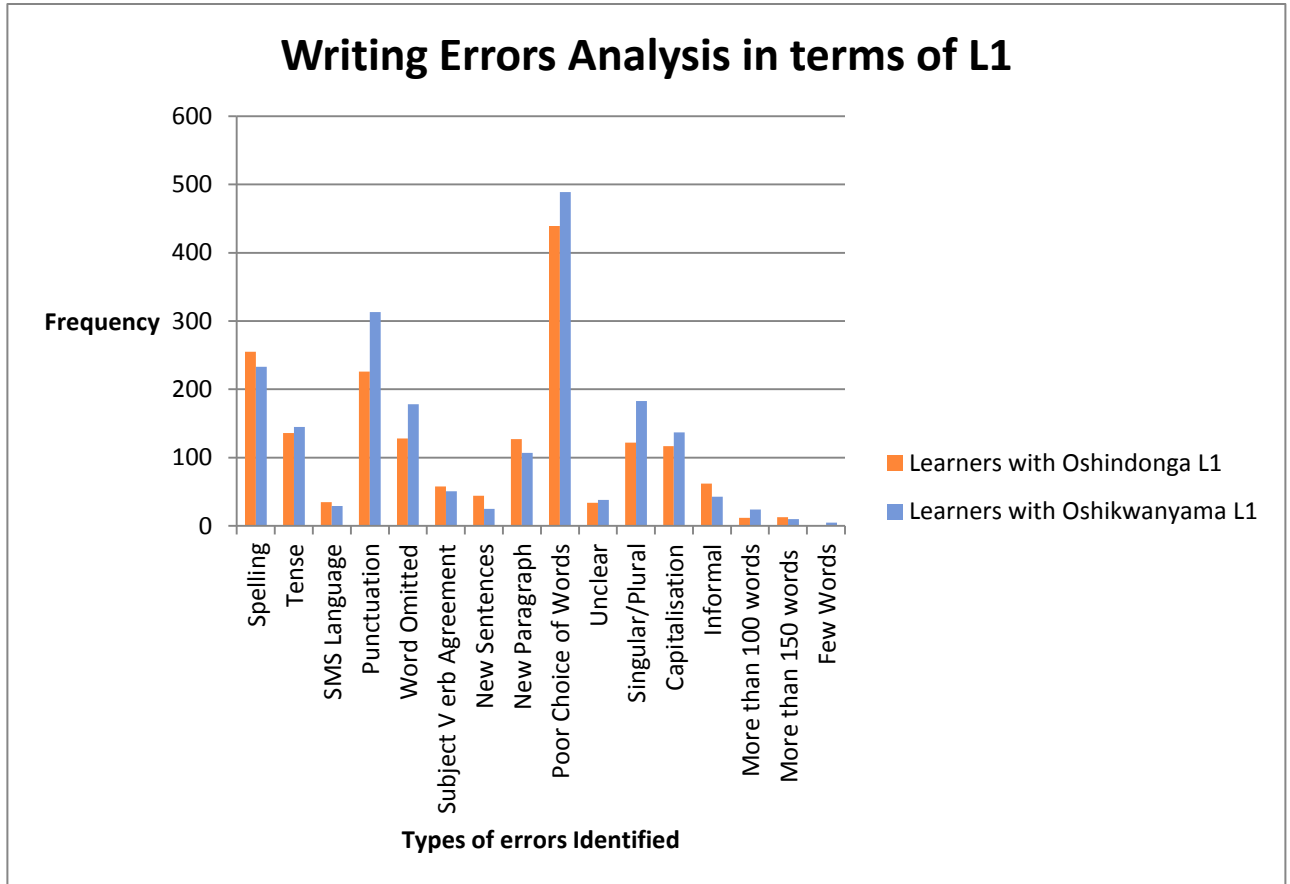


Figure 4.3: Comparison of errors made in terms of First languages

In general the mean difference shown for the two first languages were relatively small and in some cases Oshindonga learners made more mistakes and in other categories Oshikwanyama learners made more mistakes (see Table 4.4). However with regard to total errors the difference was slightly more than one error on average, with Oshikwanyama learners showing more mistakes than Oshindonga learners. The researcher, therefore, decided to administer Levene's test for equality of variance to

compare the mean scores of the two sexes statistically. Homogeneity of variance for the groups was such, that a normal t-test for comparison of means could be administered.

However based on the t-test it was concluded that the difference in the mean scores between the two language groups was statistically not significant ($p > 0.05$). This implies that the difference cannot be considered to be a true difference but may be due to chance or the specific sample.

Further identification of the errors per language group was done to specifically look at the errors made with regard to the exchange of “r” and “l” consonants and the over use of the “n” consonant. The researcher counted the number of mistakes for each consonant and then sorted them out in terms of first languages. After the identification, it became clear that the errors made in terms of “l”, “r” and “n” by the two language groups are similar, but Oshindonga speaking learners made more errors than Oshikwanyama speaking learners in all three consonant categories as can be observed from table 4.5.

Table 4.5: “l”, “r” and “n” errors by language groups

Type of error	F		(%)		Mean		Mean difference
	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	Oshindonga	Oshikwanyama	
“l” (used for “r”)	20	5	28.5	15.6	1.0	0.3	0.8
“r”(used for (“l”))	30	20	43.0	62.5	1.5	1.0	0.5
“n”	20	7	28.5	21.9	1.0	0.4	0.7
Total	70	32	100	100	3.5	1.6	1.9

N=40

The consonant influence of using “r” for “l” was higher than the other two consonant influences. The mean difference between Oshindonga speaking learners and Oshikwanyama speaking learners for “l”, “r” and “n” mistakes were 0.75, 0.5 and 0.65 respectively. The mean difference for the three consonants together was 1.9. The conclusion made is that Oshindonga learners are more influenced by the mentioned consonants in comparison with their Oshikwanyama counterparts.

Graphically, the scores of Table 4.5 look as follow:

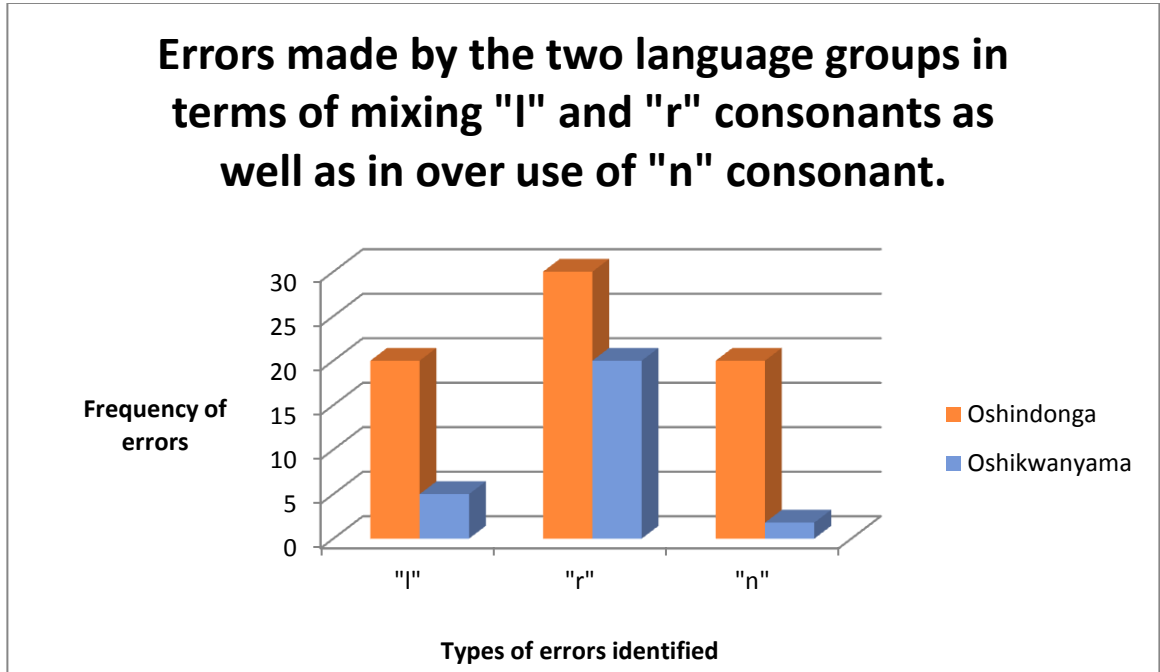


Figure 4.4: Comparison of "l", "r" and "n" errors made by the two language groups.

