

**EVALUATION OF SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH ESSAYS: A
CASE STUDY OF GRADE 10 LEARNERS OF MALAMULELE NORTHEAST
CIRCUIT**

by

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS (ELT)

in the

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

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JUNE 2021

DECLARATION

I confirm that this thesis is my original work and it has not been presented to any other university for certification. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data (including spoken words) graphics or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited using current APA system and in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

Signature.....



Date: 14 June 2021

DEDICATION

- First of all, I would like to convey my gratitude to the Lord, God Almighty, for the strength and the resilience he gave me during the study.
- I also dedicate this study to my parents who raised me in a humble background and contributed immensely to my achievement as an academic
- I would like to thank my lovely wife, Basani Happiness, and my daughter, Vongani Attest, for their support and understanding as I could not give them my full attention while working on the project.
- My friend, Dr Mathebula, colleagues at Jim Chavani High and the former principal Mr RJ Magomani I say thanks for your unwavering support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study has never been a walk in the park and my intelligence and physical strength could not have sustained me without the support of the following people and authorities.

- My supervisors, Dr Lambani and Mr Sikitime for all the precious advice and guidance they provided throughout the entire research. They are excellent supervisors who helped to silence the voice of doubt and guided me on the right path. Their patience played a major role in the success of this research project. I say thank you for your tutelage, guidance and unwavering support during this study.
- The authorities of the University of Venda, for the excellent and conducive study environment they have provided on the campus, which has simplified the entire research project.
- Finally, I would like to convey my sincerest gratitude to the participants for their willingness to take part in this study as well as the Malamulele Northeast Circuit principals for giving me permission to conduct the study at their premises. This study would have been impossible without them. To all, I say thank you.

ABSTRACT

Sentence construction in essay writing seems to be a problem that students face in secondary schools. This has been shown consistently in English First Additional Language Paper 3 examination results. Hence, the purpose of the current study was to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

The objectives of this study were to identify the types of sentences used by Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit in their essays, explore the usage of grammar and examine how different types of conjunctions were used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

The study was underpinned by the Communicative Competence Theory by Swain and Canale (1980) and qualitative research methods were employed. The study further used thematic analysis to analyse data obtained.

The target population of the study was Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit in the Malamulele Township, Vhembe District of the Limpopo Province. Stratified random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the sample for the study. The data were collected from English essays written by the sampled Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit.

The study established that although Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast circuit used different types of sentences, their structural composition were often syntactically inadequate. Common errors displayed included incorrect punctuation, concord error, vague expression, dangling participles as well as incorrect ad overuse of connective devices.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CAPS	:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	:	Department of Basic Education
EFL	:	English First Language
EFL	:	English Foreign Language
ESL	:	English Second Language
FAL	:	First Additional Language
HL	:	Home Language
IELTS	:	International English Language Testing Systems
L2	:	Second Language
LD	:	Learning Disabilities
LoLT	:	Language of Learning and Teaching
NP	:	Noun Phrase
SVO	:	Subject-Verb-Object

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The South African Language Curriculum for English First Additional Language covers the following skills: listening and speaking, reading and viewing, writing and presenting and language structures and conventions. These skills form the pillars of English language competence. Although all these skills are critical for academic progress, this study focussed on learners' writing competence paying special attention to sentence construction. According to Saddler (2012), "composing sentences is one foundational component of writing where many students struggle (Newcomer & Barenbaum, 1991, Houck & Billingsley, 1989; Myklebust, 1973). Poorly developed sentence-level composition skills inhibit more complex writing tasks, and therefore, serve as a barrier to proficient written expression (Kame'enui & Simmons, 1990, Datchuk & Kubina, 2012). Constructing a sentence is a linguistically demanding task in which students must use syntactic knowledge to generate text by combining words into groups that not only convey the intended meaning, but also are grammatically acceptable (Goode, 1996).

It is too often assumed, that by the time learners enter Grade 10, they "have mastered these fundamental writing skills. While instruction shifts towards more complex aspects of writing, such as the inclusion of genre specific elements, many" learners continue to experience notable difficulties including inability to effectively communicate ideas through writing due to their inability to express their thoughts in basic sentences clearly (Chun, 2009, 9).

Dorn (2000) explains:

Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000, 33) developed a stage theory of writing development in which they outlined critical knowledge at each stage that is a prerequisite to subsequent stages. Graph phonics, which includes phonological awareness, grapheme awareness, and morphology, is critical knowledge at the earliest stages before one can produce sentences.

In terms of their stages, it has been found that sentence syntax is also important knowledge in earlier stages, including the production of large portions of the text (Fitzgerald & Shanahan, 2000: 6). More simply, writers know how to create letters correctly before they create words, how to create words before sentences are created correctly, and before writing large forms of connected text. When struggling at the basic text-writing level, which includes both the transcription (that is, the handwriting and spelling) and text production (that is, turning ideas into words and sentences influences overall text quality), it negatively affects planning and revision adversely (McCutchen, 2004).

The most important language skill that learners should consider or require for their personal development and academic success is sentence writing (Mukulu *et al.* 2006). Similarly, Rao (2007) points out that sentence writing strengthens students' learning, thinking and reflecting on the English language in their academic programmes. In addition, Ahmed (2010) notes that for students to perform well in their academic programmes, they must have competence in sentence writing. Moreover, being proficient in sentence writing in English will enable students to be professionals and action researchers in the future.

Ong'ondo (2001) adds that it is important for students at all levels of the education system to master sentence writing skills. This is true, because at schools, most examinations and assignments learners do are mainly assessed through writing. It is probably because of this crucial role in assessment, that writing has been considered the most important skill that learners require for their academic advancement. This implies that teachers have a part to play in helping learners acquire skills that will enable them to express their ideas clearly and effectively in writing. According to Kroll (2003), improving the writing abilities of students has both academic and social implications. He observes that helping students to write clearly, logically and coherently about ideas, knowledge and views will expand their access to higher education and will give them an opportunity for advancement in the workforce.

He further observes that the current trends of globalisation and internet revolution require proficiency in the English language that goes beyond the spoken language, embracing a variety of uses of the written language. Among such uses include the

writing of business letters, memos and telephone messages. This further underscores the importance of learning writing skills. However, there has been a considerable concern that the majority of the students “do not develop the competence in writing they need to be successful in school, the workplace, or their personal lives” (Graham & Perin, 2007).

According to Fageeh (2011), “many English Foreign Language (EFL) students rely heavily on writing as an integral skill to language learning.” Sentence construction skills are central to academic achievement, to graduating from college, to gaining employment, and to communicating effectively. The single best predictor for college success and failure is one’s ability to compose an extended text (Noeth & Kobrin, 2007). Prospective employers select qualified candidates with proficient writing skills for both employment and promotions (National Commission on Writing in America’s Schools and Colleges, 2005). In Alsamadani’s (2010) view, sentence construction in a second or foreign language is even more difficult as it is a complex, challenging, and difficult process since writers are expected to produce written samples that are syntactically accurate, semantically acceptable and culturally appropriate.

The South African 2011 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) places a heavy emphasis on sentence-level conventions, including syntax, grammar and mechanics. It assumes that by the time learners enter Grade 10, they should be reasonably proficient in their First Additional Language (FAL) with regard to both interpersonal and cognitive academic skills. Hyland (2003) believes that performance in language development is subject to improvement in writing skills.” A text of an effective English Second Language (ESL) writer must be cohesive, logical, clearly structured, interesting and properly organised with a wide range of vocabulary and mastery of conventions in mechanics” (Jacobs & Lee 1981; Hall, 1979). According to Eyind (2010):

Writing is often considered merely a part of teaching and learning grammar and syntax, which, resultantly, underestimates the nature and importance of writing, and affects its growth. Therefore, the development of this skill draws considerable attention for its learning and teaching from the very early phase of language education. Nunan (1989) argues that writing is an extremely difficult cognitive activity, which requires the learner to have control over various factors.

These factors vary from the writer's academic background and personal interest to various psychological, linguistic and cognitive phenomena (Dar & Khan, 2015; Haider, 2014).

The 2011 Continuous Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) states that learners in Grade 10 should know how to construct meaningful sentences using a variety of sentence types such as simple, compound and complex sentences. It further stipulates that learners should use conjunctions (and, but, nor, or, so, then, yet) to join clauses in compound sentences, as well as subordinating conjunctions to join clauses in complex sentences. In addition, they should use time clauses (when, before, after, since, while, as, until, conditional clauses (if, unless), purpose clauses (in order to, so that); and reason clauses (because, since, as). Furthermore, they should use result clauses (so that), concessive clauses (although, though, while), place clauses (where, wherever), clauses of manner (as, like, the way), defining and non-defining relative clauses as well as noun phrases, adjectival phrases and adverbial phrases to expand sentences.

According to Murphy (1993), sentence structure is divided into four categories; they are simple sentence, compound sentence, complex sentence and compound complex sentence. Murcia and Freeman (2010) state that a simple sentence has the most basic elements that make it a sentence: a subject, a verb, and a completed thought. A simple sentence can vary in length but expresses one thought and may contain more than one subject and verb as indicated in the following examples: Joe waited for the train. 'Joe' is the subject of the sentence. 'Waited' is the verb, and the 'train' is the object. Generally, simple sentences are often short. However, they can be lengthened by the use of compound subjects, compound verbs, prepositional phrases and other elements. According to Carter and McCarthy (2006), there is nothing wrong to use simple sentences in an essay, although it prevents the flow of the writing. A simple sentence can also be referred to as an independent clause because it can be part of a compound or complex sentence and be a complete sentence without assistance. A clause consists of the main subject and verb of a sentence (Bram, 1995). So, it is very important to encourage learners to use all types of sentences because the combination of all these sentences enhances the flow of the writing.

Compound sentences are sentences consisting of more than one independent clauses joined by coordinating conjunctions, semicolons, or a semicolon followed by a transition (Bram, 1995; Verde, 2008). Verde (2008) explains that “Compound-complex sentences refer to sentences with coordinating conjunctions connecting two or more independent clauses, at least one of which should have a dependent clause within. According to Bram (1995), an independent clause refers to a clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence because it has a subject” and a finite verb of a sentence. Azar (1999), furthermore, explains “that a dependent clause must be connected to an independent clause. The dependent clauses of complex sentences can be in the form of noun clauses, adjective clauses and adverb clauses. Furthermore, implying the importance of complex sentences in writing,” Bram (1995) avers that to write grammatically correct sentences is not enough; since thinking is sorting out and assigning order to ideas, one must find the sentence structure that establishes the proper thought relationship of ideas. According to Verde (2008), it is extremely important to place the emphasis or prominent idea in the independent clause, and to arrange the less important or de-emphasised ideas in suitable subordinate constructions. In addition, Bram (1995) also asserts that, the flow of thoughts will run much more smoothly, compared with series of ideas expressed in a simple sentence.

According to Radford (1990), a previous study on Indonesian students mastery of complex sentences found that complex sentences became the most frequently written sentences in the participants’ essays. Furthermore, complex sentences can contain finite and non-finite dependent clauses....the distinction between finite and non-finite clauses is partly on morphological criteria, the forms of verbs.

Radford (1990) further explains that a clause is finite if it contains a finite verb, showing the tense distinction between the “past” and the “present”, and being associated with a particular subject. In comparison, a clause is said to be non-finite if it lacks a finite verb. Non-finite clauses remain constant in whatever context and cannot carry finite tense/agreement inflections, such as, the present or past tense (Eastwood, 2002). In their examination of sentence types, Blair and Crump (1984) established that students used more simple sentences in the descriptive mode compared to the argumentative genre across the three grade levels. Complex sentences were found to be used frequently in the argumentative genre; however, a significant difference in use was

only found in Grade 10. Fewer compound sentences were used in the argumentative genre across all three grade levels.

Since writing skills are complex, many students struggle with learning to write due to the multi-component nature of writing and to produce quality texts; writers have to be skilful in both higher-order skills (planning, drafting, revising, and editing) and lower-level skills (handwriting, spelling, vocabulary, and sentence construction) (Hayes, 1996; Saddler & Graham, 2005). While all writing requires a conscious effort and a great deal of practice in composing, developing and analysing ideas, proficient and effective writing also hinges on the ability to craft formal and well-constructed sentence structures. Sentence construction is not only a lower-level skill, but also a foundational skill that students acquire at lower elementary-grade levels. Lower-level skills are crucial building blocks of writing skills to engage in higher-order skills successfully. More specifically, a lack of mastery in constructing syntactically complex sentences may hinder students' abilities to translate thoughts and ideas into writing effectively (Graham, 2006; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986; Strong, 1986). Knowing how to plan, for example, ultimately has little value if the writer is unable to construct effective sentences. Indeed, poor sentence-construction skills can be a serious inhibitor to successful writing (Saddler & Graham, 2005).

While a lack of sentence-construction skills impedes successful growth in writing for skilled writers, it is a significantly greater challenge for less-skilled writers in constructing simple sentence structures, let alone syntactically complex structures. The mastery of both higher-order and lower-level skills enables skilled interaction between their writers cognitive resources, the instructional context, and the demands of the writing task” to produce a high-quality written text (Zamel, 1983). Less skilled writers, on the contrary, lack automaticity in lower-level skills, which inhibits their ability to use higher-order skills to compose a text (Saddler & Graham, 2005). This occurs because students have to concentrate on crafting sentences instead of focusing on the writing process (Graham, 2006; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1986; Strong, 1986). A lack of proficiency in constructing sentences at various levels of complexity causes some students to avoid writing or to give up writing altogether, further hampering their writing development (Berninger, Mizokawa & Bragg, 1991; Berninger & Swanson, 1994; McCutchen, 1996). The development of lower-level skills facilitates and the

development of higher-order skills; sentence construction, in particular, is a lower-level skill that is critical for all grade levels. Specifically, it enables students at higher grade levels to express more complex thought processes in writing. In turn, complex thought processes can be translated into coherent, cohesive, and well-argued text by using syntactically complex sentence structures. The ability to construct syntactically complex sentences at higher grades enables students to manipulate a variety of sentence types to achieve different stylistic effects.

Despite the need to develop better sentence-construction skills, recent research studies have not paid much attention to this fact; instead, they have focused on higher-order skills such as the writing process (Graham & Harris, 2003, 2005; Graham, MacArthur & Fitzgerald, 2013; Harris, Graham, Mason & Friedlander, 2008; Myhill & Jones, 2009). The CAPS has raised writing standards by requiring students to construct syntactically complex sentences, which has led to increased attention to the relationship between syntactic complexity and writing quality. As mentioned earlier, if students have not mastered sentence construction skills, besides not meeting the CAPS requirements, it is difficult for them to articulate increasingly complex ideas with clarity and confidence.

Sentence construction, along with planning, drafting, and revising, is a critical component of the writing process because a writer's ability to construct sentences is related to the working memory resources, constructing syntactically more complex sentences requires more effort from the writer. A lack of knowledge of complex sentence structures at the sentence level hinders a writer's ability to translate thoughts and ideas into dynamic sentences (Hayes & Flower, 1986). Therefore, struggling writers write simple sentences that provide information in their basic forms without connecting or completing their thoughts. This, in turn, constrains other composing processes and produces similar structures throughout the text with limited variations to hold the reader's interest (Morris & Crump, 1982; Mykelbust, 1973; Newcomer & Barenbaum, 1991). Based on the above discussions, interventions targeting sentence construction as a foundational skill for academic success are necessary to support struggling learners as poorly developed sentence inhibit academic progress.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Caps Document (2011), assumes that by the time learners enter Grade 10, they should be reasonably proficient in their First Additional Language with regard to sentence construction writing skills. However, the reality is that many learners seem to have problems with sentence construction in their Additional Language at this stage. Learners show inadequate knowledge of sentence formation, usage, punctuation and writing mechanics. These are problems because when learners fail to construct meaningful sentences, they will obtain lower marks in their Paper 2 examination that will contribute to their failure. Secondly, poorly developed sentences inhibit the academic progress of learners, since they cannot express their ideas clearly.

According to the Department of Education's report of 2016 on candidates' achievement in English at matric level, students face various challenges in sentence construction, which lower their essays' marks and further lower the overall performance in English as a subject as well as the overall results of the province. In the light of this, the study analysed students' construction of sentences to identify the potential challenges displayed by Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.3.1 Aim

This study aims to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

1.3.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

- Identify types of sentences used in English essays by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast.

- Examine the correct use of grammatical aspects in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast.
- Examine how different types of conjunctions are used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were used in this study:

- Which sentence types do Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit use in English essays?
- How are grammatical aspects used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?
- How are different types of conjunctions used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The findings of this study can serve as a basis for assisting English language teachers to adopt teaching strategies that can enhance the learning of sentence construction skills among learners. The findings can further sensitise learners to consider good writing practices. Furthermore, this study will enable curriculum developers and textbook writers to develop materials that will address the challenges that learners face in English essay writing.

The findings of the study can be relevant to teacher education as a whole, especially regarding language education, which may enable teacher trainers to develop better methods of training language teachers with specific reference to sentence construction skills. The study may also guide the Department of Education and policy makers within the education sector to look for better ways of systematically teaching writing” because academic writing is an important component of teaching and learning.

1.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

According to Best and Kahn (1993), delimitation refers to the boundaries of the study,” There are many circuits in the Malamulele area. However, the present study only focused on the Malamulele Northeast Circuit, which comprises seven high schools, namely, Adolf Mhinga, Basopa, Jim Chavani, Joseph Rhangani, Ngula, Ripambeta and Shikundu High, of these seven schools, the researcher focused on three schools specifically. The rationale was to narrow the scope of the study down to enable the researcher to conduct an in-depth study.

1.7 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

In this section, the operational terms are defined as a detailed explanation of the technical terms used during research.

1.7.1 Compound Sentence

Negari (2011) defines a compound sentence as a sentence that has two independent clauses, namely, “an independent clause that is a part of a sentence that can stand alone because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought”. Adams (2012) defines a compound sentence as a sentence that contains two simple sentences, or two independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)” preceded by a comma.

1.7.2 Complex Sentence

Sullivan (2002) defines a complex sentence as a sentence that contains one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses. A complex sentence will include at least one subordinating conjunction.” According to Kroll (2003), a compound-complex sentence has two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

1.7.3 Essay

Adams *et al.* (2000) define an essay as a text or a piece of writing that students compose creatively and independently, either in a group or with the help of a teacher

in response to a writing exercise or task. According to Norrish (1983), an essay is a short piece of writing by learners on a particular subject.

1.7.4 Sentence Construction

Shane (2005) defines sentence construction as putting together of different parts of a sentence, from the ordering of words to punctuation. Zamel (1983) defines sentence construction as a set of words that is complete on its own, typically containing a subject and predicate and conveying a statement, or a question, for example.

1.7.5 Simple Sentence

According to Lea and Street (1998), a simple sentence is a sentence that contains a subject and a verb. In turn, Kroll (2003) defines a simple sentence as a sentence that expresses a single complete thought that can stand on its own.

1.7.6 Writing

Zamel (1983) views the process of writing “as non-linear, exploratory, and generative, whereby writers discover and generate ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning. Peters (2013) defines writing “as a curiously solitary form of communication, addressed to an absent and often unknown reader.”

Grami (2010) comments that many researchers (such as, Widdowson, 1983; Smith, 1989; White, 1987) define writing as a ‘complicated cognitive task’ because it demands careful thought, discipline, and concentration, and “is not just a simple direct production of what the brain knows or can do at a particular moment”.

1.7.7 Writing Ability

Peters (2013) indicates that a writing ability refers to the ability to navigate multiple aspects of the writing process, including setting goals for writing, generating and organising ideas, transforming ideas into varied sentence structures and transcribing

these sentence structures, revising and editing text, and composing a full text. A writing ability also comprises the mastery of both higher-order (planning, drafting, revising) and lower-level (spelling, handwriting, sentence construction, vocabulary) skills necessary for proficient or grade-level-appropriate writing.

1.7.8 Academic Writing

Thaiss and Zawack (2006) define academic writing as “any writing that fulfils the purpose of education in a college or university, whereas, Rensberg (2002) define it as a process of thinking that uses written language.

Zamel (1983) describes the process of writing as non-linear, exploratory, and generative, which involves the sub-processes of planning, collecting data, drafting, revising, rewriting and editing.

Grami (2010), cited in Zuhour and Fatima (2015), describes writing as a complicated cognitive task because it demands careful thought, discipline, and concentration, and it is not just a simple direct production of what the brain knows or can do at a particular moment.

Alsamadani (2010) mentions writing as a “complex, challenging and difficult process,” which includes multiple skills such as the identification of the thesis statement as well as writing supporting details, reviewing and editing.

1.7.9 Language Level

According to Norrish (1983), a language level “Refers to the level of proficiency at which language learning areas are offered at school (e.g., home language, first additional language, second additional language” (The Status of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) in South African Public Schools, DBE 2010).

1.7.10 Language Proficiency

Language proficiency refers to “the level of competence at which an individual is able to use a language for both basic communication tasks and academic purposes” (The Status of the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) in South African Public Schools, DBE 2010).

1.7.11 Dependent Clause

A dependent clause has a subject and a verb, but it cannot stand on its own. The dependent clause provides additional information to the main clause.

1.7.12 Evaluation

According to Davidson (2005), evaluation is a qualitative measure of the prevailing situation. It is the estimation of the worth of a thing, process or programmes in order to reach meaningful decisions about that thing, process or programme.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY/ CHAPTER LAYOUT

The study is divided into the following five chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction and Background of the Study

This chapter gives an outline of the research study and focuses on the background of the study; the rationale; the purpose; the research questions; the theoretical framework of the study, the significance of the study, the research methodology, and the limitations.

Chapter Two: The Theoretical Framework

Chapter two outlines the theoretical framework underpinning this study, that is, the Communicative competence theory by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain 1980. It examines what academic writing entails, the role of writing in schools, the writing processes, the concept of a sentence, the basic part of a sentence, the general rules of a sentence, categories of sentences based on functions, types of sentences, concord in a sentence, types of concord, sentence sophistication, grammatical

cohesion in a sentence, lexical cohesion, linguistic features in writing, common challenges in writing, and the findings of previous studies.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

This chapter deals with the procedures and methods that were used to collect and analyse data. It describes the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability of the research instruments as well as data collection procedures, data analysis and finally, logistical and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four: Presentation and Analysis

This chapter presents data collected from learners' English essays and the findings of the study, which is an analysis of the findings.

Chapter Five: Synthesis, Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Neuman (1997:89), a literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge is accumulated and that we learn from and build on what others have done. Neuman (1997:89) indicates that the goals of a literature review are: demonstrating the researcher's familiarity with a body of knowledge that already exists about the subjects of research and establishing the credibility of such knowledge; showing the path of prior research and how the current project is linked to already completed research; integrating and summarising what is known in and about their area of research; learning from others, and stimulating new ideas.

This study, in line with Neuman's (1997) goals above, used existing literature related to this research in which the research evaluates sentence construction in English essays written by grade 10 first additional language learners in Malamulele Northeast Circuit. The related literature is based on the following sections: the communicative competence theory, the role of writing in academic, the definition of a sentence, parts of a sentence, sentence patterns, types of sentences, sentence purpose, sentence length, sentence connectors, logical sentences, and cohesive sentences, grammatically correct sentences and findings from other related studies.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The communicative competence theory by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980) underpinned this study. Corder (1978:66) indicates that:

The theoretical framework/model which was proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) had at first three main components, that is, fields of knowledge and skills: grammatical, sociolinguistic and strategic competence. In a later version of this model

Canale transferred some elements from sociolinguistic competence into the fourth component, which he named discourse competence. Canale and Swain (1980) and

Canale (1983) understood communicative competence as a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge” and skills needed for communication (Hyland, 2002). According to their concept of communicative competence, knowledge refers to the (conscious or unconscious) knowledge of an individual about language and other aspects of language use. Communicative competence consists of four components: strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, or grammatical competence.

However, this study is mainly based on two components of communicative competence: grammatical and discourse competence. Grammatical competence is relevant to the study because it emphasises grammatical rules of language and “the rules that govern the combination of words and phrases to structure sentences”. This study is about sentence construction, and a meaningful sentence is a sentence in which the grammatical and syntax rules are being correctly applied. In other words, if there is no grammar and syntax rule, there is no sentence.

The second relevant component of communicative competence in this study is Discourse competence. Discourse competence, amongst others, refers to knowing how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent oral or written text of different types. Discourse competence” is relevant in this study because this study is about the construction of sentences, where learners have to organise words, phrases and sentences to form cohesive and coherent written English essays. In other words, when learners are not well equipped with knowledge from both grammatical and discourse competence, they will fail to construct meaningful sentences; hence, the two components are relevant to this study.