4.3 Presentation of qualitative results

What is presented in this section is the qualitative analyses of the same data generated quantitatively for an in-depth explanation of the types of errors and possible reasons for them.

4.3.1 Qualitative analyses of errors per category

The aim of this section is to analyse a selection of the identified writing errors in more depth for better understanding of these errors. Firstly, errors from the selected categories are analysed, followed by an analysis in terms of sex and L1. The researcher selected the

following categories of errors for further analysis: poor choice of words, spelling, punctuation, tenses, subject verb agreement, singular/plural errors, word omitted, capitalization, paragraphing and informal/SMS language. Some of the errors were selected for further analysis because teachers also seem to have difficulties with capital letters, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural form, punctuation and tenses (Karamata, 2011). This presentation is done from the category that recorded the most errors to the category that recorded the least errors. It should be noted that the errors shown in the examples are those specified in that specific area. Other errors in the sentences are not corrected but also not taken into consideration as they are analysed in subsequent categories. Thus errors of different categories appear in one sentence as the sentences were quoted as they appeared in the written essays.

4.3.2 Qualitative analyses of errors by sex and language group

For this analysis, the researcher tried to determine if male and female learners made different types of mistakes. The researcher looked carefully at the scripts from female learners and compared these to the male learners for each category. After investigating 40 essays from the sampled 400 essays (20 for females and 20 for males), errors made by both sex groups were noted and compared. After the comparison of these errors, it became clear that the type of mistakes made by both male and female learners were very similar. The only difference was that, in general girls made more errors than boys as was demonstrated in Table 4.2.

In order to show the similarities of the errors identified in terms of Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama First languages, 40 essays from the sampled 400 essays were analysed (a total number of 20 essays were for Oshindonga learners and the other 20 essays were for Oshikwanyama learners). These essays were investigated, errors noted and compared to determine differences based on the language groups. After a thorough investigation it became clear that the errors made by the two language groups were similar.

The only clear difference that can be pointed out is that Oshikwanyama speaking learners made more errors than Oshindonga speaking learners, but the consonant mistakes (“l” and “r” exchange and the overuse of “n”) were more prominent for Oshindonga learners than Oshikwanyama learners as was demonstrated in Table 4.4.

4.3.1.1 General misunderstanding of the topic

As was mentioned earlier, the essay was about writing a speech to thank the principal and wish him/her a happy retirement. It was clear that some learners did not understand the topic and or the word “retirement” clearly as can be seen from the following examples:

“You retire to another school.”

“Our principal is moving to the office of the president.”

“The minister of education retire the principal to work in big office.”

“The principle is admitted as going to be a director.”

“As you retire to study law at Unam.”

“Our principal is retire to be a minister.”

4.3.1.2 Errors in poor choice of words

Based on the quantitative results poor choice of words made up 24.5% of the total number of errors, and it is the largest category of errors in this study. A qualitative analyses showed that in this category the words were correctly spelled, but were used or placed incorrectly. In other words, some words had a different meaning from the context of the essay written. In some cases it was due to the fact that some words in English have the same sound but with different meanings and different spelling, For example “principal” and “principle”, “thing” and “think” as well as “here” and “hear”. Typically prepositions and pronouns were also misplaced: prepositions (e. g. on instead of in, to instead of for) and pronouns (her instead of his and she instead of he). The following examples show that the learners were unable to choose the right words to use in their essays:

“I great you all good morning?” (greet)

“To the principle, teachers and my fellow learners”. (principal)

“I want to thank our principal for what he had done for use”. (us)

“Know we get new chair and tables”. (now)

It is my pressure to stand in front of you today. (pleasure)

Many learners made these errors repeatedly as they only consider the sound of the words rather than the meaning. Furthermore, they had difficulty in comprehending the context

in which some of the above mentioned words are used.

4.3.1.3 Errors in punctuation

Based on the quantitative data, punctuation made up 14.1% of the total number of errors. The qualitative investigation revealed that most of the learners made several punctuation errors such as incorrect use of question marks, omission of full stops and commas, as can be seen from the following examples:

“I great you all good morning?” (I greet you all, good morning!)

“I greet you all good morning” (I greet you all, good morning!)

“He is good person he likes jouking he alway happy when you go in his office.”

(He is a good person, he likes joking, he is always happy when you go into his office.)

“First of all I want to tell you what he did for our school” (First of all, I want to tell you what he did for our school.)

“To the principle have a good biest retirement.” (To the principal: “have a blessed retirement!”)

Typically learners omitted punctuation marks in their writing. From the researcher’s experience, different teachers also teach differently. Some put more emphasis on punctuation marks and others don’t. Learners apply what they were taught, especially at the early stage of their learning.

4.3.1.4 Errors in spelling

The quantitative data showed that spelling made up 12.8% of the total number of errors. The qualitative analyses indicated that there were a lot of spelling errors made by most of the learners as can be seen from the following examples:

“In behalf of my collics”. (colleagues)

“I could like to thank to this opportunitis”. (opportunity)

“It is my honour and my prevarge to stand in front of you to say somthing”.
(privilege and something)

“We are pround to have him”. (proud)

“She is alway encourage us to pay more infort on our study”.
(always and effort)

Other examples of wrong spelling were: “selemony” (ceremony), “vist” (visit), “radies”(ladies), “benefit” (benefit), “thouse” (those), “incourage” (encourage).

The problem with spelling is that learners lack the skills of fitting phonemes (sounds) and graphemes (letters). Learners spelt the words based on the sound of the words and they could also not differentiate spelling of words with the same sound but different meanings and different spelling (homophones).

4.3.1.5 Errors in singular and plural form

Based on the quantitative results, singular and plural form made up 8.1% of the total number of errors. A qualitative analyses indicated that several errors were made in this

category. Learners made no distinction between one thing and many things and examples are indicated below:

“To all the teacher and to all my fellow learner.” (teachers and learners)

“Today we have all the thing.” (things)

“He was working for 15 year.” (years)

“This gentlemen was a disciplinary for those who make mistakes.” (gentleman)

“Some of the day we tell him.” (days)

Other singular/ plural form errors are: “ a childrens” (a child), “ he is a heroes” (he is a hero), “this years” (these years or this year), “many trophy” (many trophies), “a prizes” for “ a prize”, and “many year” instead of “many years”.

As can be observed above, several learners added “s” to words to sound plural, even to those words which are already plural (childrens). They thus overgeneralised, thinking that for every plural word, they should add “s”. This is in accordance with what was found by the UNAM-CES (2004). Others omitted the “s” for words which require “s” (many year). Learners could also not distinguish the singular from the plural in words such as gentleman and gentlemen as they wrote “gentleman” instead of “gentlemen”.

4.3.1.6 Errors in words omitted

The quantitative data revealed that the omission of words made up 8.0% of the total number of errors. A qualitative analyses indicated that in this category, learners omitted some words such as helping verbs, articles and prepositions as indicated earlier. This made the sentences to be incomplete and sound unclear, for example “we ^ happy” for

“we are happy”; “for ^20 years past” rather than “for the past 20 years” and “start ^ in charge” instead of “started to be in charge”. Some of the errors displayed by the learners in their essays are as follows:

“Our principle who ^ well known.” (is)

“Good morning ^ you all.” (to)

“Successful of our principal for what he ^ done for the school.” (has)

“Thank you for the chance that ^ have been give.” (I)

“Most of ^ time this school ^ faced ^ (to) the problem and most ^ time he tray the best to avoid it.” (the, was, with and of), “he ^ done” (has), “I want ^ say” (to), “we ^ happy” (we are happy), “it our” (it is ours).