2.2.1 Strategic Competence

Swain and Canale (1980) define strategic competence as the ability to recognise and fix communication breakdowns before, during, or after they occur. For instance, the speaker may not know a certain word, thus, will plan to either paraphrase, or ask what that word is in the target language. During the conversation, background noise or other factors may hinder communication; thus, the speaker must know how to keep the

communication channel open. If the communication was unsuccessful due to external factors (such as interruptions) or due to the message being misunderstood, the speaker must know how to restore communication. These strategies may be requests for repetition, clarification, slower speech, or the usage of gestures, taking turns in conversation, for example.

2.2.2 Sociolinguistic Competence

Swain and Canale (1980) define sociolinguistic as the knowledge of sociocultural rules of use, which is to know “how to use and respond to language appropriately. The appropriateness depends on the setting of the communication, the topic, and the relationships among the people communicating” (Bex, 1996). Moreover, being appropriate depends on knowing the taboos of the other culture, what politeness indices are used in each case, what the politically correct term would be for something, and how a specific attitude (authority, friendliness, courtesy, irony etc.) is expressed, amongst others.

2.2.3 Discourse Competence

Discourse competence is a mastery of rules that determine ways in which forms and meanings are combined to achieve a meaningful unity of spoken or written texts. Cohesion brings the unity of a text, and the text exhibits unity with regard to form and meaning. Furthermore, cohesion is achievable by using cohesion devices such as pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms, parallel structures. According to Modhish (2012), cohesion devices help to link individual sentences and utterances to a structural whole.

Discourse competence is the knowledge of how to produce and comprehend oral or written texts in the modes of speaking” or writing and listening or reading, respectively (Basit, 2010:99). It includes knowing how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent oral or written text of different types. Basit (2010) explains that “discourse competence deals with organising words, phrases and sentences in order to create conversations, speeches, poetry, email messages, newspaper articles, to mention a few”. According to Stubbs (1983), in agreement with Swain and Canale’s

theory, discourse competence refers to the logical connection of sentences in larger patterns for a meaningful discourse (spoken or written). He further claims that “discourse competence attempts to study the organisation of language above the sentence or above the clause and larger linguistic units, such as conversational exchanges or written text”.

According to Maclin (2000), logical sentences use coordinators and conjunctions logically: Coordinators and conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses, aiding coherence and expressing a variety of logical relationships for the reader. Coordinators create and reinforce relationships between equal ideas or structures and also convey balance and rhythm, which aids readability. Coordinating conjunctions show logical relationships between independent clauses.

Writers are able to achieve a syntactically complex structure that helps them convey ideas that tie together, sum up a series of thoughts, qualify a previous point, and transition between ideas to convey meaning effectively by using sentence connectors that form part of discourse competence. For example, a lack of syntactical complexity often produces the following sequence of ideas in a given paragraph:

- John is always on time at school.
- John woke up late this morning.
- John was late for school.

Skills with regard to syntactical complexity are likely to produce a more pleasing flow as reflected in the following sentence: John, who is always on time at school, woke up late this morning, and he was late for school.

When information is presented as in a simple sentence, it does not help the reader to understand the relationship between ‘John’ being on time at school and John waking up late this morning are unclear, and the individual sentences lack cohesion because they do not make a reference to the relationship between these events. It is not known that John waking up late was a one-time occurrence that caused him to be late for school. Each simple sentence conveys separate ideas, and the reader has to make the connections between them. Some readers may be able to make the connections

due to already embedded knowledge, while others may not, due to a lack of familiarity with the events, and this impedes comprehension. These sentences lack connectives such as relative pronouns (who) and conjunctions (and) that contribute to cohesion by explicitly linking ideas at the clausal and sentence level. It is in the light of the details above that discourse competence is relevant to the study.

2.2.4 Linguistic Competence or Grammatical Competence

In Canale and Swain (1980, 1981), grammatical competence is mainly defined in terms of Chomsky's linguistic competence, which has led to the point that some theoreticians (for example, Savignon, 1983), whose theoretical and/or empirical work on communicative "competence was largely based on the model of Canale and Swain, [and they] use the term "linguistic competence" for grammatical competence" (Bell, 1989).

According to Swain and Canale (1980), linguistic competence or grammatical competence is the knowledge of the language code, that is, the grammar, vocabulary and conventions of its written representation (script and orthography). Furthermore, that grammar component includes the knowledge of the sounds and their pronunciation (i.e. phonetics); the rules that govern sound interactions and patterns (i.e. phonology); the formation of words by means of "inflection and derivation, for example (that is, "morphology); the rules that govern the combination of words and phrases to structure sentences (that is, syntax); and the way that meaning is conveyed through language (that is, semantics).

Canale and Swain in Basit (2010) posit that grammatical competence is concerned with knowledge of the linguistic code (verbal or non-verbal), which include vocabulary knowledge as well as knowledge of morphological, syntactic, semantic, phonetic and orthographic rules. Mastering this competence enables the speaker to use knowledge and skills needed for understanding and expressing the literal meaning of utterances. Accordingly, Reid (1983) claims that grammatical competence emphasises the grammatical rules of language-lexical rules, morphological rules, the rules of syntax, the rules of sentence-formation, the semantic rules and phonological rules as it is a dimension of communicative competence.

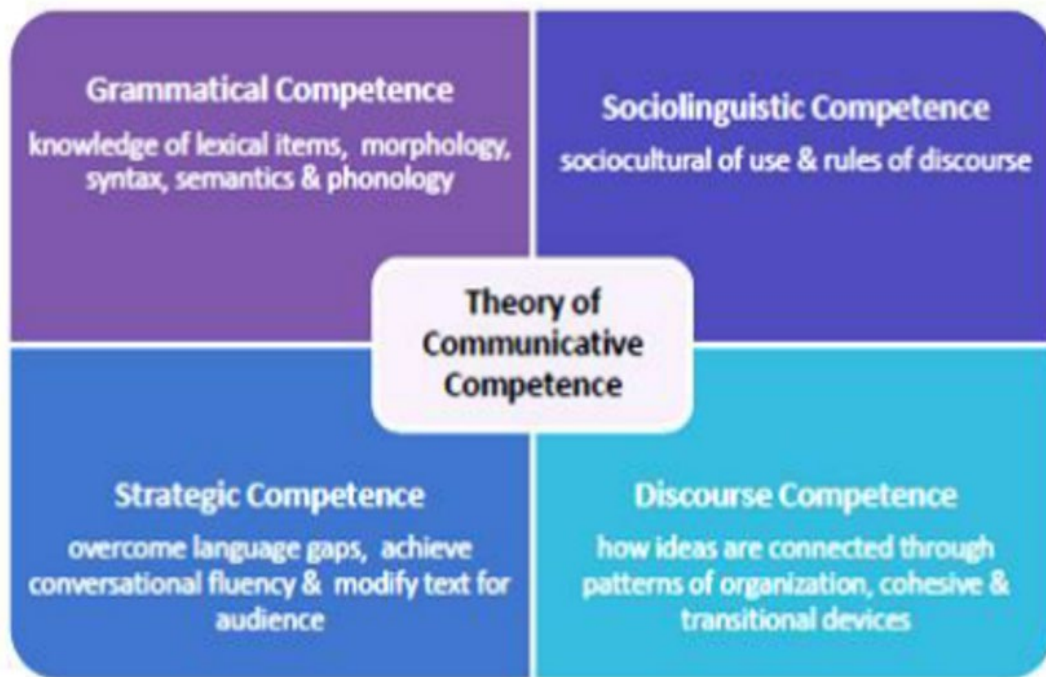


Figure 2.1: Diagram of Canale`s 1983 Communicative Competence Model

2.3 LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN SENTENCE WRITING

The 2011 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS: 2011) places a heavy emphasis on writing more, and especially on sentence-level conventions, which include the syntax, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. All these four components are called linguistic features. According to Latief (1990), linguistic features in writing refer to the language rules accepted in standard academic writing. Latief further posits that the linguistics features deal with the sentence maturity. Furthermore, Richards (1992:103) notes that “the writer uses based upon the conventional good grammar. The ability to write a clear, concise, logical and convincing paragraph or essay involves more than just the ability to be able to write a grammatical sentence” In addition, according to the finding from the study conducted by Richards (1992:103):

...most students suffer from two points: (1) the ability to write long sentences that require various coordinating, subordinating tools, vocabulary, and grammar; and (2) knowledge of the meaning and proper use of linking devices, especially those needed to establish an inter-sentential relationship.

According to Bereiter (1982), the important factors in writing include sentence structures, sentence length, sentence types, and diction. Sentence structure is generally long and complex; it does not restrict itself to a simple vocabulary. It avoids slang and contractions and the use of grammar that are generally ignored. According to Pugh *et al.* (2000), sentence construction, along with planning, drafting, and revising, is a critical component of the writing process. The lack of knowledge of complex sentence structures at the sentence level hinders a writer's ability to translate thoughts and ideas into dynamic sentences (Hayes & Flower, 1986).

Graves (1983, 56) explains that:

Writing requires specific training to achieve sophisticated development. Studies to date indicate that the writing process is one effective way to teach students to be good writers (Hayes, 1981). Students are taught how to share and communicate their ideas in schools; they share their work with peers through writing workshops and peer editing, teaching them to recognise the value of writing and the purpose in creating solid and substantial work.

According to Budiharso (2005), the linguistics features in writing include four types, which are as follow: syntax, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

2.3.1 Syntax

The word "syntax" originally comes from Greek and meaning a setting out together or arrangement. According to Yule (2010) a linguistic concept, 'syntax' basically deals with the arrangement and relationship of words in a grammatical linear sequence or sentence. This refers to the principles and processes that guide the combination of words to construct sentences in a particular language. Therefore, the syntax is defined in Webster's Encyclopedia Unabridged Dictionary of the English language (2000) as the study of the rules for the formation of grammatical sentences in a language or the rules that govern the interrelationship of words in sentences. Several grammatical categories affect this relationship between words in a sentence, and these are tense, number, gender, person, and others. There has to be agreement or concord between the major elements in a sentence in terms of these grammatical categories. The verb also agrees with its subject in the same category. For example, the singular subject

“He” is made to agree with the singular form of the verb to be in the sentence”, He is a good boy, ” and the plural subject “they” must select a plural verb “are” in the sentence, “They are good boys”. Otherwise, the sentences would not be acceptable in the English language.

In line with this, the World Book Encyclopedia (2001), creates a clear and broad picture of syntax as the rules that govern the positioning of words in phrases, clauses and sentences; rules of concord, punctuation, co-occurrence, tenses, phrases and clauses; the entire phrase structure rules, transformation, deletion and insertion, for example. The dictionary further explains that syntax and morphology comprise grammar, although syntax accounts for a great percentage of the components of grammar. Tomori (2000) shares this view and explains that syntax is the study of the rules governing the formation of linguistic units larger than words; [while] morphology is the study of “the rules governing the formation of words in a language” (Tomori 2000). The operational words in the above definitions are still the rules and words group arrangement. The definitions also stress the importance of strict adherence to the norms that guide the intricacies of a language.

If one is to use a language correctly, one should not take anything for granted. A second language learner should be mindful of the fact that word order is not the same in all languages. In English, we say, “I gave Jim the ball”. In another language, the order might be “The ball I gave Jim”. Bloomfield (2000) agrees that syntax and morphology are closely linked grammatical components. For instance, Jowit (1990) explains that syntax often deals with the structure, use and meaning as well as with the combinatorial properties of such words and so trespasses upon the territory of morphology, lexis and semantics. This definition sees morphology as an integral part of the syntax, and equally stresses that the arrangement of words in a sentence could also determine the meaning of that sentence.

Ancker (2000) asserts that syntax is often referred to as grammar, while “grammar is sometimes used to refer to morphology and syntax,” or the whole language description of phonetics and syntax. On the other hand, Eyind (2010) states that syntax is an aspect of grammar, and this syntactic aspect of grammar comprises two subsets of rules called basic and non-basic rules. She explains that when we apply a sequence

of basic rules, we will produce a well-defined sentence type that we can call a basic sentence or kernel sentence or a simple sentence. On the other hand, when we apply the non-basic rules, we realise other sentence types called non-basic sentences. A basic sentence is that which comprises only the obligatory parts of a sentence. These parts are subject, verb, object, complement. “Each basic simple sentence pattern is made up of parts that are arranged in a definite order” (a particular part before another, and not the other way round).

According to Mehmood (2009), a non-basic sentence is a sentence whose obligatory elements may be extended through the process of modification. The presence of modifiers is optional in non-basic sentences. The essence of this modification is to add more information to the basic sentence for more effective communication as well as a lucid presentation of ideas. Aremo (2012) adds that the following operations: movement, deletion and insertion are also involved in the formation of non-basic sentences. The following are examples of basic and non-basic simple sentences:

- Dogs barked. (A basic simple sentence).
- The fierce-looking dogs barked (a non-basic simple sentence pre-modified by the adjectival phrase – the fierce-looking).
- The boy is wise (a basic simple sentence).
- The boy on the bus is wise. (A non-basic simple sentence post-modified by the adverbial phrase – “on the bus”).

According to Banjo (2000), once language users are equipped with the grammatical rules of that language, they manipulate that language to suit their purpose. Accordingly, their proficiency in the language is guaranteed. Furthermore, Chomsky believes that native speakers of a language have the rules of their languages embedded in their language faculties. Therefore, they have intuitive knowledge of their languages. This natural endowment enables them to make an infinite number of sentences from a finite number of words. This ability is known as linguistic competence, and their actual usage of the language is their performance. In confirmation of this assertion, Yule confirms that: “Each adult speaker of a language clearly has a form of internal linguistic knowledge, which operates in the production and recognition of appropriately structured expression in that language.

Banjo (2000) argues that the most revolutionary aspect of Chomsky linguistics was the distinction, made between surface and deep structure. Tomori (2000) defines deep and surface structure thus: the deep structure of a sentence is the underlying syntactic-semantic component of a sentence, and the surface structure is the form in which the sentence appears, phonologically or orthographically. He further illustrates the above definition with the following sentences: (i) your shoes need cleaning. (ii) Your friends keep coming. Tomori explains that the two sentences appear to have the same surface structure, but the deep structures of the two sentences are different in that they are derived in different syntactic ways. Sentence (i) is derived from two underlying basic sentences: Your shoes are dirty; someone must clean them. Sentence two, has only one sentence as its basis. It is the underlying sentence. The views of linguistics discussed above have one focal point; namely, that syntax is the study of the arrangement of words or other linguistic units in a sentence.

2.3.2 Grammar in a Sentence

Grammar in writing is defined as the ways in which the writer handles the basic rules of writing, such as parallelism, pronoun reference, double negatives (Richards 1992, 34). According to Richards (1992), the grammatical features of academic writing must fulfill a rhetorical function such as verbal complementation, nominalisation, “use of definite and indefinite articles, relative clauses, tenses, subject-verb number agreement, and cohesive devices such as lexical repetition, referential pronouns, conjunctions, synonyms and substituted phrases.” The use of a proper sentence structure, precise vocabulary, and proper rhetoric helps the reader identify proposition in the text more readily.

Sawir (2005) maintains that grammar is the most difficult area in practising English, and that knowing the structure of the grammar enables language learners to speak better. Sawir believes that despite the great emphasis on the teaching of grammatical aspects at school, the students still find it a difficult aspect of English to learn, then and now. Wang (2010) states that it is the grammar of the language that enables us to talk about language. Knowing about grammar also helps us understand what makes sentences and paragraphs clear, interesting and precise. Grammar can be part of literature discussions when we and our students closely read the sentences in poetry

and stories” (pp. 313-314). In turn, Widodo (2006) argues that knowledge of grammar and structure enables language learners to put their ideas into words and let them communicate with others.

Wang (2010) recognises the importance or necessity of teaching grammar with an argument that grammar is the skeleton of language proficiency without which language does not make sense. Therefore, grammar is fundamental in learning/acquiring a particular language. Not all grammar features may be at the same level of difficulty; some may be “more difficult than others and take more time” to consolidate.

2.3.3 Vocabulary in a Sentence

According to Farooq (2012), vocabulary contains function words and content words. Function words are words that have a syntactic function, that are used to alert a reader or speaker to the structure of the sentence. Students have three main sources of information about words: dictionaries, word parts, and context. All of these are important, but each is also problematic.

Good writing or compositions should consist of appropriate and a varied range of vocabularies used along with proper grammar and a varied range of sentence structures (Alamirew, 2005). According to Reid (1983), in Melese (2007:13), when the writer practises the choice of vocabulary that would reflect the interest of the reader and the purpose of writing, the composition written by the student would make sense to his/her reader. However, writing in a second language and using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students. For example, White (1980) states that students normally use ‘big words’ in their essays to impress the reader and their teacher. He further points that the effort to impress the reader leads to a problem with the diction.

2.3.4 Mechanics in Sentence Writing

According to John (2010), mechanics in sentence writing refers to ways the writer handles the basic convention of writing, such as punctuation, spelling, and capitalisation. “The mechanical errors include punctuation errors, spelling errors,”

capitalisation errors, paragraphing, and handwriting. Ross (2015) has investigated the challenges faced by Arab students in writing a well-developed paragraph in English. He maintains that the students must strike a balance among the issues like content, organisation, purpose, audience and vocabulary. Ross (2015) has also found that the students write such clauses as neither follows the punctuation system nor the sentence structure. The researcher further claims that simple, compound, and complex sentences pose another difficulty for ESL learners.

2.4 THE ESSAY WRITING PROCESS

Dornyei (2011:17) explains that, “Good writing is a skill that needs to be developed and supported. Although reading is an important source of input, it is only through writing that writing skills are developed.” According to Pugh *et al.* (2000), sentence construction, along with planning, drafting, and revising, is a critical component of the writing process. The fact that a writer’s ability to construct sentences is related to the working memory resources, constructing syntactically more complex sentences requires more effort from the writer. A lack of knowledge of complex sentence structures at the sentence level hinders a writer’s ability to translate thoughts and ideas into dynamic sentences (Hayes & Flower, 1986). Writing requires “specific training to achieve sophisticated development’ (Pugh *et al.*, 2000). Studies to date indicate that the writing process is one effective way to teach students to be good writers” (Hayes, 1981). Furthermore, Graves (1983), notes that students are taught how to share and communicate their ideas in schools, they share their work with peers through writing workshops and peer editing, teaching them to recognise the value of writing and the purpose in creating a solid and substantial work. The key process of writing involves planning: drafting and revising, editing, proofreading and presenting.

2.4.1 Planning

According to Hayes (1981), the first step in the writing process is pre-writing, which is planning out what is going to be written. Prewriting ‘is an essential step in the writing process and should account for 70 per cent of the writing time’ (Murray, 1982). “Research indicates that skilled writers spend significantly more time organising and planning what they are going to write (Hillocks, 1986). Most students, however, spend

on average only about” three minutes to prepare for their writing (National Centre for Educational Statistics, 1996). Jung (2013) asserts that, “Students spend little time thinking and planning how to express their thoughts before writing them down and therefore are not accessing information and ideas that could possibly enhance their writing”.

In the planning stage, the writer analyses the structure, language features, and register of the text type that has been selected, decides on the purpose and audience of a text to be written and/or designed, determines the requirements of format, style, point of view, brainstorms ideas using, for example, mind maps, spider web lists, flow charts or lists” and consults relevant sources, select relevant information (CAPS Document, 2011). Barker (2013) considers that planning and editing should take far longer than drafting. Planning helps one find quality ideas. Planning involves deciding on the purpose and the audience of the text, and the requirements in terms of format and style. Then the content must be brainstormed, and research must be carried out, if necessary (Kerr & Unterslak 2013).

2.4.2 Drafting

Kerr and Unterslak (2013) report that drafting involves producing the first draft from the planning process, considering diction, formulating the writer`s thoughts, and including specific details needed to support the content. At this point, learners use the main and supporting ideas effectively from the planning process to produce a first draft that takes the purpose, audience, topic, and genre into account. They also determine word choice by using appropriate, descriptive, and evocative words, phrases, and expressions to make the writing clear and vivid, to show their own point of view by explaining values, beliefs, and experiences, establish an identifiable voice and style by adapting language and tone to suit the audience and purpose” for writing, read drafts critically and get feedback from others (classmates); and “include specific details of the required text (use of quotations, substantiating and motivating the argument),” (CAPS Document, 2011).

Barker (2013) gives ten tips for drafting more easily; the learner must imagine speaking to the reader and write down what they would say to them, they can start anywhere they like and not necessarily with the introduction-they just pick any paragraph and get going, writing as quickly as possible and keeping drafting and editing separately, keeping to the plan of the outline. In addition, they use the sentences in the outline as triggers and the questions in the notes to engender answers if they get stuck, find some evidence, revisiting their thesis statement regularly, no edit, and finally take breaks without being affected by distractions.

2.4.3 Revising, Editing, Proofreading and Presenting

According to Kerr (2013), revising and editing involves evaluating the writing against a set of criteria for an improvement report. This includes working on paragraphing, punctuation and grammar, and eliminating poor writing. Rewriting involves preparing the final text. Proofreading involves checking the final text for careless errors, checking headings and fonts/handwriting. The process ends with a presentation, which is the handing of the final text to the teacher for assessment. Editing is the process of making one's writing easier to read. The end goal is a text that is accurate, brief, and clear Barker (2013). Editing matters because it helps writers communicate their ideas more effectively. Well-written essays capture the reader's attention and influence their thinking. Even more importantly, editing helps writers think better. An idea more clearly expressed is a better idea. It seems that writing a good English composition is ever seems easy. It requires an ability to assess good grammar, imagination, and thought, exploring major and supporting ideas, putting them together, revising and then final editing (Ariyanti & Fitriana 2017).

Ur (1996) indicates that a written text is usually organised and carefully formulated, since its composer has time and opportunity to edit it before making it available for reading. To keep unity in an essay, one must edit the outline for ideas that are not relevant to the thesis statement or topic sentence. It is helpful to review the text and look for ideas that do not relate to the thesis or the topic sentence (Zemach & Rumisek 2005). Another very useful way of improving learners' writing is showing their work to another learner. This is called peer editing. Learners read their partners' work, and their partners read their work. Each of them comments on the others' writing. There

are two reasons for peer editing. The first is to get the readers' opinions about their writing, and the second reason is so that they read more examples of writing. Peer editing involves learners reading their partners' work several times. The first time, they just read from beginning to end. They ask themselves, 'What is it about? What is the writer's purpose?' On the second reading, they go more slowly and look at specific parts of the writing and make notes. And finally, they must remember that all they need to do, is pay attention to the content and organisation of the work and not the grammar or spelling mistakes (Zemach & Rumisek, 2005).

At this stage, learners use the set criteria to evaluate their own work and others' writing for improvement. Firstly, they refine word choices, sentences, and the paragraph structure (inserts additional information, use appropriate transition words). Next, they work on the sequencing and linking of paragraphs, eliminate ambiguity, verbosity, redundancy, slang, and offensive language, evaluate the content, style, and register; use punctuation marks, spelling, and grammar correctly and appropriately, prepare the final draft, including the layout, for example, headings and the fonts and they finally present the text (CAPS Document, 2011).

Re-writing is an essential component of the writing process; it is its recursive nature that allows writers to revise their work continually (Bereiter, 1982). Bereiter adds that "Evidence shows that writers not only revise what they are writing, but also revisit their goals and plans for writing. This process allows writers to take into account new ideas and thoughts and to have the opportunity to incorporate" them into their writing. Research by Bereiter (1982) demonstrates that the processes involved in writing are hierarchically related and notably recursive. Bereiter also found that children have much more extensive knowledge about a topic than that reflected in their typical writing. Ahmed (2010) contends that when children stop writing, it is not because they run out of things to say, but because they do not yet have adequate methods of articulating what they know. This research informs how teachers teach writing, because by allowing students to write and rewrite, they are helping them to learn how to tap into their knowledge (Hillock, 1987). John (1976: 31-32) notes that "all language is spoken or written in sentences." He further claims that a sentence is the mould into which all our thinking is run; hence, when we come to write, we are compelled to write in sentences.

2.5 THE WRITING PROCESS AND ERRORS

Norrish (1983, cited in Taiseer, 2008) calls 'errors' as a "systematic deviation, which happens when a learner consistently gets something wrong because he/she has not learnt it." He further claims that systematic errors are the result of not having learnt the correct form. According to Norrish (1983, cited in Taiseer, 2008), mistakes and errors are different, therefore, mistakes are an "inconsistent deviation" and are the result of carelessness or unconsciousness.