Most of the learners omitted some words which made the sentences to be incomplete, and this contributes highly to the award of very low marks which in return cause higher failure in ESL.

4.3.1.7 Errors in tenses

The quantitative data revealed that errors in tenses made up 7.4% of the total number of errors. In this category, according to the qualitative investigation, the influence of L1 on L2 was quite evident as the use of tenses of L1 is different from L2 and this caused errors in this category. Learners sometimes translate the tenses directly from L1 to L2.

The topic of the essay written by the learners was “you are a student and your Principal is retiring from your school. You have been asked to make a speech at a special

assembly to thank your principal for what he or she has done for the school and to wish your principal a happy retirement” (see Appendix A). The learners were obliged to compose their essays mostly in simple past and simple continuous tenses as per the topic to refer to what the principal did for the school and to suggest what the principal should do during retirement. Learners mixed up tenses and used inconsistent and incorrect tenses for example “he do not did” instead of “he did not do”, “I was gave” for “I gave”, “our principal is lefting us” instead of “our principal is leaving us”, “you are go” rather than “you are going”. In most cases they used simple present instead of simple past, e.g. “He develop our school by introduce our school.” rather than “He developed our school by introducing our school”. They also showed difficulties in the continuous tenses and used present instead of past and vice versa. Further examples are given to illustrate the specific errors made:

“Our principle like to told us to do things which good.” (tell)

“I am encourage him not to leave us alone.” (encouraging)

“We have been stay happy.” (staying)

“Our school is look good because of you sir.” (looks/is looking/)

“Our principal is going to left us very soon due to the retiring issues.” (leave)

“I was wanted” (I wanted)

Further examples of errors in tenses are: “leaded” (led), “ spend” (spent),

“gave” (give), “we are wish” (we wish), “camed” (came).

The errors indicated above are the testimony that learners are struggling with the tenses and they do not acquire sufficient knowledge of writing correct tenses in their education.

4.3.1.8 Errors in capitalisation

According to the quantitative data, capitalisation made up 6.7% of the total errors. A qualitative analyses revealed that learners did not apply capital letters as expected for any good piece of writing. They used capital letters unnecessarily in the middle of the sentences and ignored capital letters where they were needed especially at the beginning of sentences. Capitalization constitutes a significant problem in the learners' writing. Many of the errors in capitalization involved unnecessary capitalization, proper nouns that are not capitalized and common nouns being capitalized. Examples are given below:

“Our school become number one In the region and second In the hole country.” (in)

“Thank you for the Chance” (chance)

“I would like to thank god.” (God)

“he is a loving principal i have ever seen.” (He and I)

“first of all let me say good morning to you.” (First)

The other examples are also as follows:

“looking at the histry, Qwn respectively principal has been In charger for 40 years In this school and because of his good leadership, the school have succesfully archeived a lot”.

“i am encourage him not to leave us alone” for “I am encourage him not to leave us alone”.

“my god bless him” instead of “my God bless him”.

4.3.1.9 Errors in paragraphing

The quantitative data revealed that paragraphing made up 6.1% of the total errors. The qualitative analyses showed that in this category, many learners failed to write different paragraphs, separating different ideas from each other. Most of the learners encountered problems with paragraphing as they could not display the correct format or structure of the essay. They lacked the skills of separating different paragraphs with different ideas. Some wrote the whole essay in one paragraph, others could not separate the body from the introduction while others could not separate the conclusion from the body.

The errors made in this category are displayed in the following samples taken from the essays written by the learners.

Sample 1

“I am an LRC member, respective principal, teachers and fellow learner, good morning? I have given a speech to say something about the retirement of our principal who is facing field work, house work and collecting animals. [I don't have much to say, but the person cannot go without saying goodbye. Is he a pig or someone else. I' m glad to say this because is my pleasure, I thank you for what you have done to us because you are now in our memory and in school history. [Whenever you gave us the key of our life and we cannot forget the word which love most which says avoid conformation. [So as you become a grandfather now you can go do all house works and give grandmother the chance to rest don't say go do what a want no. [Lastly may almight God bless you in your happy retirement I wish you all the best. [Thank you all of you who have alive here

and listen to me, even though my speech was not enjoyable and attractive to you. A wise man says “people with two legs they must see each other.”

Sample 2

“I am on behalf of learner to say thank to our principal for what he done to us. [It was bitter and salty the principal to do this for us we were not have any think that he brought for us here. He drough for us the laptop on to be used by learners a small fax machine and printer. [We are very much proudlly for this as learners and can not say anythink to him he shows to us how good he is and we wish you a happy retirement again for those coming years.”

Sample 3

“We know that Mr. Paulus came at this school in the year 2002 and stay here as a principal for almost 5 years we then you mr. Paulus. [During his rule everyone at this school realized that mr. Paulus did not like things that is against the education.”

Errors in paragraphing can as well affect the marks of the learners as learners were taught to divide different paragraphs in their essay writing and write correctly. E.g. If a learner wrote one paragraph without separating introduction, the body and conclusion, then she/he will be penalised or not awarded marks.

4.3.1.10 Errors in subject-verb agreement

The quantitative data showed that subject-verb agreement made up 2.9% of the total errors. In this category, the qualitative analyses showed that learners could not distinguish singular verbs from plural verbs as they wrote “we was” for “we were”. They did not apply the rule of the third person singular in simple present tense (which add s or es at the end of the verb).

Learners have difficulties in distinguishing singular nouns from plural nouns, for example; “he have” rather than “he has”; “we thanks” instead of “we thank”. Examples are:

“I thanks you all.” (thank)

“What he have done it goods nobody can forget it.” (has)

“We thanks also for your plan that you came up with that help us in our study.”

(thank)

“He tell his learner wherever they are to speak English in order to pass.” (tells)

“It seem.” (it seems)

“She like” (she likes) , “he provide” (he provides)

“When it come” (when it comes) , “parents comes” (parents come)

4.3.1.11 Errors in informal writing and SMS language

Based on the quantitative results, informal writing made up 2.7% of the total errors and SMS language made up 1.7% of the total number of errors. The qualitative investigation

showed that in informal writing learners wrote words such as:

“guys” rather than “ladies and gentlemen”,

“labs” for “laboratory”,

“exam” for “examination”,

“morning” for “good morning”.

“Allow me to say bye to him.” (good bye)

“I am here in front of you guys.” (people)

The SMS language words written by the learners are such as:

“2” rather than “to”, “jas” instead of “just”

“I try by allmeans to came up with u.” (you)

“Am speaking in the behalf of my fellow learners.” (I am)

“The principal stay here fo 2 year.” (for two)

“yrs” for “years”

New technology and the use of cellphones seem to have an impact on ESL writing. Learners tend to shorten words when they text messages to one another and then do the same in their formal writing. These errors are not only made by learners but also by parents and teachers. Learners are influenced by their parents and teachers and thus inherit these mistakes and it becomes a habit. This affects learners negatively especially when they do their formal writing.

All the examples shown were quoted from the learners essays, and they are written

exactly as they appeared in the essays. It appears that there could be more than three ESL writing errors of different categories in one sentence. The researcher did not correct other errors so that she exposes the readers to how the learners write in ESL.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the researcher presented the quantitative results followed by qualitative results.

Different categories of errors were presented with poor choice of words as the highest category and few words as the lowest category (see Table 4.1). Most of the learners made similar errors in the identified categories.

From the identified ESL writing errors made in terms of sex, females made more errors than males, and this finding was statistically significant. Looking at language groups, Oshikwanyama speaking learners made more errors than Oshindonga speaking learners in some categories while Oshindonga speaking learners made more errors than Oshikwanyama speaking learners in other categories (see Table 4.4). This showed no significance difference in errors made between the mean of the two language groups. The analysis done showed that similar errors were made by learners in terms of sex and language groups. Further analyses was made for the “r”, “l” and “n” consonants and it showed that learners with Oshindonga L1 made many errors in this regard and the error of “r” consonant topped the list according to Figure 4.4. The next chapter is a discussion of the results that were presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher discusses the results as presented in Chapter 4. In the discussion of the Chapter, the researcher attempts to reflect on the findings by giving possible explanations, further clarifications and by comparing the findings with aspects as discussed in the literature review.