According to Norrish (1983), when a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he/she "uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is called a mistake. On the other hand, errors occur due to a lack of knowledge or understanding of the use." Students themselves cannot detect the errors, nor can they correct them without others' help. According to Brown (1994, cited in Taiseer, 2008:5), mistakes refer to "a failure to utilise a known system correctly whereas errors concern a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker."

2.6 SENTENCES AS CONCEPT

According to Radford (2009), a sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject-verb combination. A sentence "may express emotions, give orders, make statements, or ask questions. In every case, sentences are meant to communicate" (Napitupulu, 2017:45). Furthermore, Rozakis (2003:116) states that a sentence must have three main characteristics in groups of words: subject, predicate, "and a complete idea. Basically, the structure of an English sentence appears in the element of its sentence." Besides, the arrangement of words in an English sentence indicates that there are rules that govern the writers to shorten or expand their sentences. Moreover, a sentence has boundaries, in that the first word starts with a capital letter and the ends with the last word that is followed by a terminal punctuation mark such as a period, a full stop, exclamation mark, or question mark (Maria, Di Sciuillo & Fong, 2000).

In the traditional definition of a sentence, the term “sentence” refers to a grammatical unit built up from a smaller unit. Thus, the sentence talks of a grammatical unit and is built up from a smaller unit (Srijono, 2010). Furthermore, a sentence is a complex system (Kaan, 2002).

“A simple sentence has only one complete predication in the form of an independent clause. A simple sentence has only one main or independent clause and no dependent or subordinate clauses” (Waters & Caplan, 1996). The main aspects of a sentence is subject and predicates (Randall, 2006, 38). The clause is a simple sentence can stand alone, not depending on other clauses in the sentence. The basic principles of grammar consist of syntax (Cohen & Smith, 2007). A sentence is a textual unit that has been convenient to adopt as the largest grammatical unit for the purpose of syntactic analysis (Bianchi, 2002).

2.7 BASIC PARTS OF A SENTENCE

According to Sullivan (2002), the basic parts of a sentence are Subject, verb, Predicate, direct or Indirect object. A sentence contains at least one subject-verb combination. A verb of a sentence is the action word. For example: “the man reads” the word “reads” is the verb of the sentence because it tells the man’s action. Dudley T. (2001) explains that:

The subject and verb must agree in number, that is, a singular subject needs a singular verb, and a plural subject needs a plural verb. The subject of a sentence is the person, place, or thing that is performing the action of the sentence. The subject represents what or whom the sentence is about. The simple subject usually contains a noun or pronoun and can include modifying words, phrases, or clauses.

Zamel (2010) further states that to find the subject of a sentence, one has to “identify who or what is doing the action,” and if there is no subject, the sentence is a fragment.

The third part of the sentence is called a predicate. According to Zamel (2010), a predicate tells something about the subject. It is the verb and any complement of the verb, which can include the object and adverbial, for example.

A verb, modifying words and phrases, or clauses are the component of a simple predicate. In addition, the subject or predicate contains some elements that add meaning or detail to a sentence. These elements include the direct object, indirect object, and subject complement” furthermore, they can be expanded and further combined into simple, compound, complex, or compound/complex sentences.

Radford (2009:39-49) explains that the other parts of a sentence are clauses and phrases. Leech and Slortvick (1987:211-212) state that, “clauses are the principal structure of which sentences are composed. A sentence may consist of one or more clauses and there are three important ways in which clauses may be described and classified. They may be classified in terms of the clause elements (subject, verb, for example, from which they are constructed, and the verb patterns that are formed from these elements). An independent clause is not dependent on another clause for its meaning and its context as it is the main idea of the sentence. However, the dependent (subordinate) clause does not have a complete thought, and then it depends on an independent clause. In addition, a phrase is defined as a group of words acting together as a single part of speech.

2.8 COMPONENTS OF A SENTENCE: (PHRASES AND CLAUSES)

Radford (2009: 39-49) explains that: “to put our discussion on a concrete footing,” let us consider how an elementary two-word phrase such as the response produced by speaker B in the following mini-dialogue is formed:

Speaker A: What are you trying to do?

Speaker B: Help you

As speaker B’s utterance illustrates, the simplest way of forming a phrase is by merging (a technical term meaning “combining’) two words together: for example, by merging the word help with the word you in (1), we form the phrase help you. The

resulting phrase ‘help you’ seems to have verb-like rather than pronoun-like properties, as we see from the fact that it can occupy the same range of positions as the simple verb help, and hence, for example, occur after the infinitive particle to. (a) We are trying to help. (b) We are trying to help you.

In contrast, the phrase help you cannot occupy the same kind of position as a pronoun such as you, as we see from (3) below:

- (a) You are very difficult
- (b) Help you are very difficult

So, it seems clear that the grammatical properties of a phrase like help you are determined by the verb help and not by the pronoun you. Much the same can be said about the semantic properties of expression, since the phrase ‘help you’ describes an act of help, not a kind of person. Using the appropriate technical terminology, we can say that the verb help is the head of the phrase help you, and, hence, that help you is a verb phrase.

2.9 GENERAL RULES OF A SENTENCE

“A sentence is a group of words that form an independent thought, usually including at least a subject and a verb” (Bohnet *et al.*, 2013). A sentence is a textual unit that has been convenient to adopt as the largest grammatical unit for the purpose of syntactic analysis (Bianchi, 2002). The specific sort of knowledge can be represented as a set of rules called the “phrase structure of such rules and discuss several important properties which make them useful for describing the syntactic competence of language users” (Kaan, 2002).

Radford (2009: 39-49) asserts that the “purpose in writing is to be easily and quickly understood; it is plain that there must be a few general rules to guide our practice:

These rules are:” (a) The sentence ought not to be overcrowded either with words or with ideas (b) The right words must be used. (c) Let the sentence have a pleasant rhythm. (d) The subject and verb must agree in number; that is, a singular subject needs a singular verb, and a plural subject needs a plural verb. (e) The sentence must have unity.

This means that writers should speak or write about one person or thing in the sentence that the reader “should not wander off to other subjects; and that the principal clause in the sentence should dominate and keep in their proper places all the subordinate clauses.” According to Longknife and Sullivan (2002), a sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject-verb “combination. It may express emotions, give orders make statements, or ask questions. In every case, sentences are meant to communicate.

2.10 SENTENCE CATEGORIES BASED ON THEIR FUNCTIONS

According to Frank (1972:220), sentences are generally divided into their functions which are; declarative sentence, interrogative sentence, imperative sentence, and exclamatory sentence. He says that the first category is a declarative sentence, which “is a sentence that states a fact and ends with a period or full stop. In other word, it makes a statement. For example, the third essay is due Friday.” Swick (2009) comments that a:

A declarative sentence in English consists of a subject and predicate. The verb in the predicate is conjugated appropriately for the subject and in a specific tense: Subject + predicate Mary + speaks English. Declarative sentences can have singular or plural nouns as their subjects and can be followed by a verb in any tense and by the complement of the sentence.

That can be seen in these examples:

- John repairs the car.
- The boys ran into the forest.

There are other ways in which declarative sentences can be constructed. Declarative sentences can be constructed using a pronoun as the subject and also by using varying tenses. According to Eastwood (2002), “English verbs can show an incomplete action or one in progress” or a completed or habitual action, when changing tenses, the learner has to conform to the type of action of the verb as shown in the following examples: She is going. She was going. She has been going. She goes. She went. She has gone.

According to Danzak (2013), the conjugation of English verbs is, with few exceptions, a relatively simple matter, “but using the proper tense of verbs is something else. It is particularly important to understand the tense differences between verbs that describe an action in progress and verbs that describe a complete or habitual action.”

Corder (1999) avers that the interrogative sentence asks a question and ends with a question mark (?). For example, when is the third essay due? This sentence is asking about a question, and it is ended by a question mark (?). He further explains that there are two types” of interrogatives, and both types ask questions. The first type is “called a yes-no question because the answer to such a question will begin with the affirmative word “yes” or the negative word “no.” Most questions of this type begin with a form of the auxiliary verb” ‘do.’ Auxiliary + Subject + verb + predicate +? Do + you + have + the books +?

The fourth sentence pattern is an imperative sentence. According to Blair (2012), the imperative sentence “is a polite request or command. It ends with a period or full stop (.) unless the writer intends to show strength or strong emotion, then the sentence should end with an exclamation mark (!). For example, the essay must be finished tonight!” The fifth sentence category is an exclamatory sentence. According to Corder (1999), the exclamatory sentence shows excitement or expresses a strong feeling. It should be ended with an exclamation point (!).

2.11 TYPES OF SENTENCES (SENTENCE STRUCTURES)

Maclin (2000:301-307) posits that there are different types of sentence structure or sentence types. Sentence structure can be simple, compound, complex,” or compound-complex according to the kinds of clauses in the sentence. Maclin asserts that writing can be weakened by the lack of varied sentences. When learners are aware of three general types of sentences” it can help them vary the sentences in their writing. According to Freeman (2010), the most effective writing uses various sentence types, as explained below.

2.11.1 Simple Sentence

Murcia and Freeman (2010) indicate that “a simple sentence has the most basic elements that make it a sentence: a subject, a verb, and a completed thought.” A simple sentence can vary in length but expresses only one thought and may contain more than one subject and verb. “Examples of simple sentences include the following: Joe waited for the train.” ‘Joe’ is the subject of the sentence. ‘Waited’ is the verb, and the ‘train’ is the object. Using too many simple sentences can make writing “choppy” and can prevent the writing from flowing smoothly. However, simple sentences can be lengthened by using compound subjects, compound verbs, and prepositional phrases.

According to Blair and Crump (1984), students often use simple sentences as compared to other sentence structures in the descriptive than in the argumentative genre. Through their study, it was also confirmed that complex sentences were found to be highly used in the argumentative genre; however, a significant difference in use was only found in Grade 10. When it comes to compound sentences, it has been found that fewer compound sentences were used in the argumentative genre across all three grade levels.

2.11.2 Compound Sentence

According to Corbett (2003), a compound sentence refers to a sentence that contains two independent clauses (or complete sentences) and of which is connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction. Corbett further asserts that coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember if one thinks of the words “FAN BOYS.” “Coordinating conjunctions are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so.” In a compound sentence, “each clause has its own subject and verb”. The second clause should be separated from the first clause by a comma before the coordinating conjunction. When constructing a compound sentence, each complete thought should be able to stand alone as a simple sentence. Example: The girl went to the store, and the sales clerk sold her some milk.” Coordinators and conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses, aiding coherence and expressing a variety of logical relationships for the reader. Coordinators create and reinforce relationships between equal ideas or

structures, and they also convey balance and rhythm, which aid readability. It is important to note that coordinating conjunctions show logical relationships between independent clauses.

Zandvourt (2000) asserts that the easiest way to expand this basic pattern is to join two simple sentences to make a compound sentence as shown in the following: The examples: Joe waited for the train, but the train was late. I looked for Mary and Samantha at the bus station, but they arrived at the station before noon and left on the bus before I arrived. Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, and they left by bus before I arrived. Mary and Samantha left by bus before I arrived, so I did not see them at the bus station.

According to De Vincenzi (1996), learners should avoid beginning a sentence with "and," "or," "but," or the other coordinating conjunctions because these words are generally used to join parts of a sentence, and not "to begin a new sentence. However, such sentences can be used effectively, because sentences beginning with these words stand out; they are sometimes used for emphasis." If learners use sentences beginning with one of the coordinating conjunctions, they should use these sentences sparingly and carefully.

According to Corpuz (2011), if learners rely heavily on compound sentences in an essay, they can change some of simple sentences into compound sentences using coordinating conjunctions. However, learners must avoid overusing compound sentences as they often weaken writing.

2.11.3 Complex sentences

Blair (2012) asserts that a complex sentence comprises an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to it, and subordinate clause is similar to independent clause or full text, but lack one of the elements that make it full text. The following is an example of a subordinate clause: Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon. While he waited at the train station. After they left on the bus. Dependent clauses such as those above cannot stand alone as a sentence, but they can be added to an independent clause to form a complex sentence.

According to Davidson *et al.* (2005), dependent clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions. Below are some of the most common subordinating conjunctions: after, although, as, because, before, even though, if, since, though, unless, until, when, whenever, whereas, wherever, and while. There is nothing wrong with beginning a sentence with "because," however, learners must be careful and should try to avoid sentence fragments such as, "Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon" that "is a sentence fragment), but it is perfectly acceptable to begin a sentence with "because" as long as the sentence is complete (as in "Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon, I did not see them at the station") (Houck *et al.*, 1989).

Davidson *et al.* (2005) further assert that a complex sentence joins an independent clause with one or more dependent clauses. According to Pincas (1982:9-12), when the dependent clause comes first; a comma should be used to separate the two clauses. The dependent clauses can go first in the sentence, followed by the independent clause, as in the following:

1. Because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon; I did not see them at the station.
2. While he waited at the train station, Joe realized that the train was late.
3. After they left on the bus, Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station. Conversely, the independent clauses can go first in the sentence, followed by the dependent clause. When the independent clause comes first, a comma should not be used to separate the two clauses as in the following.

1. I did not see them at the station because Mary and Samantha arrived at the bus station before noon.
2. Joe realised that the train was late while he waited at the train station.
3. Mary and Samantha realized that Joe was waiting at the train station after they left on the bus. Complex sentences are often more effective than compound sentences because a complex sentence indicates clearer and more specific relationships between the main parts of the sentence. The word "before," for instance, tells readers that one thing occurs before another. A word such as "although" conveys a more complex relationship than a word such as "and" conveys.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) classify conjunctions into four subcategories: additive, adversative, causal, and temporal. Additive devices (and, furthermore, for instance, and similarly) are used to link sentences that have equal semantic status. In addition, the additives are used when repeating and emphasising the discourse units that repeat or add relevant new information to the previously mentioned expressions. The adversative discourse conjunctions (yet, nevertheless, however, in fact, and instead) introduce information that marks corrections, contrasts, and opposites in light of previous information. According to Eastwood (2002), “the causal devices (such as, hence, therefore, because, as a result, and in this regard) are used to introduce information that is a result or consequence of the preceding discourse.” And finally, the temporal devices (for instance, first, at last, next, previously, and simultaneously) are used to relate two discourse units with sequential, simultaneous, and preceding relations.

2.12 SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION SOPHISTICATION

According to Crossley *et al.* (2011), sentence sophistication refers to instances of phrases (e.g., noun, verb, prepositional, adverb) and embedded clauses in a sentence. According to Piche (1999), a sentence contains many structural levels that are dependent on the combination of various types of clauses (independent and dependent clauses) and phrases. The length of the clauses and phrases also contributes to the complexity of the structure (Crossley *et al.*, 2011; Rubin & Piche, 1979; Beers & Nagy, 2011). According to Rubin (1999), noun phrase expansion increases sentence length, however, the length is not the only determinant of sentence sophistication; in general, longer sentences are more complex. He further posits that “one of the major ways that sentences become longer is by adding modifiers to nouns.

Burns *et al.* (1993) add that grammarians use the term “noun phrase” (NP) to define a noun and all the words that modify it. Nouns can have modifiers that come before (pre modify) them in the NP, such as adjectives, as in “I heard a new song.” Nouns can also have modifiers that follow them” (or post modify), as in “The song playing on the radio is new.

According to Beer (1999), pre-and post-modification is one of the major ways that writers pack information into a text. Beer (1999) posits that sentences are also lengthened by the process of subordination. When one or more clauses (basically simple sentences) are combined within one sentence in an arrangement where one clause is the main one (independent and can stand alone), and the other is subordinate to the main clause (dependent and cannot stand alone).

According to Crossley (2011), in adult expository writing, the average sentence has three clauses, and some have many more. These multi-clausal sentences take planning and effort to construct, and the reader must be able to discern the main proposition from the others and the subordinate and logical meaning relationships among them. Several other linguistic factors increase complexity and render sentences harder to comprehend and produce. First, any change from an expected word order increases processing load. English is a subject-verb-object (SVO) language where the canonical (or typical) word order is the grammatical subject (the agent) followed by the verb and object (Akram & Mehmood, 2009).

In passive sentences, which are harder to process than active sentences, the grammatical agent follows the verb (media in the passive sentence that follows): Another factor that increases complexity is when two critical elements that are normally close together are separated, also called long-distance dependencies. According to Crossley (2011), sentence sophistication can be increased by sentence length, sentence connectors, and the use of a periodic sentence, as discussed below.

2.12.1 Sentence Length

Sentence length refers to the number of words per sentence; sentence type refers to the structure of the sentence," that is, simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. It is simple to understand simple sentences because they are short. However, long and complex words are important in writing important and sophisticated material (Carosso & Standford, 1983:92-93). In addition, relative pronouns (that, which, whom) are mostly used in writing than in speaking (Hogins & Lillard, 1972:16). In writing, adjective clauses play an important role to improve coherence (Bramer & Sedley, 1981).

According to Grami (2010), sentence length is achievable because of noun phrases and subordination. One of the major ways that sentences become longer is by adding modifiers to nouns. Grammarians use the term noun phrase (NP) to define a noun and all the words that modify it. Nouns can have modifiers that come before (or pre-modify) them in the NP, such as adjectives, as in “I heard a new song.” Nouns can also have modifiers that follow them (or post modify), as in “The song playing on the radio is new. The following sentence contains two NPs:

1 The three-alarm fire destroyed the recently refurbished apartment building that was just completed last year.

The noun fire in the first NP is pre-modified by three words and is the grammatical subject of the sentence. The second NP serves as the grammatical object of the sentence. Its noun building is pre-modified by four words and post-modified by a relative clause that has six words.

2.12.2 Sentence Connectors

The issue around sentence connectors is based on discourse competence, which is one of the four components of communicative competence by Swain and Canale (1980). Discourse competence, amongst others, refers to knowing how to combine language structures into a cohesive and coherent oral or written text of different types. According to Crossley *et al.* (2011), a sentence connector is defined as a link between ideas and embedded clauses. Using different types of links or connectives such as causal (for example, because, so), logical (for example, and, so), contrastive (for example, although, however), temporal (for example, first, next), and additive (for example, and, moreover, also) not only creates a connection between two clauses, but also creates sentences with varied sentence patterns (for example, simple, compound, complex, compound-complex, subject-verb-object, subject-subject-verb-verb-complement (Morris & Crump, 1999; Blair & Crump, 2000). Sentences are combined by linking devices such as conjunctions. However, conjunctions are different from other grammatical devices because they express the “logical-semantic” relation between sentences rather than between words and structures (Halliday &

Hasan, 1976). In addition, conjunctions align the text in a certain logical order that is meaningful to the reader or audience.

The more different the sentence patterns, the more complex the sentences will be. Text connectors are also an essential component of sentence construction skills. According to Maclin (2000), logical sentences use coordinators and conjunctions logically: Coordinators and conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses, aiding coherence and expressing a variety of logical relationships for the reader. Coordinators create and reinforce relationships between equal ideas or structures. They also convey balance and rhythm, which aids readability. Coordinating conjunctions show logical relationships between independent clauses.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) explain that cohesion is the semantic relation between one element and another in a text a text is cohesive when the elements are tied together and considered meaningful to the reader. Cohesion occurs when the interpretation of one item depends on the other, that is, one item presupposes the other (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). For instance, in the following text: “Amy went to the party,” “She sat with Sara. The interpretation of the item she depends on the lexical item Amy. Therefore, the text is considered cohesive because we cannot understand the meaning of “she” unless Amy exists in the text. Cohesion is not only concerned with grammar, but also with vocabulary.

Hence, it is divided into (a) grammatical and (b) lexical cohesion. Sentences are also lengthened by the process of subordination, that is, when one or more clauses (basically simple sentences) are combined within one sentence in an arrangement where one clause is the main one (independent and can stand alone), and the other is subordinate to the main clause (dependent and cannot stand alone). In adult expository writing, the average sentence has three clauses, and some have many more. These multi-clausal sentences take planning and effort to construct as a writer and the reader must be able to discern the main proposition from the others and the subordinate and logical meaning relationships among them.

Three types of subordination account for a large majority of multi-clausal sentences. In sentences with adverbial clauses, a subordinate clause is joined to the main clause

with a conjunction such as although, while, whereas, because, if and unless, for example. These types of clauses expand on the verb in the main clause by adding information about time, manner, or place, just like adverbs (as single words). In the following sentence, the adverbial clause (underlined) adds manner information to the main clause by stating something unexpected:

- Even though he had already broken the record for the most gold medals, he stated that his goal was to win even more in the next Olympic Games.

The prototypical adverbial clause appears after the main clause, but in the example above, it has been moved to an earlier position (pre-posed).

This sentence also illustrates a second type of subordination by using an object complement clause where the direct object of the main clause verb (stated) is itself an entire clause. These types of clauses often begin with that, but this is optional, and, if taken away, the sentence would be perfectly grammatical.

Other words that begin object complement clauses include question words such as what, when, who, where (for example, she decided what she would wear to the inauguration). It should be noted that not all main clause verbs can “take” an object complement, and the ones that do tend to be verbs referring to the state of being or communicative acts or that code mental states, such as, think, know, conclude, decide, and predict. This group of verbs is important in academic discourse because they allow writers to address processes, ideas, and opinions. According to Azar (1999), an adjective clause, or a relative clause, is a dependent clause that modifies or tells more about a noun furthermore, it describes, identifies, or gives further information about a noun. In addition, adjective clauses are usually introduced by the relative pronoun (Lynch & Anderson, 2013). These pronouns can help make ideas within a composition flow smoother, as shown in the following examples:

- I thanked the woman she helped me.
- I thanked the woman who helped me.
- I thanked the woman that helped me.

Furthermore, Azar (1999) indicates that:

“There are two ways in which a finite adjective clause is changed to a non-finite adjective clause, or adjective phrase. 1. The subject pronoun is omitted, and the “be” form of the verb is omitted. Example of the clause: The man who is talking to John is from Korea. Example of a phrase: The man talking to John is from Korea. 2. If there is no *be* form of the verb in the adjective clause, it is sometimes possible to omit the subject pronoun and change the verb to its –ing form. Example of the clause: Anyone who wants to come with us is welcome. Example of the phrase: Anyone wanting to come with us is welcome.”

2.12.3 Periodic Sentence

According to Brindley (1986), a complex sentence beginning with a dependent clause and ending with an independent clause is referred to as a periodic sentence. An example of periodic sentence could look like:

- "While he waited at the train station, Joe realized that the train was late."

The effectiveness of periodic sentences is as a result of the fact that the completed thought occurs at the end of it, so the first part of the sentence can build up to the meaning that comes at the end. The main idea in a periodic sentence is not completed until near the end of the sentence, since the meaning is at the end, it captivates the reader to read the sentence up to the end. This can be seen in the following examples:

- In opening minds, instilling values, and creating opportunities, education has no equal.
- With his long braids and wrinkled skin, his guitar as worn as the expression on his face, Willie Nelson is a true music maverick (Shaughnessy, 1990: 18-21).

According to Dumais (1988), an adverbial clause is a dependent clause used as an adverb; it modifies or reveals more about a verb (Farbman, 1985). In addition, it “explains where, when, how, why, to what extent, and under what condition an action occurs. As an adverb does not have a fixed position, adverb clauses, consequently, do not occupy any fixed position.” Examples:

- After graduation, she will get a job. (Indicating time relationships).
- Because he was sleepy, he went to bed. (Indicating cause and effect relationships).

- Although I had a slight handicap, I was an ambitious student. (Indicating oppositions).

To change finite adverb clauses into non-finite clauses, “the subject of both the independent and the dependent clause in the sentence to be changed into non-finite” clauses, must be the same (Wishon & Burks, 1987).

2.13 TYPES OF CONCORD IN A SENTENCE

Quirk (1985:75), observes that concord (also termed agreement) “can be defined as the relationship between two grammatical units, such that one of them displays a particular feature” that accords with a displayed feature in the other. Concord is the number (singular or plural) and person agreement with the verb, which are determined by the subjects (Downing & Locke, 2015). They further state that concord is only manifested in those verb forms that show inflectional contrast. For example: 1. the librarian he/she has checked the book.

Akram (2009) posits that “concord” is another term for grammatical agreement between two words in a sentence. “The subject and the verb have to agree” grammatically, and that phenomenon is called subject-verb concord. The verb is considered to be the heart of the sentence (Woods, 2010), and it has to take the same grammatical form as its controller, the subject. According to Vanessa (2007), the subject and the verb are the two most important items in a sentence. Quagie (2009) throws more light on the subject of a sentence and what the verb signifies. In English grammar, there is a rule that whenever the subject is singular, the verb of the sentence must also be singular to agree with it. The normally observed rule is extremely simple, namely, that a singular subject requires a singular verb.

Dada (2000:97) notes that the basic notion or underlying principle behind sentence construction must be considered in forming grammatical and meaningful sentences. This principle, therefore, is concord. According to Almeahmadi (2012:78), agreement or concord is used to describe the relationship (harmony) between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence. In relation to this, concord deals with the

subject and verb of a sentence, which can be inflected. It also means that a verb agrees in form with its subject and that a verb has more than one form, in which each form matches with a particular kind of subject (Hefferman & Lincoln, 1982). Sekyi-Baidoo (2002), also argues that in concord, the verb that is also called the predicator must “agree with the subject in number and person.” He explains that number is the singularity or plurality of the subject. While the person simple means whether the subject is the first person singular or plural as for I or we respectively, the second person singular or plural, that is, you and third person singular or plural as in he, she, it, they, especially, when the subject is a pronoun. Hefferman (1982) categorises concord into: grammatical, proximity, notional, pronoun-antecedent, and point of time – verb concord.

Tuurosong (2012) defines grammatical concord as a grammatical relationship in which a subject must agree with the verb with regard to number and person. By number, he means the:

...relationship between the speaker and what he/she is speaking about. The term “agreement,” according to him, is used to describe the type of grammatical changes that take place between the subject of a sentence and its verb. He adds that it has to do with the cordial relationship that must exist between the subject and the main verb or the first element of the verb phrase.

The strict rule under the grammatical concord is that a singular verb is used with a singular subject and a plural verb is used with a plural subject. For example: The door is open. [Singular subject, singular verb]: The doors are open. [Plural subject; plural verb]: According to Wiredu (1998), proximity concord refers to the agreement between the verb and its subject, based not on the notion, but on the fact that there is a nominal group that is immediately close to the verb. That is, grammatical concord is established between these elements instead of the normal formal agreement with the head of the noun phrase. For example: 1. neither he nor she speaks well. 2. Either the father or his sons drive well. Quirk and Greenbaum (1987) observe that proximity concord denotes agreement of the verb with whatever noun or pronoun that precedes it closely, sometimes in preference over agreement with the headword of the “subject. For example; No one except his own supporters agree with him.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1985) opines that notional concord denotes the agreement of the verb with the “subject according to the idea of number rather than” the actual presence of the grammatical marker. This makes it possible for a singular subject to agreeing with a plural verb without the sentence being considered grammatically incorrect. For example: The government are doing their best to develop the rural areas. The government has broken its promises.

In example (i) above, the noun “government” is treated as a collection of individuals, so a plural verb is chosen, but in example (ii), the noun “government” is treated as a singular individual; hence, a singular verb is chosen. With the exception of notional concord and the law of proximity, a learner has to apply the stable rules that govern the other types of concord in order to make grammatically acceptable sentences. Violation of the rules, on the other hand, results in the production of unacceptable linear sequences.

According to Oluikpe (2009) and Escalas (2010), a pronoun must agree in number, gender, and case with its antecedent. This means that pronouns depend on another structure for their meaning. Some of these pronouns that are controlled by their antecedents are the personal, demonstrative, and relative pronouns. They add that:

- A pronoun replacing a noun must have the same number as the noun it replaces.
- A pronoun replacing a noun must be masculine if the noun is masculine; feminine if the noun is feminine; and neuter if the noun is neuter.
- A subject noun must be replaced by a subject pronoun; an object noun is replaced by an objective pronoun.

Latin (1996) opines that verbs must agree with one another where they occur in a chain or move with the point of – time – past references in one sentence to avoid confusing the reader or listener about time. Examples are:

- Adam slept late but wakes up early.
- Last week my father takes me to hospitalll.

According to Isaacson (1984), this happens as a result of not mastering the rules of concord with regard to time. In the first sentence, the issue of time is not clear as the writer combines both present and past tenses. Either the verb “slept” should be made present that is “sleeps” or the verb wakesll made past, that is, woke for there to be agreement between the two verbs, in which case, time will be catered for. In the second sentence, “last week” calls for the past tense form only of the verb, hence, the verb “takes” ought to be “took”.

2.14 GRAMMATICAL COHESION IN A SENTENCE

Halliday and Hasan (1976), classify the categories of grammatical cohesion into four types: reference, substitution and ellipsis.

2.14.1 Reference

In reference, one element in a sentence cannot be semantically interpreted without using another element in the text. The reference devices are used to refer to items in linguistic texts; these include pronouns, articles, demonstratives, and comparatives. Reference may either be exophoric or endophoric (Bloor & Bloor, 2013).

In exophoric reference, the reader has to decide that something is true on the basis of information that is already available, which means the reader has to go beyond what has been written. The following example can illustrate this: “That is a wonderful idea!” when a reader reads a sentence of this nature, he \she must look out of the situation in order to retrieve the meaning. However, in endophoric reference, the reader relies on the meaning direct from the text. Endophoric reference is classified into two classes: anaphoric and cataphoric.

According to Paltridge (2012), anaphoric reference means that a word in a text refers back to other ideas in the text for its meaning. In the example: Amy went to the party. She sat with Sara. “She” clearly refers back to Amy; therefore, “she” is an anaphoric reference. A cataphoric reference means that a word in a text refers to another later in the text and the reader needs to look forward to understanding. In the example: “As

soon as he arrived, Mike visited his parents”. “He” is a cataphoric reference that looks forward to Mike.

2.14.2 Substitution in a Sentence

According to Wongwattana (2015), substitution occurs when an item is replaced by another item in the text to avoid repetition. The difference between substitution and reference is that substitution lies in the relation between words, whereas reference between meanings. There are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal, and clausal. Nominal substitution is substituting a noun or a nominal group with another noun. Elements of this type are *one*, *ones*, and *same*. In the following example, *one* substitutes *car*. This car is old. I will buy a new one. Verbal substitution involves substituting a verb or a verbal group with another verb. The verb element used to replace items in this type is ‘*do*’. For example, I challenge you to win the game before I do! Here, *do* is the substitution for win the game. Clausal substitution entails substituting clauses by *so* or *not*.

1.14.3 Ellipsis

Ellipsis is the omission of one or more words that are obviously understood, but that must be supplied to make a construction grammatically complete. There is a similarity between ellipsis and substitution as ellipsis is simply the substitution by zero (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Ellipsis can also be regarded as an anaphoric relation because the omission takes place within a text. The three types of ellipsis are: nominal, verbal, and clausal. The differences amongst these three types are that in nominal ellipsis, there is no noun; in verbal ellipsis there is no verb or the verb is omitted, while in clausal ellipsis, there is an omission of the clause.

2.15 LEXICAL COHESION IN A SENTENCE

Pamplon (2010) explains that “Lexical cohesion involves the choice of vocabulary. It is concerned with the relationship that exists between lexical items in a text, such as, words and phrases. Lexical cohesion includes two types, reiteration, and collocation.”

2.15.1 Reiteration

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), reiteration is when two items share the same referent. These items may either be repeated or have similar meanings in a text. Repetition can also be defined as the restatement of the same lexical item as seen in the following examples: Anna ate the apple. The apple was fresh. Reiteration may be in the form of repetition, synonymy, antonym, and super ordination (hyponymy and metonymy). “Synonymy is used to refer to items of similar meaning just as, attractive and beautiful. “Antonym is the relation between items of opposite meanings such as, hot and cold. “Hyponymy is a term that denotes a subcategory of a more general class. For example, vehicle is the co-hyponym of car.” Metonymy is a ‘whole-part’ relationship between items. For instance, cover and page are co-metonyms of the item book. In other words, a book is the superordinate item of cover and page (Paltridge, 2012:19).

2.15.2 Collocation

Paltridge (2012) notes that, “ Collocation is a combination of vocabulary items that co-occur together. It includes combinations of adjectives and nouns such as, ‘fast food,’ verbs and nouns such as, ‘run out of money’, and other items such as, ‘men’ and ‘women.’”

2.16 SYNTACTIC COMPLEXITY

According to Chomsky, in Morley (1916), the syntactic structure is important for the following reasons: to reveal unit within a sentence; to reveal the hierarchy in the ordering of element; to explain how surface ambiguities come out, and to demonstrate the relatedness of a certain sentence. Similarities and differences exist in different

languages when it comes to the usage of sentences as a syntactical system (Tiono, 2003).

According to Morley (2016), there are two ways in which the syntactic structure can be approached, namely, as formal and functional. The formal syntax is responsible for how words can form larger units of form and, ultimately, sentences. In functional syntax, sentences are structured in terms of smaller functional elements and, eventually, words.

When it comes to functional grammar, grammar is viewed as a fundamental aspect of a language. Thus, grammar is responsible for how sentences and utterances are formed (Carter & McCarthy, 2006).

Carter and McCarthy's theories about grammar regard syntax and morphology as the two basic principles of grammar. So, both syntax and morphology are known as structures. In functional grammar, the word "structure" refers to the patterns of grammar found in any language, and each structure consists of elements. In morphology, a sentence structure is regarded as a tool to measure a sentence while a sentence is defined as a group of words that expresses a complete statement, idea, or thought.

Furthermore, according to Rozakis (2003:116), a sentence has three main characteristics with regard to a group of words, namely, the subject, predicate and complete idea. Besides, the words in an English sentence indicate that there is a rule to shorten or expand the sentence. Moreover, a sentence has boundaries where the first word starts with a capital letter and ends with the last word that is followed by terminal punctuation marks, such as a period, a full stop, an exclamation mark, and a question mark (Silva, 2000).

2.17 SPELLING IN SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Silva (2000) posits that in order to become a competent writer, the learner must,

- Acquire knowledge of writing conventions (for example, grammatical rules, and punctuation rules, amongst others);

- Learn how to plan and revise written work;
- Acquire a large automatised spelling vocabulary; and
- Acquire a high level of fluency in handwriting and/or typing skills.

There are at least three component skills in learning to spell in English. The first is mastery of the phoneme grapheme equivalence relations necessary to learn the spelling of regularly spelt syllables and words. The second is mastery of the spelling of all of the commonly used words with irregular spellings (Dixon & Engelmann, 1999), and the third is the acquisition of morphographic knowledge, which is knowledge of the spelling of commonly occurring morphographs and rules for combining morphographs. Because some of the grapheme-phoneme equivalence relations are reversible, some of this knowledge is acquired during learning to read. However, much of it, especially the morphological knowledge and the phoneme-grapheme relationships that are unique to spelling – requires explicit teaching if it is to be acquired timeously. Before a child can learn the phoneme-grapheme equivalence relations they must first be able to discriminate between each of the graphemes and each of the phonemes. The reason why each of these skills needs to be distinguished is not because they involve different kinds of actions but because the mastery of each depends upon the provision of different types of learning experiences.

2.18 FINDINGS FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES ON SENTENCE CONSTRUCTION

Many kinds of research are carried out by second language researchers to investigate the problems faced by second language learners in writing. In this regard, they have adopted different approaches to analyse, evaluate or determine the causes of learners' errors in constructing sentences. According to Budiharso (2005), syntax is the study of sentence formation and is a system of categories and rules that allow words to form sentences. Therefore, syntax is defined as the ways in which words are put together to form phrases, clauses, and sentences (Hillock 1987).

The evaluation criteria for current writing research have shifted from grammatical accuracy as the sole basis for grading to content, organisation, style, vocabulary, and grammar (Schultz, 1994), increasing the importance of teaching the writing process.

Current writing classroom practices devote a considerable amount of time to teaching students the varied aspects of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing; Beers & Nagy, 2009). Despite the acknowledgement that content, organisation, style, vocabulary, and grammar are essential to produce good quality texts, studies have shown that raters' evaluations of the text quality are influenced by the style (sentence complexity and syntax); Freedman, 1979; Schultz, 1994). The research suggests that raters generally perceive a written text as superior if it has syntactically more complex sentences when compared to a written text consisting primarily of simple sentences (see Stewart & Grobe, 1981; Crowhurst, 1980a Schultz, 1994; Saddler & Graham, 2005; Beers & Nagy, 2009).

The ability to construct syntactically more complex sentences is essential because writers need to transform and organize ideas that sometimes require them to integrate information into grammatically correct written sentences. Limited knowledge in conveying information using sentence structures that have varying levels of complexity may hinder a writer's ability to translate thoughts efficiently. This is especially important for students at higher grade levels who are expected to produce more sophisticated sentence structures.

Cope *et al.* (2000) posit that a syntactically complex structure helps the writer to convey ideas that tie together, sum up a series of thoughts, qualify a previous point, and transition between ideas to convey meaning effectively. For example, a lack of syntactical complexity produces the following: John is always on time at school, John woke up late this morning and John was late for school. Whereas skills with syntactical complexity produce a more pleasing flow in the following sentence: John, who is always on time at school, woke up late this morning, and he was late for school. When ideas are presented as in the simple sentences, relations between John being on time at school and John waking up late this morning are unclear, and the individual sentences lack cohesion because they do not make references to the relations between these events. In fact, it is not known that John waking up late was a one-time occurrence that caused him to be late for school.

Every simple sentence conveys separate ideas, and the reader has to make connections between them. Some readers may be able to make the connections due

to already embedded knowledge, while others may not, due to a lack of familiarity with the events, and this presents an obstacle to comprehension.

Most studies found that higher grade-level students write syntactically more complex sentences when compared to lower-grade level students. In his seminal study, Hunt (1970) examined sentences written by students in grades four, six, eight, ten, and twelve. He reported that as the grade level increases, students tend to write syntactically more complex sentences. This was further supported by subsequent studies (see Hunt, 1970; Stewart, 1978; Rubin & Piche, 1979; Stewart & Grobe, 1981; Evans, 1979; Crowhurst, 1980a; 1980b; Rodrigues, 1980; Morris & Crump, 1982; Rousseau, Bottge & Dy, 1993; Ravid & Berman, 2010; Wagner *et al.*, 2011; Balioussis, Johnson & Pascual-Leone, 2012). However, these findings were dependent on the type of latent variables examined at each grade level.

According to Hammad (2013), the most common errors the learners made in an essay deal with the syntactic problems resulting from the imperfect development of sentences. His study further revealed that sentence problems arise from an incomplete mastery of syntax in writing. The sentence problems are grouped into four kinds of awkward sentences, reflecting incomplete knowledge of the basic rules of syntax. According to Bacha (2002), the description of four types of sentence problems in this section refers to the argument of Oshima and Hughes (1983:239-246). According to Oshima and Hughes (1983), sentence problems appear” with regard to sentence fragments, choppy sentences, run- on sentences, and stringy sentences.

According to Kharma (1996), students who have a problem with writing sentences with a good structure, are unable to produce longer sentences requiring subordination and coordination. In a study conducted by Ahmed (2010), the findings revealed that students' poor marks in English are the result of poor sentence construction in their essays. The study conducted by Walters (1993) shows that learners often face various difficulties in academic writing, more especially in sentence construction. The difficulties include a lack of sentence variety in their essays, the usage of non-standard conjunctions, the use of extremely long sentences without conjunctions, grammatical errors, and a lack of punctuation.

Kharma (1996) in Melese (2007: 12) found that students have problems with subject-verb agreement, pronoun references, and connectors. Kharma adds:

The use of proper sentence structure, precise vocabulary, and proper rhetoric helps the reader identify proposition in the text more readily (Richards, 1992:103). However, in other EFL/ESL contexts, some different types of errors have been diagnosed. For example, Barry (2014) conducted a study on writing errors among 38 students (32 males, six females) attending a pre-academic program at Okland University in Michigan. The findings revealed errors in the use of conjunctions, the use of conventions pertaining to English expressions, the overuse of simple sentences and the word order.

Furthermore, Hassan (2011) studied the errors of written Arabic essays by the Terengganu diploma students of the Arabic language. He collected and analysed essays from 32 corpora written by 27 female and five male students. His study reveals that the students committed ten common errors, among which, tense misuse had the highest frequency. An investigation into the inter-lingual and intra-lingual errors of writers of another language is strongly recommended. Furthermore, the problem of sentence fragments was not given much attention in the previous research viewed in the literature. This gives the present study a practical objective. Ruwaida (2015) has investigated the problems that Palestinian Arab EFL students faced in developing well-written paragraphs in English. "The findings showed that students faced many problems, particularly, in three areas of writing English compositions, namely, the sentence structure, the paragraph structure, content, and organisation. She further diagnosed the cause of problems as the transfer of the writing styles of their first languages (L1 transfer).

In the same vein, according to Corpuz (2011), Taiseer (2008) conducted a study to explore the common types of grammatical errors made by Emirati secondary level male students in their English essay writing. The most common and salient grammatical errors found in the students' essays included passivation, verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions, articles, plurality and auxiliaries." Similarly, further research was conducted by Salem (2007) at the Al-Azhar University in Egypt. The study reported that most of the students had problems with vocabulary, idioms, cultural knowledge of English, and rhetorical strategies. As the participants were students at the Al-Azhar University, and were majoring in English,

their errors were also those of the advanced students. However, the findings do not apply to other lower grade students or students majoring in other subjects.

In the study conducted by Moran (1981), complex sentences were found to be used frequently in the argumentative genre; however, a significant difference in use was only found at the tenth-grade level. Fewer compound sentences were used in the argumentative genre across all three grade levels. Moran (1981) also examined the use of sentence types in the argumentative, descriptive, and explanatory genres written by students with learning disabilities (LD) and low-achieving students in Grades seven to ten. Both groups of students used all sentence types. However, students with LD averaged fewer simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences, but more complex sentences. Both run-on sentences and fragments occurred more frequently in the samples from students with LD samples on the average. Blair and Crump (1984) also examined the word order of the main and subordinate clauses. The two word-order patterns, namely, subject-verb and subject-verb-object patterns respectively, revealed consistently higher proportions of use for all three grade levels in the descriptive genre. However, several word order patterns showed consistent differences of use between genres across the grades. Significantly, the proportions of subject-verb-complement (noun) patterns were sizably larger for the argumentative genre at all three grade levels.

Moran's (1981) study of word classes did not yield any significant differences in the use of word classes between students with LD and low-achieving students. The reason for this is that all words in a sentence belong to a specific word-class category. A string of words in a sentence each matches a specific word class. Therefore, there were no significant differences in the use of word classes between students with LD and students who were otherwise low-achieving. It must be noted that the use of numerous adjectives, adverbs, or noun and verb phrases are likely to increase the complexity of sentences because they are packed with more information compared to sentences without the additional use of word classes.

Furthermore, Zuhour and Fatima (2015) conducted a study at Tabuk University exploring the common types of errors among 40 female students in the Department of English and Translation. They found the following: Grammatical problems (in the field

of tenses, prepositions, syntactic, subject-verb agreement and the use of articles), punctuation problems (at the level of the absence, the misuse or the addition of punctuation marks) and spelling problems (in the field of substitution, omission, addition, disordering, segmentation and unrecognisable words).

These were seen to be challenges amongst many students. However, the findings cannot be taken as granted and generalised because the sample size was small, and the difficulty level of writing task is not known.

In other studies, Sawalmeh (2013) investigated the errors in a corpus of 32 essays written by 32 Arabic-speaking Saudi learners of English from the Preparatory Year Programme at the University of Ha'il. The results showed that the Arabic speakers in this study committed ten common errors. Errors found in the study were verb tenses, word order, singular/plural forms, subject-verb agreement, double negatives, spelling, capitalisation, articles, sentence fragments and prepositions.

In addition, studies by Grami (2010), Tahaineh (2010) and Kharma and Hajji (1996) also diagnosed other types of errors made by Arab students in general. Grami (2010) cited the results of the IELTS (International English Language Testing System) report of Saudi students that revealed that they scored comparatively low in all the skills, but the average for writing skills was the lowest (4.83 out 9). Grami also pointed that although Saudi students study English for six years before joining any university, only a few of them are able to exhibit a satisfactory performance in the university entrance examinations.

According to Fageeh (2011), in a similar Saudi context, Alhaisoni (2012) examined written samples of 100 first-year female Arabic-speaking EFL students of the University of Ha'il. The findings showed that students made a considerable number of errors in their use of articles. This study delivered mixed findings because these errors included inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfers. However, in other EFL/ESL contexts, some different types of errors have been diagnosed. For example, Barry (2014) conducted a study on writing errors among 38 students (32 males, six females) attending a pre-academic programme at the Oakland University in Michigan. The

findings revealed errors such as the use of conjunctions, the use of conventions of English expressions, and word order.

The findings of the study conducted by Abbasi and Karimian (2011) revealed that the majority of JSS III Pupils in Abeokuta Central Local Government, Ogun State have problems in applying the rules of concord. The pupils made concord errors of different types and only a few of them were able to write error free essays. Most of the errors committed pertained to the subject-verb concord of number and person. The findings based on the essays written by the JSS III pupils revealed that all the pupils committed errors with the use of the subject-verb concord of number, the subject-verb concord of person, the pronoun-antecedent concord and concord involving indefinite pronouns. Other errors committed by them were the subject-complement concord, the subject-object concord, the subject-object concord, the concord involving the use of auxiliaries and the concord involving the use of the past tense and the infinitive.

Spelling is addressed differently in several studies. Swan and Smith (2008:199) observe that all aspects of writing in English cause major problems for Arabic speakers.” They discuss some of the major differences between the two languages that cause Arab learners’ considerable difficulties. For example, Arabic is a cursive system that rarely recognises words written in isolated forms of letters. Another important difference they mention is that Arabic is a writing system that runs from right to left, that makes Arab learners misread and sometimes misspell words that contain letters with mirror shapes such as p and q and d and b. They also add that the right-to-left writing system makes learners misread letters within words through the right to left eye movement.

According to Bahloul (2007), the main cause of spelling errors is the irregularity of the English writing system. This irregularity seems to be the reason behind learners’ challenges in developing their spelling proficiency. This irregularity seems to be challenges that confuse learners from different language backgrounds, this also includes native speakers. According to Henderson (2012), the main cause of this irregularity is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the written word and its pronunciation.

Henderson's study (2012) revealed that Arabic students also experienced challenges with the use of auxiliaries; all the participants had the tendency of either omitting or overgeneralising the rule in the use of auxiliaries. Concerning tense formation, the findings revealed that pupils were not sure about tense formation. This was evident when they mixed tenses in their essays. With regard to the subject-complement concord, the subject-object concord and the subject-object concord showed that they had problems with the subject, the object and the verb agreement. The findings also revealed a great deal of mother tongue interference. Some sentences showed direct translations from the mother tongue. Once again, all the pupils tended to use the infinitives and the auxiliaries with the past tense. Furthermore, they also tended to use both nouns and pronouns simultaneously in their sentences.

Ruwaida (2015) refers to Huang's study (2006) conducted "about Taiwanese English majors' writing errors based on a web-based writing programme." The results depicted that the errors comprised usage (55%), mechanics (20%), style (16%) and grammar (9%). Huang thus concluded that most students commit writing errors, not because of an insufficient command of the linguistic complexity, but because of "the usage of incomplete sentences or subject-verb agreement. Ibrahim and Fadi (2013) tried to ascertain the reasons behind the weakness in writing in English in pre-year students at the Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. The findings revealed that the grammatical weakness, the lack of knowledge and understanding, limited practice and their educational backgrounds, were the main reasons for the writing errors.

Studies conducted on the writing problems encountered by students in composing essays in the L2 context have revealed that students experience a problem with a wide range of writing strategies. For example, Hammad (2013) conducted a study on the Palestinian university students' problems with English Foreign Language (EFL) essay writing. The results revealed that the students experienced problems with grammatical errors, lexical errors, word-for-word translation, cohesion errors, a lack of academic style, a lack of sentence variety, and a lack of content knowledge. Good writing or composition should consist of a range of appropriate and varied vocabularies used along with proper grammar and a varied range of sentence structures (Norrish, 1983; Alamirew, 2005). Dumais (1988) comments on, "another study conducted by Al-Khatib (2001) who examined Jordanian students' personal letter writing in English and found

that Arab learners' sentences are extremely lengthy." The study revealed some of the problems of lengthy sentences, amongst others; it includes confusion between the subject and the verb or no agreement between the subject and the verb.

Mbau and Muhsin (2014) have, amongst other errors, found that there were incorrect sentences with the omission of the singular marker-s and/ or –es at the end of the verbs for the subject of the third person singular. In addition, Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) further state that occasionally, some learners will overgeneralise the inflection and even apply it to non-inflectable forms such as modal auxiliaries, as in the example: Jack can dance disco. Karim, Fathema and Hakim (2015) have found that the Bangladeshi tertiary level EFL learners cannot deal with singular subjects and verbs forms correctly; the study also affirms that a similar problem also occurred with the plural subjects. Accordingly, the students mixed the singular subject with the plural verb or vice versa.