From the information obtained, it is obvious that most of the grade11 learners from the two selected secondary schools made many errors in writing ESL. The errors made contribute to the high failure rate in ESL. Grade 11 learners of any year are the grade 12 learners of any subsequent year. Grade 11 learners may carry these errors over to grade 12 and throughout their tertiary education. Hence the challenge regarding the poor performance of grade 12 learners in ESL is very clear.

5.2 Discussion of the categories and frequency of errors for the total sample

The findings show that errors were made in all categories, but in some categories there were more errors than in others. The categories with the highest percentages of errors as displayed in Table 4.1 are poor choice of words (24.3%), punctuation (14.1 %), spelling (12.8%), singular/plural form errors (8.1%), words omitted (8.0%) and tenses (7.4%).

This finding is in support of Lerner (2000) and Schunk (2009) who stated that learners' ESL often contains several errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, handwriting and grammar; hence their written products tend to be short, poorly organised and lack development of ideas.

The high number of errors made by most learners clearly shows that the writing of the grade 11 learners in English Second Language in the Omusati Region in Namibia is very poor and not up to standard of learners who are about to enter the last year of formal training. The combination of different errors in one piece of work results in a very weak written product and subsequently the award of very low marks is unavoidable. These results are a reflection and thus in support of the Omusati Regional results of NSSC ESL ordinary level examination in 2009, where no learners were awarded A* or A symbols, only 3.3% of learners were awarded a B or C symbol. A mere 8.9% achieved D, and 24.1% an E symbol, while 42.7% obtained F and G symbols. About 20% of the learners were ungraded (MoE, 2009). This has a negative impact on learners' performance, because the Examination Report (MoE, 2009) emphasised that marks and grades are awarded on the basis of expected writing competencies (see Appendixes B and C). If a learner made a lot of errors in their writing, it will thus affect their marks negatively.

Apart from the high number of errors, there was also a misunderstanding of the topic of the essay by some learners. As indicated earlier, they misunderstood the word "retire" as they wrote 'the principal retire to another school', "our principal is retire to be a minister" and so forth. Sirakis & Alexander (2009) emphasises that learners should

ensure that they carefully read the essay instructions before they decide to write. They should understand what they have to write so that they avoid straying from the topic. Sirakis & Alexander (2009) added that learners should read widely to develop a wider vocabulary and an understanding needed for good essay writing.

A discussion on the possible reasons for errors made by learners follows in the next section.

5.3 Discussion of results based on the qualitative analyses

The researcher selected 11 categories to do a more in-depth analyses of the errors made by learners. Several examples of mistakes were recorded in Chapter 4 and some indications given as to why the researcher thought these mistakes occurred. In this section the researcher attempts to demonstrate, based on the literature, some possible causes for the errors made by learners in the different categories. This discussion is organised based on the main reasons for writing errors as described in the literature. These are: inter-lingual transfer, Intra-lingual transfer, overgeneralisation, fossilization, carelessness and modern technology.

5.3.1 Inter-lingual transfer

Errors made may have resulted from inter-lingual transfer whereby learners' L1 interfered with their L2 when they acquire L2 and hence translate directly from L1 to L2 which leads to errors in ESL. Many of the spelling errors made by learners can be

attributed to inter-lingual transfer. This is in support of the findings of Darus and Ching (2009). Inter-lingual transfer was explained by them as a cause of errors in ESL writing. They concluded that, as a result of their phonetic perception, learners from both first languages wrote words as they speak. Observations made from the learners for both Oshikwanyama and Oshindonga were that they omit some letters as they speak and then write the way they speak.

Examples are as follow: “shot” (“short”), “mus” (“must”), “bee” (been) and “pit” (pity). Other examples are such as: “thouse” (those), “laidy” (lady), “incourage” for “encourage”, “as” for “us”, “mension” for “mention”, “posision for “position”.

Learners also made ESL writing errors in words omission that can be linked to inter-lingual transfer. Most of the omissions included words such as articles (“let me thank ^almighty” instead of “let me thank the almighty”), prepositions (“the rules ^this school” for “the rules of this school”), helping verbs (“we ^ calling” instead of “we are calling) and third person “you” (“I thank ^ for” rather than “I thank you for”) as well as pronouns (“^ is” for it is). This is caused by the L1 interference, because in L1 (Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama), as applicable in this study, articles are not used as is the case with English. People say “oinima” (“things”) and not “these things”, “otwa pandula” (“thanks”) and not “thank you.”

Some errors in pronouns (“her” instead of “his” and “she” instead of “he”) were also common. This is because L1 does not differentiate between female pronouns and male

pronouns as in L2. For example “ye” in Oshiwambo means “he/she” in English. This might be the result of many errors in mixing his or her.

Some errors are also clearly due to the effects of direct translation from the learners’ L1 to English, for example one learner wrote: “Before I am not start” (“Before I start”). This way of speaking is correct in L1 but in English it is wrong. Learners thus directly translate from their L1 into ESL and as a result, this destroys L2 rules.

The “l”, “r” influence as in mixing “ceremony” and “celemony”, “ladies” and “radies” respectively, are as a result of first language (inter-lingual) interference. This is in line with Marsh (2002) who pointed out that Oshindonga speakers have difficulties in producing and differentiating between “l” and “r”. The overuse of “n” as in “pround” instead of “proud” or “angain” instead of “again” is also as a result of inter-lingual transfer errors as learners transfer their first language directly or indirectly to the Second Language and is in support of the finding by Darus and Ching (2009) as well as by Marsh (2002).

Learners made many tense errors. In most cases they used simple present instead of simple past tense. They also lack the skill of how to use continuous tenses probably because the concept of continuous tenses in Oshindonga L1 and Oshikwanyama L1 differs from English. For example, in the first languages, directly translated one would say: *I go tomorrow*, but in English, *I will go tomorrow* or *I will be going tomorrow*.

5.3.2 Intra-lingual transfer

Intra-lingual errors are those errors which result from the incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application (Darus & Ching, 2009). Lack of exposure to the necessary ESL reading materials as well as the lack of a reading culture from the side of the learners made it difficult for them to develop their vocabulary and hence limit their understanding (UNAM-CES, 2004; Makuwa, 2005; MoE, 2007; Darus and Ching, 2009). Sirakis & Alexander (2009) state that learners should read widely to develop a wider vocabulary and an understanding needed for good essay writing. Learners made errors as a result of intra-lingual transfer since most of them hardly speak English outside the classroom and the English language proficiency of the English teachers, especially at the primary level, is severely limited, (MoE, 2007).

Many singular/plural form errors occurred as a result of lack of knowledge on how to apply singular and plural forms, i.e. intra-lingual transfer. Learners added 's' unnecessarily and omit 's' where necessary, e.g. "Childrens" rather than "children", "many thing" for "many things". Learners could also not differentiate between the singular and plural form of words such as man and men as they wrote: "many man" rather than "many men", "this gentlemen" for "these gentlemen." Learners have not learned the restrictions on the applications of the rule of L2.

Several spelling errors made by learners can also be attributed to Intra-lingual transfer (e.g. "secritary" for "secretary", "wich" for "which", "allwise" for "always", "al" for

“all”. This is because learners have limited experiences in L2 and they fail to learn and apply the correct rule of L2.

The learners made many tense errors. In most cases they mixed up tenses due to the fact that they lacked the skills and experience of how to use different tenses in L2 (intra-lingual transfer) but the use of tenses in English is also completely different from L1 (inter-lingual transfer). For example learners wrote: “will came” for “will come”, “everything is have” for “everything has”, “I was gave” for “I gave”, “he do not did” for “he do not or he did not”.