The study conducted by Hammad (2013) revealed that Arab students experienced problems with repetition, parallelism, sentence length, a lack of sentence variation and misuse of certain cohesive devices that were the major sources of incoherence and textual deviation. With regard to cohesion, the study revealed that students experienced problems with using cataphoric and anaphoric references, ellipsis, substitution and genre related cohesive ties (Qaddumi 1995). Later, Zafar (2016) conducted an empirical study that used error analysis to address their problems with language errors. Upon first analysing the errors frequently made by her business students, the verb tenses were found to be the most problematic errors. After a two-month period of writing training that focused on the accurate use of verb tenses, her students showed "an apparent improvement. In Thailand, where English has been taught as a foreign language and writing in English is confirmed to be the most difficult skill for Thai learners to master, error analysis has been a viable approach and has been used extensively by scholars to improve the writing skills of the Thai learners (Dumais, 1988:26). Bennui (2008), for example, analysed errors caused by the transfer of the subjects' mother tongue that was Thai. According to Jaafar (2011), "The findings showed that the Thai language negatively influenced the subjects' writing at

all levels including lexical, syntactic and discourse levels. He concluded that the differences between Thai and English should be taught to Thai EFL students.”

In a study conducted by Jenwitheesuk (2009), he analysed Thai undergraduate students’ written essays. His study found that the sentences contained errors, such as incorrect usage of determiner, subject-verb agreement, incorrect tenses and incorrect use of prepositions. In another study conducted by Watcharapunyawong and Usaha (2013) where the focus was on errors caused by the interference of the first language, it was found that the students’ first language had a strong influence on their writing, some of the challenges found include verb-agreement, spelling and articles.

In the same vein, Bumroongthai (2011) conducted a study in Thai EFL students. In the study, he was interested in analysing errors in English paragraphs written by Thai EFL students. The result revealed that Thai EFL students committed various types of errors regarding English grammar and the paragraph format.

Hengwichitkul (2006) analysed the “errors in abstracts written by Thai graduate students. It can be concluded from her findings that the differences between Thai and English languages and the complexity of English sentences led to the errors.”

Rattanadilok *et al.* (2015) also conducted a study in which he analysed errors in narrative essays written by Thai undergraduate students. The study found that there were many types of errors, which include: tenses, prepositions, word choice and comma. Following the analysis, it was concluded that most of the errors committed were result of the negative transfer of the students’ first language and students’ incomplete knowledge of the target language. However, other sources of errors, such as learners’ carelessness cannot be overlooked.

Blair and Crump (1984) examined sentence types and found that students used more simple sentences in the descriptive mode compared to the argumentative genre across the three grade levels. Complex sentences were found to be used frequently in the argumentative genre; however, a significant difference in use was only found among the Grade 10 learners. Fewer compound sentences were used in the argumentative genre across all three grade levels. Moran (1981) also examined the

use of sentence types in the argumentative, descriptive, and explanatory genres written by students with learning disabilities (LD) and low-achieving students in Grades seven to ten. Both groups of students used all the sentence types. However, students with LD averaged fewer simple, compound and compound-complex sentences, but more complex sentences. Both run-on sentences and fragments occurred more frequently in the samples of students with LD samples on average.

Blair and Crump (1984) also examined the word order of main and subordinate clauses. The two word-order patterns, subject-verb and subject-verb object patterns, respectively, revealed consistently higher proportions of use for all three grade levels in the descriptive genre. However, several word-order patterns showed consistent differences of use between genres across the grades. The proportions of subject-verb-complement (noun) patterns were sizably larger for the argumentative genre at all three grade levels. Moran's (1991) study of word classes did not yield any significant differences in the use of word classes between students with LD and low-achieving students. The reason for this is that all words in a sentence belong to a specific word-class category. A string of words in a sentence matches a specific word class. Accordingly, there were no significant differences in the use of word classes between students with LD and students who were otherwise low-achieving.

More recent studies tend to include phrasal complexity using the length of phrases as a measure to examine sentence patterns (Crossley, Weston *et al.*, 2011; Ravid & Berman, 2002). Both Crossley *et al.*, (2011) and Ravid and Berman (2010) argue that the phrase measures are important components of sentence patterns to examine syntactic complexity because sentences using more phrases were found to be syntactically more complex.

Burt *et al.* (1982) classified the errors in sentences into six different categories: the omission of grammatical morphemes, the double marking of semantic features, the use of irregular rules, the use of wrong word forms, alternating the use of two or more forms, and disordering. James (1998) proposes five categories of errors that include grammatical errors (adjectives, adverbs, articles, nouns, possession, pronouns, prepositions and verbs), substance errors (capitalisation, "punctuation and spelling), lexical errors (word formation and word selection), syntactic errors (coordination/

subordination, sentence structure and ordering), and semantic errors (ambiguous communication and miscommunication). In another study by Hengwichitkul (2006), errors were analysed at the sentential level. All of the errors were classified as subject-verb agreement, tenses, parts of speech, participial phrases, relative clauses, passive voice, parallel structures, punctuation, run-ons and fragments.

Likewise, Runkati (2013) categorised the errors found in her study into two main types. The first type dealt with errors at the sentential level, which were fragments, run-ons, subject-verb agreement, word order, tenses, capital letters and punctuation. The second type comprised errors at the word level, such as articles, prepositions, word choices, nouns and numbers.

Another study on sentence construction, specifically on cohesion was conducted by Sadigh (2012) on Iranian undergraduate EFL students. The results showed that the students experienced problems with the use of references, errors in lexical and conjunctive cohesion. On the other hand, the other studies only focused on coherence writing problems experienced by L2 students. For example, Watson (2004) conducted a study on measuring the coherence of writing using a topic-based analysis. Their results indicated that there were similarities between topic-based analysis and the teachers' evaluations.

Several studies have attempted to illustrate how conjunctions contribute to a better understanding of written discourse in a sentence. The findings of these studies have, to some extent, been contradictory. According to Behrman (2006), some studies have shown that there is no significant link between the deployment of cohesive devices and the quality of writing (Castro, 2004; Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000). Others have contended that there is a positive correlation between a number of cohesive devices and good writing (Neuner, 1987; Field & Oi, 1992; Ferris, 1994; Jin, 2001).

In a study using Halliday and Hasan's (1976) framework, that supports the studies contending that cohesive devices affect the quality of a text, Liu and Braine (2005) investigated the use of cohesive devices in fifty argumentative essays written by Chinese undergraduate students. Their findings revealed that there was a significant relationship between the number of conjunctions used and the quality of the

argumentative writing produced by these undergraduate students. Moreover, Sanders and Noordman (2000) indicated that conjunctions help the reader to construct representations, since they provide clear-cut information about the relationship between text segments. Based on what has been mentioned above, it has become apparent that the appropriate use of conjunctions contributes to the clarity and comprehensibility of a sentence. However, the proper use of conjunctions has been found to be a challenge for ESL/EFL learners.

Granger and Tyson (1996) investigated the usage of connectors written by French students. A qualitative analysis was used to compare and contrast French EFL learners and native English speakers. Students' usage of connectors was based on the list in Quirk *et al.*'s (1985) classification of conjunctions. "The results revealed no overuse of conjunctions in general by the French learners in their English essay writing when compared with native speakers' writing.' However, the results on corroborative, appositive and other types of connectors were overused in the French EFL writing and the results also revealed that the eight conjuncts (using Quirk *et al.*'s term) "however, instead, though, yet, hence, therefore, thus and then" were underused by the French students. The French EFL learners also demonstrated the misuse of conjunctions related to semantic and syntactic aspects. Narita, Sato, and Sugiura (2004) conducted a study to investigate the use of logical conjunctions in essays written by advanced Japanese EFL learners. The findings revealed that there are certain similarities and differences among the four learner groups in the use of these conjunctions. It can be inferred that the influence of L1 transfer on the foreign learners' use of conjunctions remains indeterminate.

Furthermore, another study was conducted by Meisuo (2000) to investigate the use of cohesive devices in expository compositions written by Chinese second-year English major students. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods. Essays scripts of one hundred and seven participants were collected from the students at two universities in China. The findings revealed that the students were inclined to overuse and misuse a variety of additives "and, also, besides, in addition, moreover, furthermore" and temporalis "first, first of all, secondly, thirdly, finally," and also demonstrated the misuse of some adversatives "but, however, on the other hand, at the same time.

A study was conducted by Lai (2008) to investigate the use of discourse connectors in the writing of Taiwanese EFL undergraduate writers. The researcher used both quantitative and qualitative analysis. During the analysis process, the researcher used one hundred and eight conjunctions based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive devices. The quantitative results revealed that the less-skilled learners used conjunctions more frequently than the skilled learners, while the qualitative findings generally revealed that even though both groups used conjunctions appropriately, they committed errors in utilising some conjunctions including: furthermore, in other words, besides, on the contrary, nevertheless, by contrast, hence, therefore and because.

According to the study conducted by Hinkel (2001) where the focus was to make comparisons between native speakers and non-native speakers in using conjunctions as cohesive ties in their compositions. "The data of this study consisted of 898 academic essays written by American, Japanese, Korean, Indonesia, and one hundred" and forty-five Arabic learners were involved in this study.

The results revealed that Japanese and Korean learners were competent in using applied coordinating conjunctions the same way as native speakers. However, it was established that the Indonesian students were competent as they displayed fewer cohesive ties than those used in native speakers' compositions, while Arab learners' essays encompassed coordinators more than what is usually the case in native students' writing. Another study was conducted by Mohamed-Sayidina (2010). The researcher examined the use of transition words and cohesive devices in English compositions written by ESL Arabic-speaking students. The students were studying an academic English module at the American University of Sharjah in the UAE.

Based on the above findings, the researcher concluded that Arabic speaking learners used more additive words than the English native speakers did. Accordingly, Behrman (2006):

The significance of conjunctions is to signal logical relations in a written text and increase the readability of the texts (Geva, 1992; Heino, 2010). Importantly, Ting (2003) asserts that conjunctions are important elements for creating organic text connectivity; their presence hence should create unity and contribute to the quality of the text.

Furthermore, Schleppegrell (1996:97) points out that, “A conjunction is a grammatical resource for indicating links within texts”. Zamel (1983) asserts that it would be difficult to make sense of ideas without conjunctions, since these conjunctions prepare the readers to anticipate the ideas that follow.” Hence, mastering the appropriate use of conjunctions is an essential skill when the students try to learn how to write, as has been noted by researchers on discourse and writing pedagogy (Cook, 2016; McCarthy, 1991). According to Zamel (1983:22), cohesive devices are crucial in writing. However, the linking devices have been found to be problematic for English language students. The results of a study conducted by Ahmed (2010) on cohesion and coherence among Palestinian students revealed that some problems, such as difficulty “in writing the introduction, the thesis statement, the topic sentence, writing concluding sentences and writing the conclusion were revealed”.

In turn, Haider (2014) explored the organisational problems that the Pakistani students face in ESL writing. These problems include overused coordinate sentences and misused topic sentences. This study also reports that the Pakistani students face problems with the use of cataphoric and anaphoric references, ellipsis, substitution and genre-related organisational ties. The lack of motivation and self-confidence and writing anxiety also pose a challenge to the Pakistani ESL learners. The literature produced by Pakistani writers can prove to be more effective and productive for language learning as it does not pose the problem of contextualisation. While advocating the use of Pakistani literature for English language instruction, the linguists maintain that stylistic-based perceptions and critical perceptions can be enhanced by integrating language with literature.

In turn, Adeel and Sajid (2014) have studied the organisational problems faced by the Pakistani student writers. By using questionnaires and *viva voce* questions, the researchers have reached the conclusion that these students face difficulties in the use of cohesive devices, such as substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical cohesion. Ross (2015) has investigated the challenges faced by Arab students in writing a well-developed paragraph in English. He maintains that the students must strike a balance among the issues such as content, organisation, purpose, audience and vocabulary. Ross (2015) has also found that the students write such clauses

without following the punctuation system or the sentence structure. The researcher further claims that the simple, compound and complex sentences pose further difficulties for the ESL learners.

Demerezen (2012) analysed the problems concerning the structures of simple sentences among Turkish University students. The researcher discussed the basic elements of a simple sentence and its different patterns. According to the study, an extended simple sentence, namely, with double or triple structures in subjects, verbs and objects is problematic for Turkish students. The researcher also claims that double predicates in a simple sentence also confuse the students. The main focus of this study is the overlooked and neglected structures which the researcher calls a simple sentence with extended phrasal elements.

In addition, Kunwar (2013) lays stress on creating opportunities for the interaction of the ESL learners with high-quality literature. While reflecting on the practices being carried out in Indian classrooms, the researcher presents a picture that is a cause for concern regarding the use of literature in the language classroom. These facts are also true in the Pakistani context. While reflecting on the prevalent practice in the Indian context, Kunwar (2013) quite aptly maintains that a highly mechanical and conventional approach is adopted towards literature in the language classroom; the teacher reads and explains each and every line of the text. Following this process, students are expected to scan the text to obtain information for the sake of the exam, and they are expected to cram the answers to the questions given at the end of a lesson.

Cohen (2003) analysed the problem with regard to the structures of simple sentences for Turkish University students. The researcher discussed the basic elements of a simple sentence and its different patterns. According to the study, an extended simple sentence, that is, with double or triple structures in subjects, verbs and objects comprise a problem area for Turkish students. The researcher also claims that double predicates in a simple sentence also confuse the students.

In 2012, Gustillo and Magno investigated the sentence-level errors of freshmen students in five private schools in Manila, Philippine. "They found that the most

frequent errors” were the use of commas (16.6%), word choice (13.5%), Verbs including S-V agreement (11.8%), capitalisation (11.3%) and punctuation and sentence structure (9.4%) (Gustillo & Magno, 2012: 101). In addition, Sawalmeh from Saudi Arabia analysed 32 essays written by Saudi learners. The results showed that the most frequently errors were verb tenses (16.5%), errors in articles (12.4%), sentence fragment (11.7%), spelling (11.6%), and word order (10.9%) (Sawalmeh, 2013:10).

Other studies focused on grammar and have found that grammar is the most difficult area for L2 learners. Learners have a number of problems with regard to writing in the second language. For example, as verbs take different forms depending on the tense and the subjects with which they are used, they create problems for second language writing students” (Tyner, 1987). Similarly, Kharma (1987) in Melese (2007:12), states that students have problems with subject-verb agreements, pronoun references, and connectors. Related to grammatical errors, Shumaila Khan and Mohammed Riaz Khan (2016: 283), who analysed errors in English written by Saudi students at the Jazan University, classified the types of grammatical into the following categories: verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions, articles, auxiliaries, spellings, pronoun, passive voice, and a run-on sentence. Moreover, the research about learners’ errors in written essays has been widely conducted by some researchers.

Similarly, Barry (2014) analysed the writing samples of 38 Saudi students, 32 males and six females, attending a pre-academic programme at the Oakland University in Michigan. The data analysis included several categories such as the use of conjunctions, the use of conventions of English expressions and word order. The findings reveal the excessive use of conjunctions, especially “*and*.” Other research studies reveal problems with paragraphing and paragraph unity among Arab students writing in English. For instance, Khuwaileh and Al Shoumali (2000) analysed the writing of Jordanian students in Arabic their first language, and English as their second language. They reported that 55% of the students wrote compositions in their first language that lacked the organisation of thought and with no appropriate linking of ideas. Similar findings regarding the writing of Jordanian college students in terms of the organisation of ideas were reported by Abdel Malik (2003). In addition, Ahmed

(2010) examined the writing of EFL Egyptian students and reported similar problems in terms of sequencing ideas and writing topic sentence.

In another study by Ekeguchi (1997), the researcher investigated all types of errors using error analyses and contrastive analyses among 120 students in three parts of Malaysia. Their findings revealed that difficulty with using the correct form of English grammar was the main problem in Malaysian students' essay writing. Three recurrent grammatical errors were reported including the misuse of articles, the verb *to be*, and the subject-verb agreement. They also concluded that the reason behind students' grammatical errors was the first language's interference that is the Malay Language in the context of the study.

Arinasamy (2013) reported that Malaysian students had minor problems in using modal verbs grammatically in argumentative writing. Their findings revealed that Malaysian students preferred to use many modals in their writing. However, the use of these modals was limited to a few words only. It was concluded that despite the inaccuracies in terms of meanings, most students were able to use syntactically accurate modals in their sentences.

According to the Narinasamy's study, one consistent pattern of error identified in the student writing samples was the systematic overuse of certain verb forms. Pica (1983) and Larsen-Freeman (1992:310-11) found that learners who had received formal second language instruction showed a strong tendency to over apply grammatical morphemes, such as *-ing* and the plural *-s*. These kinds of over-application errors can consist of morphemes supplied in obligatory contexts (overgeneralisation) and others in non-obligatory contexts (overuse).

Darus and Subramaniam (2009), using Corder's (1967) model of error analysis, examined errors in a corpus of 72 essays written by 72 Form Four Malaysian students. They found that most of the students committed six common errors: singular/plural forms, verb tenses, word choices, prepositions, subject-verb agreement and word order.

Wee (2009) and Nor Hashimah *et al.* (2008) also reported that the errors that students committed in their respective studies were basically grammatical errors. Based on the identification of various errors, the researchers decided to focus on analysing frequent grammatical errors in essay writing that disrupt the writing flow. According to Wee *et al.* (2010), misinformation occurs when wrong forms are used in the subject-verb agreement process. According to Zheng and Park (2013), misinformation can be categorised into noun misinformation, verb misinformation and also preposition misinformation. As for this study, the researchers in their study did not attempt to classify the errors, but they intended to analyse the common misinformation that appeared to assist teachers in planning for student learning and assessment.

A lack of an adequate vocabulary that leads to constrained expressions in L2 writing is also a challenge that students face in acquiring L2 writing skills (Ouma, 2005). In addition, Rabab'ah (2003) points out that students often lack an adequate vocabulary when engaged in L2 writing. As a result, they find it a challenging task to express their ideas freely and accurately in L2 writing. These difficulties can be solved by encouraging extensive reading among students in order to improve their vocabulary levels.

In investigating the low achievement in creative composition writing, Abaya (2006) carried out a study on the analysis of lexical errors in the written English compositions of standard eight pupils in the Rigoma division, in the Nyamira district, Kenya. The findings revealed that the lexical errors learners made in their written compositions included: confusion of synonyms, inappropriate collocation, incomplete sentence structures, first language interference and coinage. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that teachers need to expose learners to a variety of reading texts to expose them to new vocabulary items and sentence structures. From the foregoing, it is evident that second language learners often face various difficulties in learning L2 writing skills. The difficulties are partly attributed to the teaching methods used, the learning strategies, L1 interference, the limited vocabulary and the inadequate mastery of the L2 grammatical structures.

According to Kharma (1996), learners have problems with structuring paragraphs, the topic development of a paragraph, structuring the whole discourse as well as

developing the theme in a discourse. Raimes (1983) states that students exhibit difficulties in differentiating a topic sentence from the supporting ideas. Pincas (1982) also revealed that learners have problems with applying the principle of unity in paragraphs because of their failure to use cohesive devices appropriately.

In a similar context, Mohamed (2010), cites Alhaisoni (2012) “who examined written samples of 100 first-year female Arabic-speaking EFL students of the University of Ha’il. The findings showed that students made a considerable number of errors in their use of articles.” This study delivered mixed findings because these errors included inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfers. The cognitive problems that students faced included problems with punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, content and organisation.

According to Byrne (1998: 16), the fact that punctuation has never been standardised to the same extent as spelling, makes it problematic. Similarly, Cairol and Wilson (1995:191) state that writing students encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation. Capital letters are useful for the initial words in sentences, the beginning of important words, in topics and headings, amongst others. According to Leki (1991), this could be because of the traditional methods that teachers use to teach writing for spelling, punctuation, and mastering grammar.

Brown (1994) and Connor (1996) group errors into two categories. These categories are interference from the L1 and interference from the L2. Inter-lingual transfer is the main cause of L1 interference. Brown (1994: 224) points out that in the early stages of learning a L2, the L1 is the only previous linguistic system that the learner can use, therefore, errors occurs as a result of familiarity with the L1. It is important to note that there are positive and negative linguistic transfers of a language. In positive transfer, parallel features of the two languages correspond exactly, while negative transfer the two languages do not correspond exactly (Hall, 1973).

According to Myles (2002) students who have the ability to write in their mother tongue can transfer the skills of writing to L2; whereas a lack of competence in their mother tongues may serve as an impediment in writing in the L2. The fact that writing in the L2 is influenced by the L1 has been proved by both Krashen (1994) and Connor (1996). Krashen (1994) discovered that L2 learners transfer their L1 rules when writing

an English essay. The transfer of the L1 into the L2 characterises the grammar errors in the essay. In addition to Krashen, Connor (1996) posited that L2 learners use their knowledge of the L1 to express ideas in an English essay. Most learners translate their ideas in the “L1 before they develop them in an English essay.

According to Connor, writing is concerned with the transfer of the first language (L1) cultural conventions to the second language (L2) performance. The transfer deals with the rhetorical organisation of ideas in writing that is assumed to be culturally determined. Various studies on writing indicate that when students of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) write in English as beginners, they translate or attempt to translate the L1 words, phrases, and organisation into English.

Accordingly, the students use the patterns of language and the stylistic conventions they have learned in their native language and cultures (Connor, 1996:3-4). When they have matured and have become more accomplished and have achieved the advanced level of mastery in writing, of course, they will not translate the L1 words and patterns of L1 conventions into English any longer. The language of academic writing uses specialised symbols that emphasis the vocabulary, grammatical, and rhetorical features.

In effect, various studies on writing indicate that, as beginners, when students of English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) write in English, they translate or attempt to translate the L1 words, phrases, and organisation into English. The students use the patterns of language and stylistic conventions they have learned in their native languages and cultures (Connor, 1996:3-4). Conversely, the immature demonstration of linguistics in writing will result in awkward sentences and poor writing. According to Budiharso (2005:44), the linguistic features in writing include four types: “syntax, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics (Budiharso, 2005:44). In terms of language, the writer should have his or her own style, a set of characteristics generally found in an author’s writing.

The style is manifested in the use of the three most important elements of formal writing, namely, tone, sentence structure, and diction (Rico, 2014). Brown (1994:

225) cites research “suggesting that the early stages of language learning are characterised by a predominance of inter-lingual transfer, but once learners have begun to acquire parts of a new system, more and more” intra-lingual transfer is manifested. Intra-lingual errors are defined by Richards (1971:198) as those which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application, the learner attempting to build up hypothesis about English from his limited experience of it in the classroom or textbook.

Thagg-Fisher (1985) based her study on two types of tests on errors from the 1960s, namely, translation and composition errors that were made by Swedish learners of English. It was found that concord error density does not differ in spoken and written language, but it does differ in creative and non-creative text production (Thagg-Fisher, 1985:69-70). Concord errors in translation texts are dependent on the choice of words and sentence structure in the source text, whereas Swedish learners of English can avoid making concord errors in creative text production (Thagg Fisher, 1985:71). Thagg-Fisher (1985) also found in her study that people make errors or mistakes owing to the *one –s* principle, which means that the final -s of the singular noun may be misinterpreted as the plural morpheme. Swedish learners of English have problems considering irregular and unmarked plural nouns; when plural nouns lack the regular–s morpheme, Swedes tend to make concord errors. Moreover, Swedes also have problems with regard to non-countable nouns, since these types of nouns can be classified differently in English and Swedish.

Collective nouns are problematic for Swedes since they are influenced by the writer’s perspective (Thagg-Fisher, 1985:77). Moreover, Swedes have to know whether the noun is regarded holistically (as one entity) or atavistically (as members making up a group) as concord depends on whether a collective noun is regarded as a single undivided body or a collection of individuals (Thagg-Fisher, 1985:78). Pronouns are challenging as well; sentences with, *everybody*, *every*, *none*, *some* and *each* can cause concord errors (Thagg-Fisher, 1985:81). Kohlmyr (2001:146) found that the most common problem for Swedish learners of English is found when the subject is a personal pronoun; furthermore it was found that there are two types of errors; “either the subject requires the verb to take the 3rd person singular–s or it does not”

(2001:144). Another common problem for Swedish learners of English is when the subject is a noun or a noun phrase and there are three different noun types (1) countable nouns (2) non-countable nouns and (3) collective nouns.

Other previous research relevant for the present study focused on agreement with collective nouns in newspapers written by native speakers of English (Levin, 2001). It has been found that when there is a long distance between the subject and the predicate, it is difficult to remember the number of the subject (Levin, 2001:93). In addition, agreement errors become more frequent when personal pronouns occur in other clauses than their subjects. When a pronoun appears in another sentence than its controller, it is more likely to produce a plural concord than if both items appeared in the same clause (Levin, 2001:99-100).