Paragraphing errors could have resulted from intra-lingual transfer and lack of experience in writing L2. According to Sirakis and Alexander (2009), learners should be taught the correct structure of an essay to avoid losing marks. They should write paragraph one as an introduction, they can write more than one paragraph for the body, and the last paragraph must be a conclusion. The ideas in different paragraphs need to be arranged in logical order. The MoE (2009) pointed out that learners have problems with paragraphing and urged that learners should be taught how to develop and structure different paragraphs.

From the researcher’s experience, the grade 11 learners in the sampled schools are guided in their writing because they are provided with the points to include in their essays, (see Appendix A). This gives them clues of what to write about, hence they can develop their paragraphs according to the prompts given and arrange them well. In spite

of this it was found that a large number of learners did not separate their essays into appropriate paragraphs.

Errors in subject-verb agreement might be attributed to intra-lingual transfer, as learners lack L2 rules of the third person singular in simple present tense, which adds “s” or “es” at the end of the verb as in “he loves” and “he tells”. To the contrary learners wrote: “he like” instead of “he likes”, “It come” for “it comes”. The fact that they already had difficulties with tenses made it very difficult for them to apply the correct subject-verb agreement.

Learners wrote words which were correctly spelled but the problem was that they did not put the words in the right context and the word had a different meaning from what was intended for the written essay. This is because some words in English have the same or almost the same sound but with different meanings and different spelling. E.g. “principal” with “principle”, “thing” with “think” and “here” with “hear”. The incorrect choice of words also included prepositions (e. g. “on” instead of “in”, “to” instead of “for”). This showed that the learners were totally confused and they were unable to choose the right words to use. This could be caused by the intra-lingual transfer of errors as it was alluded to earlier in Chapter 4. Learners do not read enough as they are not being motivated and exposed to different reading materials. It was also mentioned earlier that some learners do not hear English in their communities.

Learners will benefit from reading regularly. In addition to that they will improve their vocabulary and this will help them to speak English fluently and to write good essays in English. Learners should thus be encouraged to develop a reading culture. Through reading and using dictionaries, they will expose themselves to different words and meanings. This will enable them to know the meaning of different words and it will make it easier for them to choose and write the right words.

5.3.3 Fossilisation

A number of errors might have been made by learners simply because they inherited them from their teachers. Fossilisation occurs when learners learn an incorrect form of L2 from models and repeat the same errors. Teachers fossilize the errors and transfer them to the learners as they regard these errors as correct. The report on teachers' English proficiency (Kisting, 2011) indicated that most teachers also have difficulties with most of the errors identified in this research. This shows that teachers are not delivering proper subject knowledge as they also experience difficulties in tenses, subject-verb agreement, singular and plural form, and in punctuation (Kisting, 2011).

There could also be a possibility that teachers teach the incorrect usage of prepositions and pronouns as they also have difficulties with these in ESL (Philander, 2008). In addition to this the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2007) states that the English language proficiency of English teachers, especially at the primary level, is severely limited. Hence if teachers have problems with different categories of errors, then learners will

make the same mistakes as well.

Most of the errors made by learners in this study were similar to those outlined in the Examination Report of English Second Language (MoE: DNEA, 2009), which is another indication that errors are fossilized. Examples of errors in fossilisation are: “thing” instead of “think”, “her” instead of “his” or “she” instead of “he”, “know” instead of “now”, “many childs” instead of “many children”, “we are wish” instead of “we wish”, “many than” instead of “more than”. These examples are as a result of fossilisation which affects learners, teachers and parents. Han (2004) emphasises that these types of errors are the permanent incorporation of incorrect linguistic forms into learners L2. Fossilisation is partly caused by incorrect instruction by teachers. The bad thing about fossilisation is that it is permanent and difficult to correct.

5.3.4 Overgeneralisation

Some of the errors made by the learners might be caused by overgeneralisation. This is when learners assume that a certain rule is correct and mistakes become a habit (UMAN-CES, 2004).

Some spelling errors and errors in tenses were caused by overgeneralisation as many learners added ed even to irregular verbs, for example “doned” instead of “done”, “leaded” instead of “led”, “camed” for “came” and “builded” for “built”. They learned that to change verbs into the past, “d” or “ed” is added at the end of the verb. Learners assume that certain features they heard follow the same rule hence they made it a habit

even where it was unnecessary. This finding supports what was stated by UNAM-CES (2004).

5.3.5 Carelessness

Findings from this research confirmed what was noted by Abi (2002) who said errors are “systematic”. If learners are not careful to take note of the correct words, they repeat mistakes without recognizing the errors. Learners’ carelessness for example in spelling (“blesse” for “bless” and “alway” for “always”) also led to many errors.

Punctuation errors were made as many learners omitted punctuation marks such as commas, full stop, question marks, exclamation marks and others. In some cases, the punctuation marks were used unnecessary. The Ministry of Education (2005) emphasised that learners should be able to use basic punctuation marks correctly. The cause of punctuation errors might be due to carelessness from the side of the learners, as the same rules are used in their first language and the influence of L1 can thus not be considered as a possible cause for this problem. Similarly errors in capitalisation and paragraphing mainly occur as a result of carelessness from the side of the learners as the same rules applies in their L1.

5.3.6 Modern technology

Another possible cause of errors might be modern technology. The exposure of learner to mobile phones as well as laziness to write full sentences resulted in SMS language

which they made a habit and used in their formal written work and examination. Some of the example are “5yrs” (five years) ,“exams” (examination), “u” (you), “guys” (people), “labs” (laboratory), “m” (am), “jas” (just), “ma” (my), just to mention a few. The MoE (2009) emphasised that SMS language is against the formal Standard English and no marks are awarded for SMS language. The fact that learners are exposed to mobile phones regularly, and they are always communicating with their parents and other people through SMS language make them lazy to write full words, thus they get used to writing SMS language even in the examination.

5.4 Discussion of results based on sex

This section deals with the discussion of the errors made by the grade 11 as related to sex. A comparison was made of errors made by male and female learners. Both male and female learners made similar errors. The only difference was that females made more errors than males in most categories as can be seen in Table 4.2. According to Swann (1992), there is little evidence available on the differences in girls and boys’ writing. Hence further research in this regard is highly recommended. The mean difference between boys and girls with regard to total errors made was 3.2 errors. This is a big difference and was found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). (see Table 4.3).

5.5 Discussion of results based on language groups

Language errors were also analysed based on the two language groups in the sample. Both learners with Oshindonga as L1 and Oshikwanyama as L1 made the same type of

errors. The only difference was that learners with Oshindonga L1 are more influenced on “r” and “l” consonants exchange and “n” influence, (see table 4.5).

It should be also noted that, Oshiwambo has eight dialects (Haacke, 1990), as discussed in the literature review and there are only two languages which are recognised as first languages. This means that speakers of other languages or dialects should choose between the two recognised first languages and learn them as first languages. This can have an additional negative effect on L2 with direct translation into the second language (Marsh, 2002).

5.6 Conclusion

English is the official language of Namibia. It is the medium of instruction from grade 4 to tertiary education. It is also the most important language that gives access to the international community, world wide information technology as well as information networks. From the findings, it was clear that many learners made a lot of errors in ESL writing. These errors are caused by inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, fossilisation, over-generalisation as well as inadequate understanding of grammatical rules of English (Darus & Ching, 2009; UNAM-CES, 2004).

Cummins (2007) has a strong argument that L1 aids L2. In this study a number of negative influences were observed. This study showed different writing errors made by learners from the two selected secondary schools as identified. One of the main causes

of writing errors in ESL, as alluded to earlier, was the influence of negative transfer from the first languages. The interference of L1 caused many learners to refer to their L1 when they encounter difficulties in their L2 writing. This contradicts Cummins theory of Second Language Acquisition (2007) which states that learners use their first language knowledge to acquire the second language. Through the process of L2 learning, negative transfer hampers learning and interrupts the performance in ESL as errors are unfortunately transferred. This refutes Cummins theory of Second Language Acquisition, because in this case, negative transfer from L1 into ESL resulted in written errors which affected the performance of learners in ESL writing

The errors identified from the learners writing give evidence that learners were very much influenced by their L1 in the process of learning ESL. It also indicates that L1 plays a considerable role in causing learners to make errors when they do their ESL writing as they translated words or phrases directly from their L1 into L2. Therefore negative influence of L1 on L2 should not be underestimated. Swann (1992) emphasises that younger children need experience of a wide range of reading and writing activities in order to perform well at a later stage in their school career. The researcher is not against the use of L1 as a tool for L2 acquisition, but is also of the idea that learners need exposure of L2 at an early stage to be able to learn it effectively.

In the Omusati Education Region there is also a serious lack of exposure to English. Learners are mostly exposed to their first languages around the schools and their

communities. The MoE (2007) reiterates that learners hardly speak English outside the classroom. Learners are only forced to speak English in the rare event that their teacher cannot speak their first language or if there is a strict law at school which forces them to speak English. Unfortunately this takes place only during the school hours at some schools.

Learners should be exposed to writing activities more often. Some authors (Pritchard & Haneycut, 2005; Nakale, 2004) emphasise that for learners to write well they need enough time in order to think critically, to rewrite, select, revise and organise their ideas in real writing and re-writing. If this practice is implemented, it may bring change in ESL writing errors. It is also advisable if experts in both L1 and L2 help learners acquire L1 appropriate skills necessary for L2 acquisition. This will help learners to learn the effective way of using L1 in acquiring L2 and this supports Cummins theory of Second language acquisition (2007) which states that first language knowledge is helpful in the second language acquisition.

Errors in English are being transferred from teachers to learners of different generations. As a result learners fossilize the errors and continue to use the language incorrectly and teachers do not correct them since they have also fossilised the same mistakes. Namibian teachers were tested on their English language proficiency and according to the results the English of the majority of the teachers is below standard. Kisting, (2011, p.2) reiterated that “There is strong evidence that this low performance of teachers and other educators overall has a negative impact on learners’ performance in English and all other

subjects.” Despite the low performance of teachers in the English proficiency test, they have the responsibility of improving and enhancing learners writing in both content and grammar. Their role is to prepare learners to be well prepared and well equipped in order for them to succeed in their education.

One of the typical experiences of the researcher is that, whenever a learner is taught something by the teacher, that is regarded as correct, no matter how parents could try and correct the learner. The learner will always say ‘the teacher said so’. In this case whatever learners are getting from the teachers mentioned above is kept in the learners minds and it is very difficult to be replaced or erased.

Wolfaardt (2010) emphasises that it requires support structures, availability of necessary resources and manpower as well as enough funds to succeed in ESL challenges facing the education sector in particular, and the nation at large. The English proficiency test that was conducted identified the training needs of the teachers. The next step will be to put resources in place in order to implement the training as soon as possible so that the transfer of errors from the teachers to the learners can be eliminated or at least limited.

5.7 Recommendations

This study aimed at understanding the errors made by learners in ESL writing as well as the causes of these errors to find better strategies for improvement. In teaching ESL, teachers should be aware of the difficulties their learners have especially in the area of

writing. Teachers should emphasise the differences between L1 and L2 in order to make the learners aware of the differences in the structure of L1 and L2. Teachers must make it clear to learners that certain rules in L1 are not appropriate when they write in English. This will help learners to apply the correct strategies in their ESL writing activities and errors may decrease. In order to implement effective and successful ESL teaching, the researcher proposes the following recommendations.

These recommendations are based both on the literature review and the findings of this research.

5.7.1 Well equipped teachers needed at the grassroots level

For learners to master the rules of L2 as early as possible, well qualified teachers in both L1 and L2 at the pre-primary and primary levels are required. Teachers should work in collaboration with other experts within their clusters, circuits and experts from the region so that they make the learners understand how these languages work and how different they are. Teachers should first acquire the basic knowledge in ESL language teaching before they teach learners. This will ensure that they are in a position to guide learners to learn the correct rules of L2 which will result in good ESL writing.

5.7.2 Emphasising positive transfer of L1 into L2

Learners should be coached about the appropriate transfer strategies which facilitate their language learning as their first language plays a vital role in learning their L2. Hence, teachers are expected to help learners conquer negative transfer and to guide

learners to make use of positive transfer such as extensive reading of different materials and texts.

5.7.3 Compulsory Dictionaries

All learners should have English dictionaries as per their level. Dictionaries play a crucial role in the process of Second Language acquisition. Therefore dictionaries must be made compulsory so that it can help learners to master words and their meanings efficiently.

5.7.4 Teachers must be advised to teach the syllabus instead of the text books

It happens that at some schools the English novice teachers do not get an induction on the targeted basic competencies in ESL. This results in some competencies to be ignored by the novice teachers although all the competencies are assessed at the end of the year examination. To avoid this, ESL mentors as well as other ESL experts within the region should be required to monitor the ESL novice teachers' progress to ensure that the expected competencies are being covered.

5.7.5 Appointment of an expert team in L2 to train ESL teachers as per their level of teaching

The Ministry of Education should appoint a group of experts in ESL. This group should train the English teachers in the advanced and appropriate techniques and teaching methodologies in teaching ESL. The team must always evaluate and assess the progress

of the learners at schools after the teachers implemented what they have gained from the training. The team should then identify further training needs required by the teachers and conduct regular training as needed.

5.7.6 ESL National markers experts should be appointed to train all the teachers on marking ESL examination

The marking of the essays differs among different teachers. It will help if experienced markers are appointed in each region, to give guidance and training to all the ESL teachers on how to mark the ESL writing activities as well as the examination. This will ensure uniform marking which will also help learners to correct their errors by taking note of the errors they have made.

5.7.7 Further research required

Due to limited literature on ESL writing performance, the researcher also suggests further research in this area. If the above mentioned recommendations are implemented, then we will go step by step in reducing writing errors and improving the teaching of ESL writing.

References

- Abi, S. (2002). An analysis of errors in Arabic Speakers' English writing. (Online):
 Available: <http://abisamra03.tripod.com/nada/languageacq-erroranalysis.html>.
 [02 December 2010]
- Cummins, J. (2007). *Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*. Britain: Cromwell Press Ltd.
- Darus, S., & Ching, K. H. (2009). Common errors in written English essays of form one Chinese students: A case Study. *European Journal of Social Science*. 10 (2), 245-246.
- Eckert, P., & McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). *Language and Gender*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, J. (2009). *Language and Identity*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Elyssa, T. (2009). *Treatment of Namibian ESL errors*. NETA Conference: Windhoek.
- Gay, L. R., Mills, G. E., & Airasian, P. (2009). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications*, 9th Edition. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Haacke, W. H. G. (1990). *Language and Literature in Africa*. Windhoek: UNAM
- Han, Z. (2004). *Fossilization in Adult Second Language Acquisition*. Great Britain: Cromwell Press Ltd.
- Hubbard, P., Jones, H., Thornton, B., and Wheeler, R. (1983). *A training course for TEFL*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Karamata, C. (2011). *Teachers fail English*. [The Villager, Monday to Saturday, 7

November to 13 November 2011].

Kisting, D. (2011). *98% of teachers not fluent in English*. [The Namibian, Wednesday, (November 2011)].

Langan, J. (2003). *College writing skills, Media Edition*, USA: McGrawhill.

Lerner, J. (2000). *Learning disabilities*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Makuwa, D. (2005). *The SACMEQ project in Namibia: A study of the conditions of schooling and the quality of Education*. Namibia: Ministry of Basic Education Sport, and Culture.

Marsh, D. (2002). Approaching Language-sensitive Expertise. In D. Marsh, A. Ontero & T. Shikongo (Eds), *Enhancing English-Medium Education in Namibia*. Finland: University of Jyväskylä.

Ministry of Education. (2007). *Report on the study to investigate a two Language Curriculum Policy*. Windhoek: MoE.

Ministry of Education. (2009). *Report on the Examinations: NSSC (O)*. Windhoek: DNEA.