Richards (1970) further defines intra-lingual errors as those errors that originate within the structure of English itself, as a result of the misinterpretation of the English grammatical rules. Developmental errors are errors committed during various stages of the L2 learning process. Accordingly, Richards (1971:199) defines developmental errors as errors that do not derive from the transfer from another language; instead, they reflect the learner's competence at a particular stage and illustrate some of the general characteristics of language acquisition." It normally occurs when a learner employs a false hypothesis about the TL based on their limited knowledge of the TL. In most past research on analysing problems of writing in English, the researchers' aims were to identify the errors that occurred and then analyse them to determine the cause and develop possible solutions to overcome the problems.

Lim (1990) analysed grammatical errors made by Mandarin speaking students from a private year two community college in Kuala Lumpur. Fifty ESL compositions produced in a test were used as the main source of data. The researcher used free writing and guided writing tasks to compare the results. Similar to previous studies, the errors made were classified under eight grammatical categories, namely, tenses, articles, prepositions, spelling, pronouns, wrong choice of words, singular and plural forms and agreement. The two major factors that contributed to the presence of errors in students' written work were inter-lingual transfer and intra-lingual transfer.

Darus and Subramaniam (2009) investigated the types of errors committed by 72 Form Four Malay students in their written work. The results of the study showed that the errors that the students committed in their sentences were basically grammatical errors. The students also had a relatively weak vocabulary and committed errors in applying sentence structure rules in English. The study concluded that the students had problems in acquiring grammatical rules in English. In addition to Kroll, Connor (1996) posited that L2 learners use their knowledge of L1 to express ideas in an English essay.

Furthermore, the students use the patterns of language and stylistic conventions that they have learned in their native language and cultures (Connor, 1996:3-4). When they have attained the advanced level of mastery in writing, of course, they will not translate the L1 words and patterns of L1 conventions into English anymore. Several studies have attempted to illustrate how conjunctions contribute to a better understanding of written discourse. There have been contradictions in the findings of these studies because some studies have shown that there is no important link between the deployment of cohesive devices and the quality of writing (Johnson, 1992; Zhang, 2000; Castro, 2004). However, other researchers have contended that there is a positive correlation between a number of cohesive devices and good writing (Neuner, 1987; Field & Oi, 1992; Ferris, 1994; Jin, 2001). Some researchers like Liu and Braine (2005) supported the notion that cohesive devices affect the quality of text. In his research, he investigated the use of cohesive devices in fifty argumentative essays written by Chinese undergraduate students. The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between the number of conjunctions used and the quality of the argumentative writing produced by these undergraduate students.

Furthermore, cohesive devices in fifty argumentative essays written by Chinese undergraduate students have been investigated by Liu and Braine (2005). It was found that there was a significant relationship between the number of conjunctions used and the quality of the argumentative writing produced by these undergraduate students.

According to Sanders and Noordman (2000), conjunctions help the reader to construct representations. Furthermore, they provide clear-cut information about the relationship between text segments. In the light of what was mentioned above, it has

become clear that the appropriate use of conjunctions helps to provide clarity and comprehensibility within a text.

In turn, Meisuo (2000:87) investigated the use of cohesive devices in expository compositions. These compositions were written by Chinese second-year English major students using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Students' essays scripts of one hundred and seven students "were collected from two universities in China. Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive devices and their framework for analysis were used. "The findings of the study revealed that the students were inclined to overuse and misuse a variety of additives such as "and, also, besides, in addition, moreover, furthermore" and temporal "first, first of all,

According to Lai (2008:66) conducted a corpus-based study to investigate the use of discourse connectors in the writing of Taiwanese EFL undergraduate writers, applying both quantitative and qualitative analysis. One hundred and eight conjunctions were selected for analysis based on Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy of cohesive devices. One hundred and two essays by 25 skilled and 26 unskilled Taiwanese undergraduate students were analysed. His quantitative results indicated that the unskilled learners used conjunctions more frequently than the skilled learners, while his qualitative findings generally revealed that even though both groups used conjunctions appropriately, they committed errors in utilising some conjunctions including: furthermore, in other words, besides, on the contrary, nevertheless, by contrast, hence, therefore, and because.

In his study, Kroll (1991) also noted that the students' writing revealed virtually no nominalisation that would allow the more skilled writers in class to create nouns out of verbs and succeed in delivering the tight packaging of information. He claimed that this usage would have enabled students to compare and contrast the two models within a paragraph without losing meaning and without necessarily having to package the discussion into two successive paragraphs. Another study conducted by Gass (2013). reveals that the ESL Arabic-speaking students, who were studying the "academic English module at the American University of Sharjah in the UAE," also have some challenges with regard to spelling. The high number of spelling mistakes revealed the students' lack of experience with written English generally. Nunan (1999)

states that producing a coherent, fluent and extended piece of writing is the most difficult task to perform in language learning and it is even more challenging for second language learners. According to Brown (2001), written products are often the results of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialised skills, skills that not every speaker has. In this regard, Emmons (2003) states that writing is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all English Language major students. It is believed that writing demands a great deal of skills and conventions such as writing readiness and grammatical rules for the students to become proficient and effective writers.

According to Alhaisoni (2016), writing is the skill, in which most Malaysian students are less proficient; moreover, they do not know how to accomplish the written tasks satisfactorily. Accordingly, ÖzgeRazı (2013) “states that “Turkish students who learn English as a foreign language usually find it difficult to write” correct compound and complex sentences. Adams and Keene (2000:78) cite Haiwen (2013) who “investigated the current situation of college English writing teaching in China thoroughly, and he found that college students’ writing ability is far from satisfactory. Nofal (2010) conducted a study in which he investigated” and scrutinised the reasons behind the weaknesses of English major students in the Philadelphia University in Jordan. He contends that “it is difficult for students to express themselves adequately in writing.” In effect, “the most discrete characteristics of a good paragraph are virtually absent in the writing of most students. Unity, consistency, order and coherence are obviously lacking; students fail to signal the direction of their thoughts” with the use of transitional words such as, ‘however,’ ‘moreover,’ ‘nevertheless’ and phrases such as “on the other hand,’ “in fact,” “of course,” for example (Adeel & Sajid, 2014). Al-Buainain (2008) elaborates that “there is a general consensus among English language instructors at the University of Qatar that most EFL students are weak in writing courses.” According to Ansari (2012), more than 50% of students in Saudi Arabia do not know how to write in English. Most of them are unaware of cursive writing.

According to Jafari and Ansari’s (2012) with regard to the Iranian EFL students’ failure in writing, they contend that the failure of Iranian EFL students in L2 writing as effectively as they should, can perhaps be attributed to a variety of factors including

L2 writing instruction, lack of motivation, L2 writing feedback, lack of target language proficiency and vocabulary, the interference of L1 into L2 and psychological variables such as anxiety.

An investigation was carried out by Salem (2007). This researcher explored the views of undergraduate students at the University of Al- Azhar in Egypt in relation to writing. The results revealed that most of the students felt overwhelmed when they were required to write on a certain topic. They did not know how to start, how to develop their ideas or how to conclude their essays. They also lacked the technical skills needed for writing acceptable compositions in English. They often repeated their ideas, reported a few if any valid points, made serious mistakes in grammar and punctuation, and included irrelevant information. In turn, Hawaii and Al-Khasawneh (2013) explored the reasons behind the weakness of writing among pre-year students at the Taibah University. The finding of this study showed that students declared main themes behind their weakness of writing, such as grammatical weakness, knowledge and understanding, less practice, and educational background.

Latif (2007) conducted a study to examine second language writing anxiety and writing self-efficacy in the context of English as a foreign language in Egypt. There were 67 Egyptian participants. The results revealed that second language anxiety was associated negatively with students' writing performance. In addition, Nacira (2010) conducted a study in which he analysed the factors behind students' poor writing production at the Batna University. The study revealed that the majority of the teachers assume that the effects of L1, lack of reading, motivation, and practice result in students' poor performances in writing." The study further revealed that these difficulties occurred at all levels of the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay. Several research studies showed that international students studying at Asian universities encountered challenges in coping with the writing demands in their disciplines (Myles & Cheng, 2003).

Norrish (1983) cites Hourani (2008:11) who remarks that "the primary causes of errors can be as follows: "Interlingual errors and intralingual errors. Interlingual errors are those which are related to the native language, whereas intralingual errors are those

which are due to the language being learned.” Correction is essential to help students become more accurate in using a foreign language.

In the case of the Saudi male and female high school students, Almarwany (2008) confirms what Elkılıç avers “with regard to the punctuation problems. Almarwany (2008), remarks that the students’ first language creates many writing problems.” Among these problems are capitalisation and punctuation. According to Almarwany (2008:10), the results of the test revealed that the students committed various mistakes in grammar, organisation, and, most importantly, in capitalisation and punctuation. Like Elkılıç, “she points out that errors in punctuation were the most frequent. The findings indicated that errors in punctuation resulted” from the inadequate mastery of L2 rules as well as Arabic interference. Due to their inferior language proficiency, students apply L1 rules without realising that the L1 and L2 have different systems of punctuation.

Finally, Mohamed (2010:54), conducted research to examine the use of transition words and cohesive devices in English compositions written by ESL Arabic-speaking students who were studying the academic English module at the American University of Sharjah in the UAE. She reached the conclusion that Arabic speaking learners used more additive words than the English native speakers did. Mohamed-Sayidina (2010:54), further posits that second or foreign language learners of English face many obstacles, they are able to produce sentences that may be grammatically correct, but do not sound English because of their mother tongue interference. According to Walters (1983:18), “A student’s writing may be grammatically correct, but unacceptable because of interference from the native language in style, usage, or arrangement of ideas.

Akram and Mehmood (2009) explain that in order to become college and career ready, high school, learners are expected to master standard English conventions, as well as the socially agreed upon rules for grammar and mechanics. Unfortunately, an overwhelming proportion” of learners are completing school without becoming proficient in these sentence level conventions (National Commission on Writing, 2004), “which allow for clear written communication and are associated with academic achievement and socioeconomic mobility” (Schmitt, N. (2000).

Conclusion

From the reviewed literature, it is evident that writing is an important skill that learners must acquire for their academic advancement. However, it has been uncovered that learning to master writing skills is a challenge most learners face at all levels of the education system. Different researchers have established various errors students commit on their L2 written compositions and have also identified different sources of such errors. The Canale and Swain (1983) Communicative Competence Model consisting of four components: strategic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, linguistic competence, or grammatical competence provided the rationale for the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the procedures and methods that were used to collect and analyse the data. Accordingly, it describes the research design, research methods, the population of the study, the sampling techniques, the data collection process, data analysis, the validity and reliability of the research instruments and, finally, the ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kumar (1996:74) defines a research design as a procedure or plan adopted by the investigator in answering questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically. However, Mouton (1996:35) defines a research methodology as the knowledge of how" to do things. There are many research designs, however; this study has adopted a qualitative research design, which uses a case study approach. According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989:118), a qualitative research design studies human behaviour within the context in which it would occur naturally without the researcher's interference. "Furthermore, a qualitative study is defined as a study that attempts to understand ordinary" people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation as well as to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by people who have participated in it (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:139).

Therefore, a qualitative paradigm is relevant in this study because the research seeks to evaluate the sentence construction in English essays: a case study of the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit. According to Alamirew (2005) a case study is a type of qualitative research that can be used to study a phenomenon in a specific context. In addition, Best and

As, this study evaluates the sentence construction of Grade 10 First Additional Language learners, a case study is appropriate because the research aims at a better understanding of a particular case, which is the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners' sentence construction.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted action research method. According to Barry (2012), action research refers to a disciplined inquiry carried out by a teacher “with the intent that the research will inform and change his or her practices in the future.” This research was carried out within the context of the teacher’s environment with the students and at the schools in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit and the researcher works as a teacher in one of the sampled schools in Malamulele North East. According to Barry (2014), action research can be a worthwhile pursuit for educators for a number of reasons; foremost among these is simply the desire to know more.

According to John (1991), as teachers get into action research, they are more likely to look at questions that address the school and district concerns rather than questions that affect the individual teacher, as this process creates new patterns of collegiality, communication, and sharing. In addition, action research projects influence thinking skills, a sense of efficacy, a willingness to share and communicate, and attitudes toward the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to improve continually.

3.4 POPULATION AND SETTING

Archibald (2001) defines a population of a study as that group about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions. In turn, Peil (1982) defines a research population as all the cases or individuals that fit a certain specification. The population of the study was 250 Grade 10 learners from the sampled high schools in the Malamulele North East Circuit. The Malamulele Northeast Circuit is within the Vhembe district, in the Collins Chavani Municipality in the Limpopo Province, South Africa. All

the high schools in the Malamulele North East Circuit are rural public schools and are found in villages, as shown in the map below.

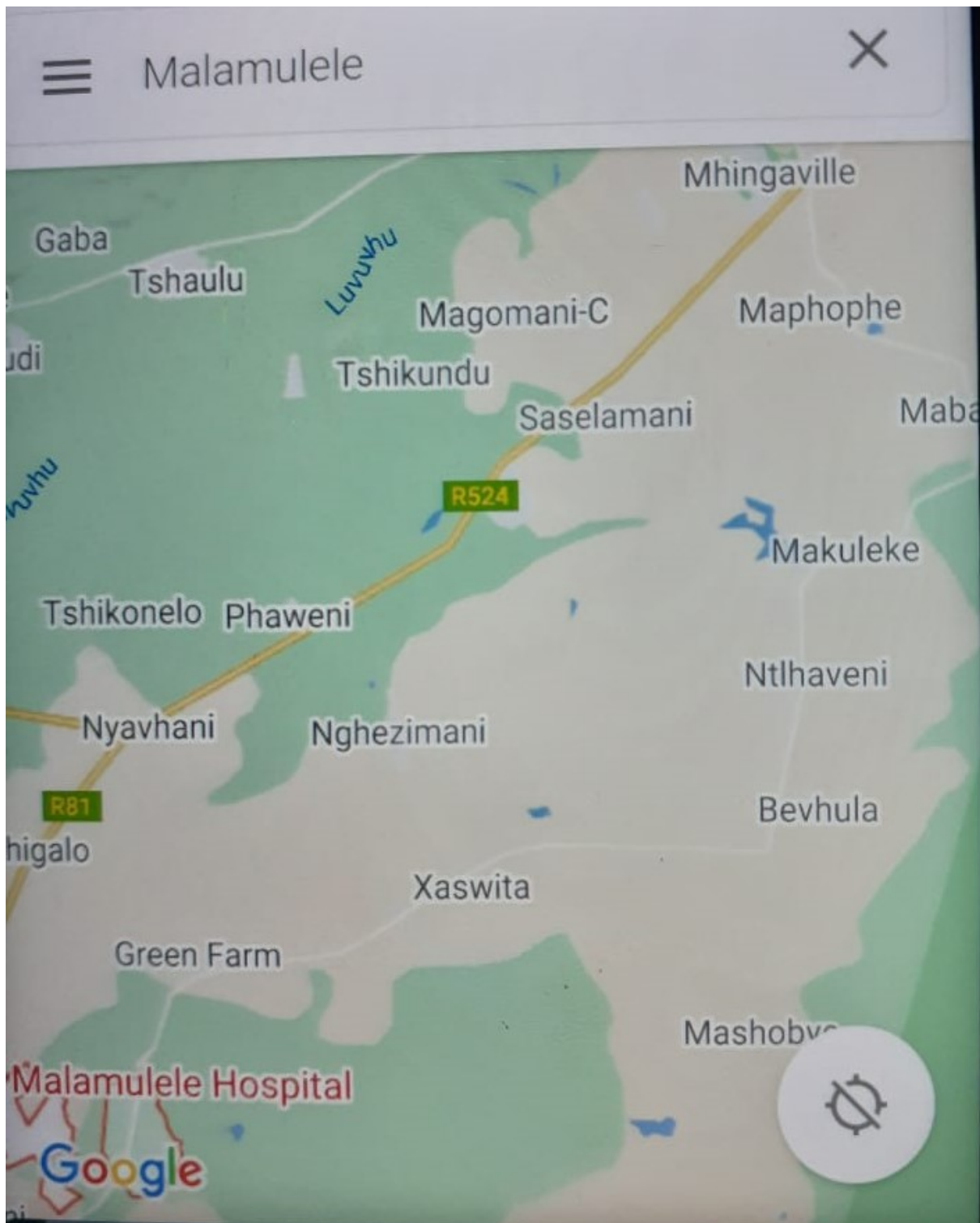


Figure 3.1: Aerial Streets View of Malamulele North East Villages (sources: <https://Google>)

3.5 SAMPLING

Johnson and Christenson (2004:197) define sampling “as the process of drawing a sample from the population where the characteristics of a subset are selected from a larger group. Sampling refers to the selection of a subset of persons or things” from a larger population, also known as a sampling frame with the intention of representing the particular population (Gall *et al.*, 2007:166; Neuman, 2011:246). Non-probability sampling and probability sampling were used for the selection of the participants. For this reason, purposive sampling, which is a non-probability method and a stratified method, which is probability or simple random sampling, were used in this research study. The criteria used to select the schools’ samples and the learners’ scripts samples for this study are discussed in the subsections that follow.

3.5.1 Schools’ Sample

A purposive procedure was used to sample three out of the seven schools in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit. Purposive sampling involves a deliberate selection of sampling units, which conform to the determined criteria (Ridha, 2012). In this particular study, the researcher selected three schools purposefully on the basis of their matric results for last year’s (2019) performance. The highest performing school and the two least performing schools in Malamulele Northeast were selected purposefully.

3.5.2 Learners’ Sample

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select learners as the respondents of the study. Babbie (2008:121) explains that “Stratified random sampling is a method of sampling that involves the division of a population into smaller subgroups known as strata” and is suitable for heterogeneous populations because the inclusion of small subgroups can be ensured percentage-wise (Van der Walt, 1984:78).

This kind of sample is mainly used to ensure that the different groups or segments of a population acquire sufficient representation in the sample (Chadwick, 1984:59;

Nachmians, 1981:434). In this study, 25 learners were sampled out of 250 Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit. The learners were stratified into three categories: learners who obtained above average scores for their English essays, learners who obtained average scores in their English essays and learners who obtained below average scores in their English essays. It was done in this manner to ensure a wide variance with respect to challenges that learners face in sentence construction. The classification was based on the learners' achievement or marks they obtained in essay writing in English First Additional Language Paper 3.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION/ RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The researcher used document analysis to collect qualitative data, where an essay task was used as an instrument to collect data. Document analysis refers to any written materials that contain data about the phenomena the researcher wishes to study (Bailey, 1994). An essay writing task was used as an instrument to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit. The test was the 2019 final examination and it was appropriate because it was a common test for all Grade 10 learners in South Africa and was written under the supervision of strict invigilators.

Furthermore, the researcher used an essay analysis schedule or rubric to remark the scripts. All language aspects that have something to do with sentence construction were thoroughly checked; for example, types of sentences learners used in their essays, the use of cohesive devices and the use of grammar paying special attention to aspects such as punctuations, articles, concords and tense.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis deals with the process of data classification, data coding, data entry and analysis in order to make interpretation possible. It is also concerned with the statistics used to analyse the data, that is, the organisation, interpretation and presentation of the collected data (Oso & Onen, 2005). Ezzy (2000) describes this method of data analysis as a way of analysing data by organising it into categories on the basis of themes, concepts or similar features.

In this study, qualitative data were collected. The data were then analysed using thematic analysis by grouping the responses provided by respondents into various themes according to the objectives of the study. The procedures employed were primarily designed to reduce and categorise large quantities of data into more meaningful units for interpretation. The steps used in developing themes were based on Marshall and Rossman (2000), in De Vos (1998) and include the following procedures:

3.7.1 Organising Data

The researcher read through the transcribed data repeatedly to familiarise himself with what the data entailed, paying special attention to the patterns that occurred.

3.7.2 Generating Initial Code

In this phase, the researcher started to organise data in a meaningful and systematic way. The researcher was concerned with addressing specific research questions and analysed the data; with this in mind, the researcher coded each segment of the data that was relevant to or captured something interesting about the research questions. The researcher identified the most important themes, recurring ideas, and patterns, which assist with the integration of the results.

3.7.3 Searching for Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) define a theme as a pattern that captures something significant or interesting about the data and/or research question. In this case, the researcher examined the codes and some of them clearly fitted into a theme. At the end of this step, the codes were organised into broader themes that seemed to say something specific about this research question.

3.7.4 Reviewing Themes

During this phase, the researcher reviewed, modified and developed the preliminary themes that had been identified in Step 3. At this point, the researcher gathered all the data that were relevant to each theme. The data associated with each theme were colour-coded. After this, the researcher read the data associated with each theme and considered whether the data did really support it or not. If the analysis seemed incomplete, the researcher went back and found what was missing.

3.7.5 Defining and Naming Themes

This is the final refinement of the themes, and the aim was to identify the 'essence' of what each theme is about. (Braun & Clarke, 2006:92). The following questions are asked: What is the theme saying? If there are subthemes, how do they interact and relate to the main theme? How do the themes relate to each other?

3.7.6 Reporting

After the final themes had been reviewed, the researcher wrote the report and decided which themes made meaningful contributions to understanding and answering the research questions.

3.8 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the extent to which an empirical measure reflects the real meaning of the concept adequately under consideration (Babbie, 2018:124). Throughout the stages of this study, the researcher was confined to valid, authentic and trustworthy methods of collecting, presenting and interpreting the data.

In qualitative research, validity refers to the ability that the researcher has to check for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures to ensure the validity of the data analysis process (interpretations, descriptions and explanations), the researcher followed reliable processes and made use of effective strategies in this study, as identified by Creswell (2009). Creswell (2009) suggested that after the raw data are obtained (transcripts and field notes, for example.), the first step is to organise and prepare the data for analysis. After that, researchers should read through all the

data and then begin a detailed analysis by using a coding process, followed by the generation of a description of the setting, people, categories, and themes for analysis using the coding process, then write a quantitative narrative to represent the description and themes. The final step is to interpret the data.

3.9 RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to the consistency or stability, whether the measure can be repeated and confirmed by further competent measurements (Nahid, 2003). “Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results” (Anderson.& Keel, 2002:57). In addition, reliability provides information on whether the data collection procedure is consistent and accurate (Bell, 1989:117; McDonough & McDonough, 1997:63; Best & Kahn, 1993:208; Seliger & Shohamy, 1989:185). Reliability refers to dependability or consistency, “while validity suggests truthfulness” (Neuman 1997:188). In addition, Kumar (1996:140) argues “that the greater the degree of consistency and stability in an instrument, the greater its reliability. In addressing the principle of reliability in this study, the researcher analysed the learners’ written documents more than once, and the findings were the same.

3.10 LOGISTICAL ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations have to do with the researcher ensuring ethical checks. That is, a series of questions that a researcher must ask about the research and the specific procedures included safeguarding subjects (Graziano & Raulin, 2012). To attain this, the researcher ensured that the respect, the rights of the respondents involved in the study to privacy and protection from physical and psychological harm. The researcher also ensured that each respondent understood what the study was all about. In addition, the respondents were given clear and sufficient background information on which to base their own decisions regarding whether they would take part in the study or not. It was only after their consent had been obtained that the copies of their essays were taken from the schools. In each case, a precise brief was given on the nature of information required from them by the researcher; confidentiality of the information provided was assured.

Conclusion

The chapter explained the approaches utilised to solve the research problem and answer research questions. All the components of methodology including research design, research methods, the population of the study, the sampling techniques, the data collection process, data analysis, the validity and reliability of the research instruments and the ethical considerations were expounded. Clarity was also given regarding the use of each particular technique and the reason for being the best choice for answering the research question.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explained the research design and methodology. This chapter presents and discusses the data obtained from the field. This chapter also focuses on the interpretation of findings that emanated from the learners' essays scripts. This research aimed to answer the questions posed in the research problem:

- Which sentence types do Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit use in English essays?
- How are grammatical aspects used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?
- How are different types of conjunctions used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?

The aim of the data analysis was the exposition of the research topic: "Evaluation of sentence construction in English essay: A case study of Grade 10 learners of the Malamulele North East Circuit" and its related research questions.

The collected data were analysed using the themes derived from the research questions that guided this study. The reporting of the data took the form of thick descriptions and direct quotations to ensure that the participants' voices were not lost.

4.2 RETURN RATE OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Table 4.1: Return Rate of the Research Instrument

Instrument used	Administered	Collected	Percentage
Written essays	25	25	100

The essay written by the sampled Grade 10 first additional learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit were all collected, thus attaining a 100% return rate. According to Saunders (2009), a return rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good and 70% and above are very good. Therefore, the return rate was considered very good to produce the required information for analysis purposes.