Ministry of Education. (2010). *Education Management Information System (EMIS): Windhoek EMIS Education Statistics*.

Ministry of Education: DNEA. (2009). *Grade 12 examination statistics for Namibia, National & Regional distribution of symbols: NSSC-Ordinary Level (full time)*. (Online). Available: www.dnea.gov.na. [22 December 2010]

Ministry of Education-National Institute for Education Development (2005). *Namibia Senior Secondary certificate (NSSC), English as a Second Language*

Syllabus: ordinary level, syllabus code: 4116, grades 11- 12. Windhoek: NIED Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture. (2003). The language policy for schools in

Namibia. Discussion document. Okahandja: NIED.

Ministry of Information and broadcasting. *The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia.*

(2000). Windhoek:

Myles, J. (2002). *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign language.* TESL- EJ, Vol 6.

No.2. Queen's University.

Nakale, M. (2004). *English paper writing test is unfair.* (Online). Available

<http://www.namibian.com.na>. [26 October 2010].

National Planning Commission. (2004). *Namibia Household Income & Expenditure*

Survey, Main Report. Windhoek: Central Bureau of Statistics.

New Era, October 22, 2010: vol.16. no.59 (Vacancy advertisement)

Philander, F. (2008). *English remains a problem.* [New Era, Thursday, 13 March 2008].

Polytechnic of Namibia. (2011). *Guide to Prospective Students.* Windhoek.

Pritchard, R. J. & Haneycut, R. L. (2005). The process of approach to writing instruction:

Examining its effectiveness. In C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fritzgerarl

(Eds.), *Handbook of writing research.* USA: Guidford Press.

Riddel, D. (2003). *Teach yourself: Teaching English as a Foreign/Second Language.*

London: Hodder Headline Ltd.

Schmandt-Besserat, D., & Erard, M. (2008). Origins and forms of writing. in C.

Bazerman (Ed.), *Handbook of research on writing: History, Society,*

School, Individual. New York: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Schunk, D. H. (2009). *Learning Theories: An Educational Perspective, fifth edition*. London: Pearson Educational International.
- Shipanga, S. (2012). *Namibian Graduates not well prepared for work*. [The Namibian, Thursday, 6 April 2012].
- Sirakis, L.B., & Alexander, R. (2009). *English, Namibia Senior Secondary certificate: Ordinary Level, module 1, Grades 11-12*, Second edition. South Africa: Cambridge University Press.
- Smit, N. (2011). *Teachers tested in English Proficiency*. [The Namibian, Tuesday, 13 September 2011].
- Soanes, C., & Stevenson, A. (2008). *Concise Oxford English Dictionary, eleventh edition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Swann, J. (1992). *Girls, Boys & language*. USA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Totemeyer, A. (2009). *Multilingualism: Language policy for Namibian schools*. Retrieved March 20, 2010, from <http://www.sociolingo.com/2009/11/multilingualism-languagepolicy-namibianschools>.
- University of Namibia. (2011). *General Information and Regulations Prospectus*. Windhoek.
- University of Namibia-CES (2004). *CES Study guides: methods of Teaching English*. UNAM: Windhoek.
- Wielkiewics, R. M. (2000). *SPSS*. USA: McGraw-Hill.
- Wolfaardt, D. (2010). The influence of English in the Namibian Examination Context. In M. Malaba (Ed), *Policy and Practice in English language, Education in*

*Namibia: Selected Papers from the National Conference on English as an
Official Language.* Windhoek: Macmillan Education Namibia Publishers (Pty)
Ltd.

Appendix A**Exercise 2: Question 24**

You are a student and your Principal is retiring from your school. You have been asked to make a speech at a special assembly to thank your Principal for what he or she has done for the school and to wish your Principal a happy retirement.

Write your speech. You must include the following:

- how long the Principal has been in charge and details of how successful the school has been during this time;
- the personal qualities that have made the Principal so successful and one interesting story which demonstrates the Principal's character;
- some ideas for what the Principal might do during retirement.

Your speech should be about 100 words long.

Exercise 2: Question 39

You are a student and your Principal is retiring from your school. You have been asked to make a **speech** at a special assembly to **thank your Principal for what he or she has done for the school and to wish your Principal a happy retirement.**

Write your speech. You must include the following:

- how long the Principal has been in charge and details of how successful the school has been during this time;
- the personal qualities that have made the Principal so successful and one interesting story which demonstrates the Principal's character;
- some ideas for what the Principal might do during retirement.

Your speech should be about **160 words** long.

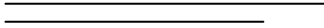

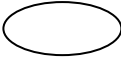

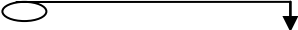
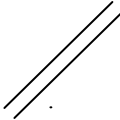




Appendix B

The prescribed marking guide for teachers

MARKING OF SETWORK

1. All mistakes must be indicated, even if they are repeated several times.
2. Indicate the different mistakes-don't just underline!
3. Correct and precise indication of mistakes will lead to accurate evaluation.

SYMBOLS FOR MARKING

	-Spelling
	-Grammar
	-Punctuation
	-Word omitted
	-Word order
	-New sentence
	-New paragraph
	-Poor choice of words
	-Not applicable
	-Unclear

Appendix C

NB: For Pages 91-92

ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE		1			2			3			4			5		
Content and Style	Language and Structure	- Creative use of vocabulary +idiom. -Few grammar and spelling mistakes -Audience met -Interesting paragraphs			-Competence in vocabulary + idiom. -Few grammar + spelling mistakes -Some sense of audience -Useful paragraphs			-Appropriate Choice of Vocabulary. -Simple sentences -Mistakes do not impede understanding -Some lack of sense of audience -Paragraphs used			-Many grammar, spelling and punctuation errors -basic language used -Wrong choice of sense of audience -Flaws in paragraphing			-Density of error obscures meaning -Whole section impossible to recognise as pieces of English writing -no paragraphing		
		10	12	16	10	12	16	10	12	16	10	12	16	10	12	16
	TOTAL															
1	-Original, creative spark -Instructions followed -Information correctly interpreted -Quality is sustained, Form complements	9-10	11-12	14-16	8	9	12-13	7	8	10-11	6	7	9	5	6	8
2	-convincingly executed -Instruction and information correctly executed; suitable form -Mistakes do not affect the text	8	9	12-13	7	8	10-11	6	7	9	5	6	8	4	5	7
3	-fairly convincing -Some instructions used -Irrelevant information used -Fulfils the task, Form acceptable -Average content	7	8	10-11	6	7	9	5	6	8	4	5	7	3	4	5-6
4	-Content not particularly relevant -Mistakes hamper precision -Most instructions not met -Form inconsistent -There may be repetition	6	7	9	5	6	8	4	5	7	3	4	5-6	2	2-3	3-4
5	-Very little engagement with task -Instructions not followed; Lack of form -Occasional patch of clarity	5	6	8	4	5	7	3	4	5-6	2	2-3	3-4	0-1	0-1	0-2

Example: (If Content and style =level 3 and Language and Structure =level 4) calculation: Content & style 3

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} \text{Content \& style 3} \\ \text{Language \& Structure 4} \end{array} \right\} \frac{4}{10} \text{ or } \frac{5}{12} \text{ or } \frac{7}{16}$$

If topic is totally misinterpreted, no mark will be awarded.

Appendix D

Oshindonga
Female

Thanks for the chances

The Principal MRS Mulongeni, the HOD Mrs Indaka, my respective teaches, as well as my fellow Learners, Good morning! ✓

Am Diina Shivute, currently doing my Grade 11 at here Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, so allow me to deliver this pieces of Speech to our principal, a speech of thank, to thank Him for what he have done for the school. Our school is look good because of you Sir! ✓

Mrs mulongeni thanks a lot our principal for what you have done its good and its very interesting as well, am speaking in the behalf of my fellow Learners that, thank, thank, thank, we don't even to stop to say thank you mulongeni. we are wishing you again good Luck and happy retirement in your life.

Thank you!

$$\left. \begin{array}{l} L3 \\ C4 \end{array} \right\} 5 = 42\%$$

Marker: Teacher

Oshindonga
Female

(Thanks for the chances)

The Principal ^CMRS Mulongeni, the HOD ^{SP}Mss Indaka, my respective ^C(teaches), as well as my fellow Learners, Good morning!

^{SMS}Am Diina Shivute, ^{SP}currently doing my Grade 11 at here Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, so allow me to deliver this ^{SVA}pieces of ^PSpeech to our principal, a speech of thank, to thank ^PHim for what he have done for the school. Our school is look good because of you ^PSir!

^{SMS}Mrs mulongeni thanks a lot our principal for what you have done ^Pits good and its very interesting as well, ^{SMS}am speaking in the behalf of my fellow Learners that, ^Pthank, thank, thank, we don't even to stop to say thank you mulongeni. ^Pwe are wishing you again good Luck and happy retirement in your life.

Thank you!

L 3
C 3 5/12 = 42%

Marker: The researcher

Oshindonga
Female

Thanks for the chances

The Principal MRS Mulongeni, the HOD Mss Indaka, my respective ^{well} teachers, as well as my fellow Learners, Good morning!

Am Diina Shivute, currently doing my Grade 11 at here Nuuyoma Senior Secondary School, so allow me to deliver this pieces of speech to our principal, a speech of thank, to thank Him for what he have done for the school. Our school is look good because of you Sir!

Mrs mulongeni thanks a lot our principal for what you have done its good and its very interesting as well, am speaking in the behalf of my fellow Learners that, ~~thank~~ ^{well} ~~thank~~ ^{well} ~~thank~~ ^{well}, we don't even to stop to say thank you mulongeni. we are wishing you again good Luck and happy retirement in your life.

Thank you!

- ✓ Did not write 150 words
- ✓ wrong words used
- ✓ some words (subject) omitted
- ✓ wrong verb tense used

L-3
C-4

$$5/12 = 42\%$$

Marker: Third person

Appendix E

Oshindonga
Male

The retiring of Our principal

Thank for the Chance I had given by the leader of this meeting, in order to Say something, At the first I need to say, thank for Our Mr Tomas Phillipus, Our teacher's and my follow learn for allow me to express my speech to you. First I need to ask the premission from god to give us power and to be with us in this meeting and ask this in the name of jesus Cristus.

C-4
L-5 2 = 17%

Marker: Teacher

Oshindonga
Male

The retiring of Our principal

Thank for the Chance I had given by the leader of this meeting, in order to Say something. At the first I need to say, thank for Our Mr Tomas Phillipus, Our teacher's and my follow team for allow me to express my speech to you. First I need to ask the permission from god to give us power and to be with us in this meeting and ask this in the name of Jesus Christus.

$$\frac{L}{C} = \frac{5}{4}$$

$$\frac{3}{12} = 25\%$$

Marker: The researcher

Oshindonga
Male

The retiring of Our principal

Thank ^{you} for the Chance I had given by the leader of this meeting, in order to Say something. At the first I need to say, thank for Our Mr Tomas Phillipus, Our teacher's and my follow learn for allow me to express my speech to you. First I need to ask the permission from god to give us power and to be with us in this meeting and ask this in the name of Jesus Christus.

- ✓ Did not write according to the number of words required
- ✓ No Capitalisation at the beginning of the Sentences
- ✓ Wrong Phrases used
- ✓ Spelling mistakes
- ✓ Word marking (you - object)

Marker: Third person.

$$\frac{L-5}{C4} \quad \frac{3}{12} = 25\%$$

Appendix F

Oshikwanyama
Female

Specch

To the principal, teacher, cleaner, my fellow learners, I greet you all good morning

Allow me to say my views about our principal for what he has done for the school and to wish him a happy retirement.

As I know our principal was a respected person, ^{sp}intelligent and he was a very hard work ^{man}person. Our principal charges our school. ^{sp}learners they are passing with high points, all school is very rich when it comes to material they are enough at school. our principal is a good person and he likes correcting learners' mistakes.

I wish our principal a happy retirement and ^{sp}my God bless him, he will also be able to come and visit us and help us where we can't afford?

I thank you all.

C 4
L 5 3/10 = 25%

Marker: The teacher

Oshikwanyama
Female

Speech *about?*

To the principal, teacher, cleaner, my fellow learners, I great you all, good morning!

Allow me to Say my veiws about Our principal For what he has done for the school and to wish him a happy retirement.

as I know our principal was a respected person, interiged and he was are very hard work person. Our principal charge our school. learner they are passing with high point, all schou is very rich? when it come to in material they are enough at school. Our principal is a good person and he like correcting learns mistake.

I wish our principal happy retirement and my god bless him, he will also can come and vis us and help us were we can not afford?

I thanks you All.

L-5
C-4

3/10 = 25%

Marker: The researcher.

Oshikwanyama
Female

Speech

To the principal, teacher^s, cleaner^s, my fellow learners, I great you all-good morning

Allow me to Say my ^{sp}veivs about Our principal For what he has done for the school and to wish him a happy retirement.

as I know our' principal was a respected person, ^{sp}interged and he was ^{ww}are ^{ww}very hard ^{ww}work person. Our principal charge our school. learner they are passing with high point, all schou is very rich when it come to in material they are enough at school. our principal is good person and he like correcting learns mistake.

I wish our principal happy retirement and my god bless him, he will also can come and vist us and help us were we can not afford.

^{WT}I thanks you All.

LS $\frac{3}{12} = 25\%$ \rightarrow exceeded the number of words
CA \checkmark wrong punctuation
 \checkmark punctuation omitted
 \checkmark spelling mistakes
 \checkmark wrong words used
 \checkmark wrong verb tenses

Marker: The third person

Appendix G

Oshikwanyama
Male

The retirement of Our school principal

First I would like to thanks the char person who give me this opportunities to say some thing in behalf of my collics, and I would like to thanks again the inspector of Okalongo, the principal, the teaches institutional work and learner Good morning you all.

It a pressure and honour to deliver this speech to day in the retirement of our principal. He was a good person who loves order and and people who beoave in a good manner also like who concentrate and serious in his or her school work. *you must know your principal*

It a pressure again that to day He is leaving because complete his life with us and today He is retire in the age of 60. I would like to conclude that He must be old with eyes and teeth we will chow It for you.?

Thank you!

C 4
L 4 4/12 = 33%

Marker: The teacher

Oshikwanyama
Male

The retirement of Our school principal

First I would like to thanks the char person who give me this opportunities to say some thing in behalf of my collics, and I would like to thanks again the inspector of Okalongo, the principal, the teaches Institutional work and learner Good morning you all.

It a pressure and honour to deliver this speech to day in the retirement of our principal. He was a good person who loves order and and people who beave in a good manner also like who concentrate and serious in his or her school work.

It a pressure again that to day He is leaving because complete his life with us and today He is retire in the age of 60. I would like to conclude that He must be old with eyes and teeth we will chow It for you.

Thank you!

more than 100 words.

$$\begin{array}{l} L = 4 \\ C = 3 \end{array}$$

$$4/12 = 33\%$$

Marker: The researcher

Oshikwanyama
Male

The retirement of Our school principal

First I would like to thanks the char person who give me this opportunities to say some thing in behalf of my collies, and I would like to thanks again the inspector of okalongo, the principal, the teaches institutional work and learner Good morning you all. w-PR

It a pressure and honour to deliver this speech to day in the retirement of our principal. He was a good person who loves order and and people who beave in a good manner also like who concentrate and serious in his or her school work.

It a pressure again that to day He is leaving because complete his life with us and today He is retire in the age of 60. I would like to conclude that He must be old with eyes and teeth we will chew it for you.

Thank you!

- Direct translation
- ✓ Exceeded the number of words
 - ✓ Singular form used instead of plural
 - ✓ Helping verb omitted
 - ✓ Wrong prepositions used
 - ✓ Wrong words used
 - ✓ Spelling mistakes

h-5
c-4

$$3/4 = 75\%$$

Marker: The third Penku