4.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF DATA

“A thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data” (Source). The table presents the themes extracted from learners’ essays scripts.

Table 4.2: Theme 1: Types of Sentence: Presentation of Simple Sentences

Themes	Subj ect + verb	Subjec t +Verb+ Object	Subject + Verb+ Adjecti val	Subject + Verb + Complem ent	Adverb ial +Subje ct + Verb	Subject+ Verb + Object + Complem ent	Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object
Explanations	“I crie d”. S+ v	“We receiv ed the parcel” S+V+O	“He came to the party” S+V+A	“Her father is a doctor” S+V+C	“Nicely he replied ”	“They electe d him speaker” S+V+O+ C	“The principal gave him the medal” S+V+IO+ DO
	“He ate” S+ v	“drove the car” ?+V+O	“He goes to the church” S+V+A	“My aunty was ?” S+V+C			
	“We wene d” S+ v	“She cleane d the house” S+V+O					

Themes	Subj ect + verb	Subjec t +Verb+ Object	Subject + Verb+ Adjecti val	Subject + Verb + Complem ent	Adverb ial +Subje ct + Verb	Subject+ Verb + Object + Complem ent	Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object
	“No bod y care ” S+ v	“She cut the tree” S+V+O					

4.4 ANALYSIS OF THE SIMPLE SENTENCES

Murcia and Freeman (2010) state that “a simple sentence has the most basic elements that make it a sentence: a subject, a verb, and a completed thought.” A simple sentence can vary in length but express only one thought and may contain more than one subject and verb. This information was considered in analysing the data.

4.4.1 Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb)

Participant wrote 1: “I cried.” This is a complete English sentence. In this sentence, “I” is the subject of the sentence. “Cried” is the verb of the sentence. It also ends with a full stop. Furthermore, a sentence is grammatically correct because it has a singular subject that goes with a singular verb. Participant 2: “He ate”. This is a simple sentence as it comprises the basic elements of an English sentence. “He” is the subject of the sentence. “Ate” is the verb of this sentence. Participant 3: “We went.” This is the simple sentence. “We” is the subject of the sentence. “Went” is the verb as such it qualifies

to a simple sentence. Participant 4: “Nobody care.” This is an English sentence, made of the singular subject, “nobody,” followed by a plural verb “care.”

All the sentences of participants 1, 2, 3 and 4 are simple sentences based on the definition of the sentence by Radford (2009). According to Radford (2009), a sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject – verb combination. Moreover, a sentence has boundaries, in that the first word starts with a capital letter and the last word is followed by a terminal punctuation mark such as a period, a full stop, an exclamation mark and a question mark (Maria, Di Sciullo & Fong, 2000). However, according to Sullivan (2002), a complete sentence is the sentence in which, the subject and verb agree in number, that is, a singular subject needs a singular verb and a plural subject needs a plural verb. In the light of his definition, the sentence of participant 4 could not qualify as in the sentence, the subject “nobody” is singular; while the verb “care” is plural.

4.4.2 Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb+ Object)

Participant 5 wrote, “We received the parcel.” According to Sullivan (2002), the basic parts of a sentence are the subject, the verb, the predicate and the direct or Indirect object. Based on this definition, this sentence is a simple English sentence because it meets the basic requirements of an English sentence. It has a subject, “we,” a past tense verb “received,” and the object “the parcel.”

Participant 6 wrote, “Drove the car.” According to Radford (2010), a sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject–verb combination. In terms of the definition, participant 6’s entry does not qualify to be a sentence. It has a past tense verb “drove” and the object “the car,” but there is no subject. According to Zamel (2010), to find the subject of a sentence, one has to identify who or what is doing the action and if there is no subject, the sentence is a fragment. If one asks, who drove the car? The answer cannot be found in the entry; therefore, it is not known who drove the car. Therefore, this cannot be a sentence as it does not meet the basic requirement of English sentence construction. As stated by Radford (2010), a sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject–verb

combination. “Drove” is the verb and “the car” is the object. Who drove the car is not known; accordingly, this cannot be an English sentence.

Participant 7 wrote, “She cleaned the house.” As stated above by Sullivan (2002), the basic parts of a sentence are the subject, the verb, the predicate, and a direct or indirect object. This sentence is complete and meets all the basic requirements of a correct English sentence. It has a subject, “she,” a past tense verb, “cleaned,” and an object, “house.”

Participant 8 wrote “She cut the tree.” The sentence qualifies to be a simple sentence. It has the subject, “she”, the verb “cut” and also the direct object, “the tree.” Furthermore, the sentence is grammatical correct when its verb is in the past tense. To check if the sentence is correct, the sentence must provide an answer to the following questions: 1. who cut the tree? 2. What is she doing? 3. What is being cut? When the sentence is able to answer all the questions, it means that the sentence is correct. Through the analysis of the sentences above, it has been noted that some learners have mastered the art of constructing a simple sentence that comprises a subject, verb and object. However, there are some learners who find it challenging to construct meaningful simple sentences that cater for the “object.”

4.4.3 Simple Sentences (Subject+ Verb + Adjectival)

Participant 9 wrote: “He came to the party.” According to Frank (1972), there are other elements, contained within the subject or predicate that adds meaning or detail to a sentence. This sentence qualifies to be an English simple sentence because it meets the basic requirement of a simple sentence as posited by Frank. The sentence is made of the subject “he,” the past tense verb “came” and the adjectival “to the party.”

Participant wrote 10: “He goes to the church.” The sentence above qualifies to be a simple sentence as it meets the basic requirement of an English simple sentence. The sentence has “He” as the subject of the sentence, “goes” as the verb of the sentence, and “to the church” as the adjectival of the sentence. All the sentences are correct simple sentences based on the definition of a simple sentence above.

4.4.4 Simple Sentences (Subject+ Verb + Complement)

Participant 11 wrote: “Her father is a doctor”. Frank (1972) posits that there are other elements, contained within the subject or predicate that adds meaning or detail to a sentence. The sentence of participant 11 has all the basic requirement of an English simple sentence. According to Frank (1972), other elements are contained within the subject or predicates that add meaning or detail in a sentence. The sentence contains a subject “her father,” “is” is a verb and “a doctor” is a complement. Therefore, this sentence qualifies as a simple sentence.

Participant 12 wrote: “My aunty was...” According to Zamel (2010), to find the subject of a sentence, one has to identify who or what is doing the action and if there is no subject, the sentence is a fragment. The sentence contains a subject “my aunty” and a verb “was,” but there is no complement. It can only be assumed what the participant wanted to say something about the aunt.

4.4.5 Simple Sentences (Adverbial +Subject + Verb)

Participant 13 wrote: “Nicely he replied” The sentence qualifies to be a simple sentence as it meets the basic rule of the construction of a simple sentence. It contains the adverb “nicely,” the subject “he,” and the past tense verb “replied.” A sentence can take any form as long as it is within the framework of the basic rules of English sentences as seen in the above sentence. Learners seldom write sentences of this kind, hence, only one entry was found in the learners’ essays. This may be the result of learners’ limited knowledge about this form, and it is suggested by Halloran that learners avoid what they do not know and focus on what they know. When this structure or form is not used, it only results in an uninteresting pile of sentences that do not encourage the reader to read.

4.4.6 Simple Sentences (Subject+ Verb + Object + Complement)

Participant 14 wrote: “They elected him speaker.” As mentioned by Frank (1972), there are other elements, contained within the subject or predicate that adds meaning or detail to a sentence. This is a complex simple sentence. In this sentence, “they” is the subject of the sentence, “elected” is the past tense verb of the sentence and “him” is the object of the sentence, while “speaker” is the complement of the sentence. Therefore, this is a complete simple sentence because it meets the basic requirement of an English simple sentence.

4.4.7 Simple Sentences (Subject + Verb + Indirect Object + Direct Object)

Participant 15 wrote: “The principal gave him the medal.” The sentence meets the requirement of the basic simple sentence; therefore, it is a simple sentence. It consists of the subject, “the principal,” the verb, “gave”, the indirect object, “him” and the direct object, “the medal.” Therefore, this sentence is a complete simple sentence.

This finding suggests that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit depend heavily on simple sentences when constructing English sentences. Although a simple sentence is the simplest form of the sentence, some learners are still having difficulties in constructing simple sentences. The learners’ decision to use simple sentences can be attributed to a limited vocabulary or choosing simple sentences as a strategy to avoid the other types of sentences those they do not understand. When short sentences are overused in an essay, it compromises the coherence of an essay because it results in choppy sentences and it reduces the flow of the message being sent. It can be safely claimed or assumed that learners decide to use simple sentences because they find it easier to construct them in contrast with compound and complex sentences. Furthermore, it can also be assumed that the learners’ choice of simple sentences is based on their ability to give concise directions.

Other studies have dealt with the reasons for overusing simple sentences and their effect on writing. Gass (2013) provides many diverse reasons for the over usage of simple sentences such as, the learners’ limited knowledge: mother tongue interference, the lack of motivation and lack of interest in writing by learners. It can be assumed based on Halloran’s findings that some of the challenges that Grade 10 First

Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit have with the construction of simple sentences, stem from learners' limited knowledge of the target language: mother tongue interference, a lack of motivation and a lack of interest in writing.

Other researchers, such as, Lakoff (2000), have dealt with the positive effect of using simple sentences. His findings reveal that learners use simple sentences because simple sentences are effective when presenting a limited amount of information and are easy to write and read. His study also reveals that those simple sentences are effective to declare a direct statement, to give concise directions, to ask a question and to display a simple list. It can also be assumed that some Grade 10 learners decided to use simple sentences because of some of the reasons mentioned above. Nevertheless, although simple sentences may be shorter, it is worth noting that they are not any less academic than other sentence types.

Based on the above analysis, many Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit can construct meaningful simple sentences with varying patterns. However, there are no extended simple sentences, that is, with double or triple structures in subjects, verbs and objects. This finding affirms Blair and Crump's (1984) study that examined sentence types and found that students used more simple sentences in their English essays than any other types of sentences. In another study conducted by Demerezen (2012), it has been found that Turkish university students do not use an extended simple sentence and that double predicates in a simple sentence also confuse the students.

Table 4.3: Theme1: Types of Sentences: Presentation of Compound Sentences

Themes	Sentences with Comma but without Coordinating Conjunction	Sentences with a Comma and Coordinating Conjunction	Sentences without Comma and Coordinating Conjunction
Explanation	The little boy did not like going to school, He went anyway	Joe waited for the train, but the train was late.	“They spoke to him in Tshivenda he responded in English”.
	I do not want coffee, I like tea.	“She saw a cat run in front of her and She fell down”	“That man is a hero is successful in catching the criminals in his village”.
	John ran to the store, but walked home.	You can make a big house and You can make a little clay hut it is the same.	The black dog has won many prizes He doesn't know many tricks.
			I have never visited Kruger national park maybe the Phafuri camp.

4.5 ANALYSIS OF THE COMPOUND SENTENCES

According to Corbett, (2003), “a compound sentence refers to a sentence that contains two independent clauses (or complete sentences) that are connected to one another

with a coordinating conjunction. Corbett further asserts that coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember” if one thinks of the words "FAN BOYS as each letter may be used to represent particular coordinating conjunctions such as: for, and, nor, but, or, yet and so.” This information was considered in analysing the data.

4.5.1 Sentences with a Comma, but without a Coordinating Conjunction

According to Blair and Crump (1984), a compound sentence refers to a sentence consisting “of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction.” In a compound sentence, “each clause has its own subject and verb. This second clause should be separated from the first by a comma in front of the coordinating conjunction.

Participant 16 wrote: “The little boy did not like going to school, he went anyway.” This sentence does not meet all the requirements of an English compound sentence, as defined above. The sentence has two clauses: “The little boy did not like going to school” and “He went anyway.” Each clause has its own subject and verb. However, the two clauses are not joined by a coordinating conjunction.

Participant 17 wrote: “I do not want coffee, I like tea.” This sentence comprises two clauses. The first clause is “I do not want coffee.” “I” is the subject, “do not want”, is a verb and “coffee” is the object. The second clause is “I like tea.” “I” is the subject, “like” is a verb and “tea” is the object. However, the participant did not join these clauses with a coordinating conjunction. The suggested answer for the above sentence is, “I do not want coffee, but I like tea.”

Participant 18 wrote: “John ran to the store but walked home.” According to Blair and Crump (1984), in a compound sentence, each clause has its own subject and verb. The second clause should be separated from the first by a comma in front of the coordinating conjunction. The sentence above has one clause “John ran to the store” followed by a comma and coordinating conjunction “but.” However, the learner did not write the subject (he) for the second clause. As stated above, a clause must have a subject and a verb. The suggested answer is “John ran to the store, but he walked home” or “John ran to the store, and he walked home.”

4.5.2 Sentences with a Comma and a Coordinating Conjunction

Participant 19 wrote: “Joe waited for the train, but the train was late.” This sentence meets all the requirements of an English compound sentence. It comprises two independent clauses, “Joe waited for the train” and “the train was late.” Each clause has its own subject and a verb. “Joe” is the subject, “waited” is the past tense verb and “the train” is the object. For the second clause, “the train” is the subject; “was” is the verb and “late” is the adjectival. These two clauses are connected with a coordinating conjunction, making it a correct compound sentence. According to Blair and Crump (1984), a compound sentence has two independent clauses. “An independent clause is a part of a sentence that can stand alone because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought” (Ahmed, 2010:72). Basically, a compound contains two simple sentences.

Participant 20 wrote: “She saw a cat run in front of her, and she fell down.” The sentence above is a compound sentence. “She saw a cat run in front of her” is an independent clause because there is a subject and a verb. “She fell down” is the second clause. These two clauses are linked with a coordinating conjunction “and”, making it a correct compound sentence.

Participant 21 wrote: “You can make a big house, and you can make a little clay hut, it is the same.” This sentence is also a compound sentence since it comprises two clauses, “You can make a big house” and “you can make a little clay hut it is the same.” However, the coordinating conjunctive used is incorrect. The suggested conjunction is “or,” so that the sentence can read “You can make a big house, or you can make a little clay hut it is the same.”

4.5.3 Sentences without a Comma and Coordinating Conjunction

Participant 22 wrote: “They spoke to him in Tshivenda he responded in English.” The English rule regarding a compound sentence states that a compound sentence must have two independent clauses. This sentence has two clauses, though it is not

separated by a comma and a conjunction. An independent clause is “part of a sentence that can stand alone because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought” (Bell, 1987:77). “They spoke to him in Tshivenda” is an independent clause because it contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. “He responded in English” is another independent clause because it also contains a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought. However, the learner should have used a comma at the end of the first clause followed by the coordinating conjunction “but” to separate the two individual clauses. The sentence should read “They spoke to him in Tshivenda, but he responded in English.”

Participant 23 wrote: “That man is a hero is successful in catching the criminals in his village”. This sentence left out important aspects of a compound sentence because it has no comma at the end of the first clause and it has no coordinating conjunction. It can be corrected by identifying the first clause, which is, “That man is a hero.” The second step will be to use a comma. The last step is to formulate another clause, which can be “he is successful in catching the criminals in his village.” Now the sentence reads, “That man is a hero, and he is successful in catching the criminals in his village.”

Participant 24 wrote: “The black dog has won many prizes doesn’t know many tricks.” The sentence above does not have two independent clauses. “The black dog has won many prizes.” There is no comma at the end of the first clause, and there is no coordinating conjunction. According to Crump (1989), whenever there are two independent clauses separated by a coordinating conjunction, a comma must be used before the coordinating conjunction. In what is supposed to be a second clause, there is no subject “doesn’t know many tricks” rendering it a non-clause. The suggested answer is “The black dog has won many prizes, but he doesn’t know many tricks.”

Participant 25 wrote: “I have never visited Kruger national park maybe Phafuri camp.” The challenge in constructing a compound sentence by participant 4 is similar to that of participant 3 above. There is only one independent clause, “I have never visited the Kruger National Park,” and no comma at the end of the first clause. There is no conjunction and no subject in what should form a second clause. The suggested

answer is “I have never visited the Kruger National Park and the Phafuri Camp” or “I have never visited the Kruger National Park or the Phafuri Camp.

Based on the above analysis, it can be said that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners at Malamulele North East use compound sentences correctly. The construction of sentences in essay writing can be affected when only compound sentences are used because for a well-constructed sentence in an essay; there must be a variety of sentence types. This result concurs with those of Ross (2015), whose study reveals that Malaysian students use compound sentences the most in comparison with other types. The study also established that learners use compound sentences because it is easier for learners to compare and contrast ideas, and it conveys the cause and effect or chain of events or to elaborate on a claim or extend the reasoning. It can be assumed that his findings are not unique in terms of the Malaysian students; some of his findings are the possible reason for Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in Malamulele North East to use compound sentences. Based on the analysis above, it has been established that the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit also use compound sentences in their English essays. It has also been established that although learners can construct compound sentences, there is a great need for improvement. Some compound sentences are constructed without conjunctions or use incorrect conjunctions.

Table 4.4: Theme1: Types of Sentences: Presentation of Complex Sentences

Themes	Sentences Starting with a Dependent Clause	Sentences Starting with an Independent Clause	Sentences with Relative Clauses
Explanations	When everyone had boarded, the bus began its three-hour tour	“They have eaten their meal before the first break”.	“Tsakani wore the dress that she borrowed from Ginger”
	“eating lunch at Malamulele, Tim went to the gym to exercise”	“The car stolen, while watching”.	“He was the teacher who taught my mother”
	“After playing, we all wet to our different home”.		Rural women are given disadvantages in societies, that privilege urban women”.
	“When we arrived, we heard great noise of happiness”		
	As soon as the bus arrived in the school.“		

4.6 ANALYSIS OF THE COMPLEX SENTENCES

Blair (2012) asserts that a complex sentence comprises an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to it, and a subordinate clause is similar to an independent clause or a full text but lacks one of the elements that make it a full text. This information was considered in analysing the data.

4.6.1 Sentence Starting with a Dependent Clause

Participant 11 wrote: “When everyone had boarded, the bus began its three-hour tour.” The sentence above comprises a dependent clause “When everyone had boarded” and independent clause, “the bus began its three-hour tour.” The independent clause is a complete sentence because it has a subject and a verb. According to Davidson *et al.* (2005), when the dependent clause comes first, a comma should be used to separate the two clauses. Therefore, this sentence qualifies as a complex sentence.

Participant 22 wrote: “eating lunch at Malamulele, Tim went to the gym to exercise.” The sentence above consists of a dependent clause, “eating lunch at Malamulele,” and the dependent clause “Tim went to the gym to exercise.” It qualifies as a complex sentence. However, for the sake of clarity regarding the sentence above, it is suggested that the independent clause should start with a word such as, “after” or before.

Participant 13 said: “After playing, we all went to our different homes.” According to Davidson *et al* (2005), dependent clauses can begin with subordinating conjunctions. The sentence starts with a subordinating conjunction, “after,” a comma, a conjunction and the gerund “playing” making it a dependent clause. Therefore, the sentence starts with the dependent clause “After playing” and is followed by an independent clause “we all went to our different home.” This is a complete complex sentence.

Participant 24 wrote: “When we arrived, we heard a great noise of happiness.” This sentence consists of a dependent clause, “When we arrived,” and an independent clause, “we heard a great noise of happiness.” It is a complex sentence. Participant

15 said: “As soon as the bus arrived in the school.” According to Davidson *et al* (2005), dependent clauses begin with subordinating conjunctions as seen in the above sentence. This sentence consists of the dependent clause, “As soon as the bus arrived at the school” with no comma and no dependent clause. It is not known what happened when the bus arrived. The suggestion is that the participant should consider including a comma and a dependent clause. The suggested answer can be “As soon as the bus arrived at the school,” all the learners were shouting.

4.6.2 Sentence Starting with an Independent Clause

Participant 10 wrote: “They have eaten their meal before the first break.” The sentence above is a complex sentence. It consists of an independent clause, “They have eaten their meal” and a dependent clause, “before the first break.” The first clause consists of the subject “they,” a present participle verb “have eaten” and the object, “their meal.”

Participant 12 wrote: “The car was stolen, while watching the game.” This is a complex sentence consisting of an independent clause, “The car was stolen” and a dependent clause, “while watching the game.” However, there is no need for a comma after an independent clause, a comma is necessary “when the sentence starts with a dependent clause” (Brown, 2001:72). The suggested correction is “The car was stolen while watching the game.

4.6.3 Sentences with Relative Clauses

According to Davidson *et al.* (2005), relative clauses are subordinate (dependent) clauses that modify a word, phrase or idea in the main (independent) clause. Relative clauses start with a relative pronoun, such as, *who/whom, whoever/whomever, whose, which (in which, through which, about which, for which) that*, and sometimes *where, when, what, why*.

Participant 11 wrote: “Tsakani wore the dress that she borrowed from Ginger. This sentence consists of an independent clause, “Tsakani wore the dress,” a relative pronoun, “that” and a dependent clause, “she borrowed from Ginger.” It is a complete

complex sentence. Participant 22 wrote: “He was the teacher who taught my mother.” This sentence has an independent clause, “He was the teacher,” followed by the relative pronoun, “who” and the dependent clause, “taught my mother.” The relative pronoun “who,” is the subject of the dependent clause, “taught my mother.” Therefore, the sentence above is a complex sentence.

Participant 23 wrote: “Rural women are given disadvantages in societies that privilege urban women”. As already stated by Blair and Crump (1984), a compound sentence refers to a sentence consisting “of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction.” An independent clause can be used at the beginning of the sentence as is the case in the above the sentence. This sentence comprises an independent clause “Rural women are given disadvantages in societies,” followed by a comma and an independent clause, “that privilege urban women.” It is a complex sentence. However, according to Davidson *et al.* (2005), a comma is not used to separate the two clauses when the independent clause comes first. The suggested answer for the sentence above is “Rural women are given disadvantages in societies that privilege urban women.”

The data reveals that learners also use complex sentences. However, there is a great need for improvement. In a study conducted by Bram (1995), it has been found that the Arabian students who were studying English in USA were struggling with complex sentences. The findings of this study affirm the study by Bram (1995), which found that Arabian students use compound sentences, but there is a considerable need for an intervention, when learners who are struggling with complex sentences may fail to express their thoughts clearly and, as such the message is compromised. The mother tongue influence on writing complex sentences may have attributed to some of the challenges that the Grade 10 First Additional language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit experience.

The analysis above shows that many Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit use complex sentences, though not as convincingly as could be expected from a Grade 10 learner. When learners are unable to construct complex sentences, it affects their sentence construction in English essays in many ways: it is not easy for learners to compare and contrast ideas and learners cannot

write sentences in which cause and effect are explicit. Furthermore, learners will not be able to elaborate on a claim or engage in extended reasoning. Cope *et al.* (200) posit that a syntactically complex structure helps the writer convey ideas that tie together, sum up a series of thoughts, qualify a previous point, and transition between ideas to convey meaning effectively. It can be assumed that learners experience problems with complex sentences because they have not understood it during class lessons or learners are lazy to go extra mile searching information. Other reasons for learners' failure to construct correct complex sentences are given by Fadi (2013). The findings reveal that grammatical weakness, lack of knowledge and understanding, less practice and educational background were the main reasons for learners' failure to construct complete complex sentences.

4.7 THEME 2: GRAMMATICAL ASPECTS

Table 4.5: Grammatical Aspects

Sub-themes	Articles	Concords	Tenses	Spelling	Punctuation
Explanation	"a poor learners who are not doing well"	"The things that they talk about is about ..."	"There were times where something bad happens."	"Respect edult".	i grew up at Mhinga.
	He worked many years without-car"	"A group of boys are playing."	"He bursted in tears on his birthday."	I was disappointed by their answers."	"the house is large.
	"when I grow up, I will buy the many cars"	"A group of boys are playing."	"Three children die in a car accident yesterday."	"Extection of animals and plants."	It was may 2020".

Sub-themes	Articles	Concords	Tenses	Spelling	Punctuation
		Neither of the two stores were open.”			“When I was young I lived in a big house.”
					“Thomas, Amos were happy.”

4.8 ANALYSIS BASED ON GRAMMATICAL ASPECTS

According to Bacha (2002), Grammar is viewed as the most essential aspect of language learning for second language learners.” In this study, the grammatical aspects that were analysed are: article, concord, tenses, spelling and punctuations.

4.8.1 Article

Participant 1: “a poor learners who are not doing well.” The English syntactic rule regarding articles “a” and “an” states that “a” and “an” are only used with a singular noun whose specific identity is not known to the reader (Selinker, 1972). He furthermore states that, the article “a” is used before a noun beginning with a consonant sound. The example above presents the addition of the article “a” to the sentence. Based on the above rule, the above sentence is incorrect because the article “a” is used before a noun beginning with a consonant sound and it is also used with a singular noun. The sentence must read as follows: “the poor learners who are not doing well,” or “learners who are not doing well,” depending on the context. The

subject is “learners,” which is in a plural form. “Poor” is not a noun in the sentence as the learner may have thought mistakenly.

Participant 4 wrote: “He worked many years without a car.” The English syntactic rule regarding the article “a” state that the article “a” usually precedes a noun beginning with a consonant sound. The word “car” has a consonant sound and is singular, so it qualifies to have the article “a.” In the above example, there is an omission of the article “a” from the sentence. The correct sentence is “He worked many years without a car.”

Participant 7 wrote: “When I grow up, I will buy the many cars.” The English rule states that the article “The” is used to refer to a specific or particular noun. The example above presents the addition of the article “the” to the non-specific noun “cars.” The participant is referring to any car; hence, there is no need to add the article “the” in this sentence. The correct sentence is “when I grow up, I will buy many cars.” The participant can use the article “the” when the cars are specific or are known to his / her or audience. In this sentence, the participant is referring to cars in general.

The findings of this study suggest that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit need more practice on articles as it has a negative effect on sentence construction in English essays, as seen in the case of participants 1, 4, and 7 above. It should be assumed that mother tongue interference may be the cause of the challenge as there is no article in their first language (Xitsonga).

4.8.2 Concord

The data shows that some Grade 10 first additional language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit have challenges in constructing concordant English sentences, as evidenced in the following examples extracted from learners’ English essays.

Participant 1 wrote: “He do not usually give homework.” The concord rule says if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular. The subject of this sentence “He” is singular but the verb “do” is plural that makes the sentence grammatically incorrect. The correct sentence is “He does not usually give homework,” this is the formal

agreement, which is simply termed the default type of agreement, where the form of the noun is matched by the verb with its –s inflection present for the singular form, and absent for the plural form and where the subject and the verb in a sentence agree in number (K 12-reader, 2012 & Peters, 2013).

Participant 2 wrote: “A group of boys are playing.” The concord rule says if a subject is singular, its verb must also be singular. The subject of this sentence is “a group”, which is a singular subject, but the helping verb “are” is plural, that makes this sentence incorrect. “The boys” is not the subject of this sentence. The correct sentence is “A group of boys is playing.” however, it is worth noting that when “a group of” is removed from the sentence, the subject will be “boys,” and it will take the plural verb “are.”

Participant 3 wrote: “Neither of the two stores were open.” The concord rule says that if a sentence begins with “neither” or “either” without the “or/nor” combination, the verb is singular. The word “neither,” here means none of the two stores. However, “if a sentence has two subjects connected by or/nor, either/or, or neither/nor, the verb must agree with the second subject (the subject closer to the verb)” (Fuhchs & Bonner 2000:35). Neither and either always take a singular verb when acting as the subject of a sentence; when these pronouns appear by themselves, they are singular, even though their use connects two things. The result of this study affirms Michael’s (2017) findings that revealed that Grade 12 First Additional Language learners in Vhembe have challenges with the usage of neither and either. The correct sentence is “neither of the two stores was open” because we are talking about one of the two stores. It must be noted that sentences without concord are problematic for sentence construction in essays because the meaning can easily be lost in such sentences. This result suggests that learners have not mastered the concord rule.

4.8.3 Tenses

The data show that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit have challenges in the usage of basic tenses, as is evidenced in the following examples.

Participant 1: “There were times where something bad happens.” The present tense was among the grammatical challenges faced by learners. Sometimes they used the past tense instead of the present tense in their essays. The present tense, according to Kirkpatrick (2007), indicates an action that is going on now or a state that exists now. It uses the infinitive form of the verb, and it changes in the third person singular when it adds “s” to the base form of the verb. Yarber and Yarber (2004), state that the present tense is used to express a condition or an action that exists or is on-going. It is also used to express an action that is usual or is the truth.

In the above sentence, the participant confused and mixed his tenses within the sentence; for example, the verb “were” is in the past, but “happens” is in the present, which makes the whole sentence confusing. The sentence can be corrected by changing “happens” to be in the past “happened.” The sentence will read as “There were times where something bad happened.” Alternatively, the sentence can be changed to the present tense; in the place of the verb “were”, the learner can write “are.” This result concurs with Tahini’s (2010), findings that indicated that the present tense was applied wrongly by Congolese students. The students confused and mixed the tenses within the sentences, for example the verb in a sentence could be in the present tense and the students used it incorrectly in the past tense.

Participant 2 wrote: “He bursted into tears on his birthday.” The rule regarding irregular verbs is that they do not take the regular “d”, “ed” or “ied” spelling patterns of the simple past or past participle tense. The above sentence is incorrect because the word “burst” is an irregular verb; it does not take or change to any form and does not even end with “-ed.” The participant should have written “He burst into tears on his birthday.” The sentence is in the past tense. In the present tense, it will be “He bursts into tears on his birthday.” The difference between the present and the past tense is that the verb is inflected for the third person singular when the sentence is present. In the past tense, the verb does not take an inflection.

Participant 3: “We have wrote three letters already.” The present perfect tense is formed by the combination of the present tense of the verb “to have” or “has” plus the past participle of the main verb of the sentence. The participant used “wrote” instead

of “written.” The sentence can qualify to be in the present perfect tense when combining the present tense of the verb “to have” or “has” plus the past participle of the main verb of the sentence. “Have” is the present tense, but “wrote” is not the past participle of the word write, so the sentence uses a combination of the present and past tenses. The past participle of the word “write” is “written.” The participant should have written, “We have written three letters already,” or “we wrote three letters already.” This challenge may be attributed to the fact that there is no irregular verb in Xitsonga, so learners just generalised the rule, which affected the sentence construction negatively.

4.8.4 Spelling

The data show that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit have challenges with writing the correct English spelling, as is evidenced in the following examples extracted from learners’ English essays.

Participant 11 wrote: “Respect edult.” Spelling entails the act or process of writing words by using the letters conventionally accepted for their formation. The above example contains an error that occurred as a result of the substitution of some letters. Substitution occurs when a letter is replaced by another letter in a word. The participant substituted the letter “a” with “e”, and that makes the word “adult” that is spelt wrongly.

Participant 17: “I was dissapointed by their answers.” There is an addition of the letter “s” and an omission of the letter “p” in the word “disappointed”, making it incorrect.

Participant 14 wrote: “Extexction of animals and plants.” This sentence contains errors, which occurred by substituting and omitting letters. The learner substituted the vowel “i” with the vowel “e.” Furthermore, the consonant “n” was omitted from the word “extinction.” The findings on the spelling indicate that the Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit experience problems with spelling. These problems affect the construction of correct English sentences in essays. For example, the meaning in the sentence may be lost, more especially when the wrong word is written because the learner could not spell the correct word.

4.8.5 Punctuation

The data show that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit seem to have challenges with the usage of punctuation, as is evidenced in the following examples.

Participant 18 wrote: “i grew up in Mhinga.” The English rule for pronouns states that the pronoun “I” is always capitalised, no matter where it occurs in a line. Example 1 is incorrect because the pronoun “I” is written in lower case. The correct sentence is “I grew up in Mhinga.”

Participant 2 wrote: “the house is large.” The English rule regarding the first letter of the sentence states that the first letter of the sentence must be capitalised, and the remaining letters must be written in small letters (lower-case letters). The sentence above contradicts this rule. The participant should have written: “The house is large,” by simply replacing the small letter “t” with the capital letter “t.”

Participant 3 wrote: “It was May 2020.” The English rule states that the names of days, months, and holidays are proper nouns, so they are capitalised, but not seasons unless they are part of a title or a proper noun. The sentence above is in contravention of this rule because the word “may” is the name of a month and it is not capitalised. The participant should have written: “It was May 2020.”

Participant 4: “When I was young I lived in a big house.” One of the English punctuation rules regarding the use of commas, states that a comma is used after introductory clauses, phrases or words that come before the main clause. The above example is incorrect because there is no comma before the second clause. The sentence should read “When I was young, I lived in a big house.” The comma will help to separate the two clauses.

Participant 5 wrote: “Thomas, Amos were happy.” The English punctuation rule regarding the use of commas states that it can be “used to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items.” The participant in the above example

has added a comma when it is not needed as stated in the rule regarding the use of commas. However, the participant should have used a coordinating conjunction instead of a comma. More precisely, in this case “and” is needed to join Thomas and Amos. The sentence will then read: “Thomas and Amos were happy.”

One other thing about the above example is the lack of a full stop at the end. The rule states that a full stop is used at the end of the sentence. The complete sentence will be “Thomas and Amos were happy.”

It should be noted how punctuation can affect sentence construction negatively as seen in the above extract. In some cases, it can be assumed that learners are ignorant of the rules. For example, with regard to participant 18, it is assumed that by the time a learner enters Grade 10, that learner knows that the pronoun “I” is always capitalised.

The data show that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit have challenges with the usage of articles as is evidenced in the above. Examples of some sentences that do not qualify to have articles are written with articles. Conversely, some sentences that qualify to have articles have no articles. This result concurs with the findings by Barret and Chen (2011). They investigated thirty of the third-year university students who attended a writing class with the same lecturer. They indicated that the participants in this study had problems using the English article in terms of distinguishing between a definite and indefinite noun phrase.

Regarding concord, the data showed that learners struggle with the grammatical concord, the concord of proximity and distance concord. This problem is also found in other studies, such as that of Johansson (2012), who examined concord errors in the written production of Swedish learners of English to determine the different types of concord errors that are the most common for Swedish learners of English. The study found that Swedish learners of English have problems with grammatical concord that is related to the subject-verb concord in English. Furthermore, it has been established that learners have some challenges with tenses. Accordingly, learners struggle with the past and present participles, the incorrect use of irregular and regular verbs, and also experience challenges with the use of the future tense. These results

show the learners' failure to use the present tense correctly, concurs with Hawkins (1996) who has found that the present tense was among the grammatical challenges faced by students. He indicated that sometimes students used the past tense instead of the present tense in their essays.

With regard to spelling, some learners substituted the correct letters with incorrect letters, while some replaced the correct letter with the incorrect letters, and some omitted a letter from a word resulting in spelling errors. These challenges are not unique to the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in Malamulele. The study by Cook (2001) reveals that the first-year Kurdish college students have challenges with spelling; their challenges include the insertion of an extra letter, omission of a letter and the transposition of letters.

Concerning punctuation, many sentences are started with a capital letter, but there is no full stop at the end of the sentence. Furthermore, the days of the week and the names of months are not written with capital letters. Some learners use a comma to separate two items instead of using a coordinating conjunction. These findings concur with Almarwany's findings (2008) that reveal that capitalisation mistakes among the first-year Kurdish college students are extremely high. Students do not write a capital letter for the days of the week and the names of months. Some students use a capital letter in the middle of the words.

4.9 THEME 3: USAGE OF DIFFERENT CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions are words that link other words, phrases, or clauses together. Conjunctions allow you to form complex, elegant sentences and avoid the choppiness of multiple short sentences.

Table 4.6: Theme 3: Usage of Different Conjunctions

Subthemes	Coordinating Conjunction	Subordinating Conjunction	Correlative Conjunction	Conjunctive Adverbs
Explanations	“Anna is beautiful and arrogant.”	“This happens every day these parents because do not work.”	None	none
	“My dad but continued driving silently.”	“The farmer milked the cows if going to town.”		
	“My mother was sad and she talked to the teacher and he apologised but my mother was still sad.”	“Dad did not go to work today until his injury to his arm.”		
	“that person seem to a father and a mother of the child.”			

4.10 ANALYSIS OF CONJUNCTIONS

According to Cook (2016), conjunction is a part of speech that writers use to join words, phrases, clauses and sentences together. To put it very simply, conjunctions join

words and groups of words to show how ideas are related to each other.” There are many types of conjunction, but in this study. only the following conjunctions were considered for analyses, namely, coordinating subordinating, correlative and conjunctive adverbs.

4.10.1 Coordinating Conjunctions

Cook (2001) explains that coordinating conjunction connects sentence elements with the same grammatical value; such as: words with words, phrases with phrases, clauses with clauses and sentences with sentences.”

Participant 1: “Anna is beautiful and arrogant.” The use of the conjunction “and” in the sentence above is in contravention of the rule that governs the usage of the coordinating conjunction “and.” The conjunction “and” is used to add a similar or an equal idea. The words beautiful and arrogant are not similar; in fact they contrast each other and cannot be joined by a coordinating conjunction. The correct conjunction to use is “but” because it is used to add an opposite idea. This result concurs with Haider’s (2014) in his findings in a study that investigated the usage of the conjunction “and” by Pakistani students in ESL writing. His findings revealed that the Pakistani students overused the coordinate “and” in their English sentences.

Participant 2 wrote: “My dad continued but driving silently.” The use of the conjunction ‘but’ in the sentence above contradicts the rule of the usage of the conjunction “but.” Haider (2014) states that the word “but” is one of the seven coordinating conjunctions in English (the others are and, or, so, for, nor, and yet) and it is used to connect two statements that contrast or contradict each other in some way. In the above example, the word “but” does not connect the two statements. “My dad continued” is not a complete statement because it is not known what he continued doing, on the other hand, “driving silently” is not a complete or contrasting statement with regard to the first part of this example. The sentence can be corrected when the conjunction “but” is placed between the word driving and silently.

Participant 3 wrote: “My mother was sad and she talked to the teacher and she apologised and my mother was still sad.” The sentence above has many coordinating

conjunctions; in other words, the coordinating conjunction “and” has been overused. The sentence is confusing because the participant overloaded it with information using one conjunction even where other conjunctions could have been used. For the sake of clarity, this sentence can be written in many forms: for example “my mother was sad but she talked to the teacher” or “my mother was sad she talked to the teacher and the teacher apologised but my mother was still sad, in turn, Participant 4 wrote: “that person seem to a father and a mother of the child.” The sentence above has many mistakes. However, this analysis focuses on conjunctions. The participant has used the incorrect conjunction “and” because the conjunction ‘and’ is used to add a similar or equal idea. A person cannot be a mother and a father of someone, but a person can be a mother or a father of someone. The suggested solution is “that a person seems to a father or a mother of the child.”

4.10.2 Subordinating Conjunction

The data show that certain learners have some challenges with the use of some subordinating conjunctions as is evidenced by the following examples:

Participant 1 wrote: “This happens every day these parents because do not work.” Cook (2016) indicates that the subordinating conjunction connects two clauses of unequal value; that is, they connect dependent clauses with independent clauses.” The independent clause of this sentence is “This happens every day”, therefore; the subordinating conjunction must connect the clauses at this point. The positioning of the subordinating conjunction “because” makes this sentence lose its sense because it is not positioned between dependent and independent clauses. The independent clause in this sentence is “these parents do not work.” The dependent clause is “these parents do not work.” The participant should have noticed the two parts of this sentence and placed “because at the end of the independent clause. The participant should have written: “this happens every day because these parents do not work.” Here, the word “because” gives the reason for the action.

Participant 2 wrote: “The farmer milked the cows if going to town. “The English rule in relation to the usage of the subordinating conjunction “if” states that it is used to say that something will happen only after something else happens or is true. The participant has used the inappropriate subordinating conjunction “if” and, as a result,

the sense of the sentence was compromised. The participant should have written: “The farmer milked the cows before going to town”, or “The farmer milked the cows after going to town.” Participant 3 wrote: “Dad did not go to work today until his injury to his arm.” The participant’s choice to use the subordinating conjunction “until” in this sentence has compromised the sense of this sentence. In this sentence, there is an independent clause, which is “Dad did not go to work today.” After an independent clause, the participant should have provided or written a conjunction that may connect well with the reason for the dad not going to work. The sentence can be corrected by using the subordinating conjunction “because” because it connects the independent clause, furthermore, the reason for not going to work is explicit.

4.10.3 Correlative Conjunction

The data show that there is not even a single learner who has used a correlative conjunction. There are several correlative conjunctions that learners could have used in their essays, here are some of the most common correlative conjunctions used: either-or, neither-nor, both-and, not only-but also and whether-or.

4.10.4 Conjunctive Adverbs

The data show that no learner has used conjunctive adverbs. According to Kroll, (2003), here are the most common conjunctive adverbs: accordingly, also, besides, consequently, finally, however, indeed, instead, likewise, meanwhile, nevertheless, next, otherwise, still, on the other hand, in contrast, therefore and then. Halliday and Hasan (1976) refer to conjunctive adverbs as adversative discourse conjunctions, which include “yet, nevertheless, however, in fact, and instead,” these conjunctions are used to introduce information that mark corrections, contrasts, and opposites in the light of previous information.

Conclusion

Based on the above analysis, it has been established that the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit used two types of conjunctions: coordinating and subordinating. However, there is a great need to

improve these two categories because it has been established that some learners do not know that the coordinating conjunction connects sentence elements with the same grammatical value. It was found that learners overused and underused the coordinating conjunction, “and” as seen with regard to participants 1, 3, and 4 respectively. Learners also struggled with subordinating conjunctions as discussed concerning participants 1, 2, and 3 above. Lastly, learners have not used any of the conjunctions that are correlative and conjunctive adverbs. Through this analysis, it can be concluded that learners use only two types of conjunctions, and there is a need to improve on both coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SYNTHESIS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a review of the research questions, a summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, the conclusions and recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.2 REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study sought to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit by answering the following research questions:

- Which sentence types do Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit use in English essays?
- How are grammatical aspects used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?
- How are different types of conjunctions used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast?

5.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

This sub-section gives a summary of the study findings in relation to the objectives and questions of the study. It addresses types of sentences Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit use in English essays.

5.3.1 Types of Sentences used by Grade 10 First Additional Language Learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit

The first objective of the study was to identify types of sentences used in English essays by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast.

It was established that learners used all types of sentences. However, even though learners used all types of sentences, there is considerable concern about the quality and correctness of compound and complex sentences. The finding concurs with those of Ahmed (2010) that shows that learners use all types of sentences although they have challenges in L2 essay writing, more specifically, with regard to compound sentence construction. Nevertheless, this result is contrary to Moran's (1981) findings, which revealed that learners only used compound sentences in the argumentative genre across all five Grade levels and most of the sentences were incorrect. The first question: Which sentence types do Grade 10 learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit use in English essays? Learners use all types of sentences

5.3.2 The use of Grammatical Aspects in English Sentences by Grade 10 Learners in Malamulele Northeast

The second objective of the study was to examine the correct use of grammatical aspects in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele North East.

The findings show that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit had certain challenges in the usage of articles, concord, tense, spelling and punctuation, all these led to limited expression in L2 writing. These findings concur partially with those of a study by Farood (2012) on students' difficulties with L2 writing, and that established that students faced difficulties with L2 writing due to a number of factors involved in the learning process such as a lack of vocabulary, L1 interference, a poor grasp of grammatical structures, incorrect spelling and the illogical sequence of ideas.

The second question: How are grammatical aspects used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast? Learners have challenges in the usage of articles, concord, tense, spelling and punctuation,

5.3.3 The use of Different Conjunctions in English Sentences by Grade 10 Learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit in Terms of the Third Objective of the Study

The third objective of the study was to examine how different types of conjunctions are used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast.

The findings revealed that learners employed a variety of conjunctions in their essays, which indicates that they know almost all types of conjunctions. However, they have limited knowledge of how to use these conjunctions correctly. Some conjunctions were overused while others were underused.

The biggest challenge was that not even a single participant used correlative or conjunctive adverb conjunctions in their essays. As a result, many essays written by the participants were not coherent and this compromised the flow of the message.

The third question: How are different types of conjunctions used in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast? Some conjunctions were overused while others conjunctions were underused.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

According to Best and Kahn (1993:40) limitations are those conditions beyond the control of the researcher that may place restrictions on the conclusions of the study and its application to other situations. Several factors, including time, finance and corona virus restriction regulation posed challenges which only derailed the data collection process.

5.5 SUMMARY

The findings derived from the data collection instrument indicate that some Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit who participated in this study struggled with writing because their writing was full of grammatical mistakes with regard to spelling, sentence construction, tenses and punctuation. Furthermore, they also struggled to organise their ideas (coherence) and to present an argument.

This study found that the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit used all types of sentences, particularly simple sentences. The researcher's analysis of the learners' scripts also revealed which sentence types were problematic for learners. It was also found that although the Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele North East Circuit used all types of sentences, compound and complex sentences were challenging for them and needed special attention.

The use of grammatical aspects in English sentences by Grade 10 learners in Malamulele Northeast has been found to be a challenge for many learners. The study found that the majority of the participants had some language challenges in general and with the concord/subject-verb agreement, in particular. Many participants could not apply the concord rule that states that if a subject is singular; its verb must also be singular.

The English syntactic rule regarding articles was also found to be a challenge to many participants. Participants could use the articles "a" and "an" not only with a singular noun and with those whose specific identities were not known to the reader. Other minor challenges were found with tenses, the choice of vocabulary and spelling. This study also found that the participants knew almost all types of conjunctions. However, they struggled to choose the appropriate conjunctions to link the two clauses. This challenge is prevalent, particularly, with regard to subordinating conjunctions.

The Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in Malamulele have some challenges in many areas of English language aspects, which is contrary to the expectations of the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement that puts a greater emphasis on learners' ability to construct a correct English sentence when they enter Grade 10. More research should be conducted to determine why learners are not performing as expected by the South African Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

5.6 CONCLUSIONS

It was the aim of this study to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit. This research has provided important information about sentence construction, paying attention to both learners' abilities and their failures. This study has revealed that although learners in the Malamulele Northeast Circuit use all types of sentences when they write English essays, they have challenges with regard to grammatical aspects as well as with conjunctions. This research is expected to be able to enrich the learners' knowledge to improve their understanding of English structures and to be aware of grammatical aspects. Besides, various limitations were experienced in the course of this study, as stated in an earlier chapter; however, this information is extremely crucial for other researchers to conduct similar research in the future.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher found it necessary to make certain recommendations following the summary, findings of the present research and the conclusions reached. These recommendations could be used to enhance the construction of English sentences in secondary schools. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

5.7.1 Intensive Training of Teachers

Teachers should undergo rigorous and continuous training so that they can be fully equipped with the necessary skills for assessing learners' work (Spencer, 2007). Unless there is a radical change in the current pedagogic practices, the Grade 10 learners will continue to be compromised by the current system. Similarly, at primary school level, teachers should be trained adequately so that they can teach writing effectively and not just spend more time on administrative work. They should undergo continuous professional development in the form of in-service training and should also be given incentives to further their English Second Language studies.

It is also recommended that teachers of the English language should be equipped through workshops, seminars, and in-service training with modern techniques in the

teaching of English language as a second language to update their knowledge and skills.

5.7.2 Editing of Written Essays

The researcher suggests that language editing should also be extended to primary schools to Grade 12 and beyond. As much as excellence is encouraged at post-graduate level, this should also build up from undergraduate level, and this will help in focusing more on academic literacies than on surface grammar features when evaluating student writing.

5.7.3 Teaching of Cohesive Devices in Context

Teachers of English should focus on teaching cohesive devices in context. This could be done by exposing learners to good samples of essay writing using process-based approaches such as group discussions, role play, peer editing and debates in the teaching of writing skills. Furthermore, the teaching of grammar should be emphasised in the school curriculum.

5.7.4 Learners' Encouragement

Teachers should also make an effort to encourage students to read widely on a variety of written materials such as newspapers and storybooks and should encourage learners to use a variety of sentence types, more especially, compound and complex sentence types. They should read more books at all levels especially, at the basic level. When a good reading habit is reinforced among the learners at a tender age, it will go a long way to improve the learners' use of English and their communicative competence will be enhanced.

5.7.5 Teaching Materials

The government, school authorities, and individuals should make a concerted effort to supply adequate teaching and learning materials that will assist with English language teaching. This would, hopefully, rekindle learners' interests in the study and in the teaching of the language.

5.7.6 Training of New Teachers

More teachers of the English language should be trained to ensure that there are an adequate number of teachers at all times in the schools in order to lessen the burden on the few existing teachers in the schools.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: APPROVAL LETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR:

MR/MS M.S KHOSA
SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
PROF. J.E CRAFFORD
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC
26 NOVEMBER 2019

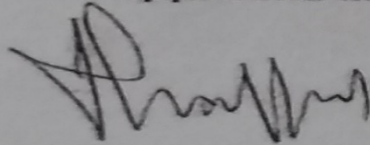
DECISIONS TAKEN BY UHDC OF 26th NOVEMBER 2019

Application for approval of Master Proposal Rep
Sciences: M.S Khosa (11571109)

Topic: "Evaluation of sentence construction in Eng
Grade 10 learners in Malamulele North-East Circuit

Supervisor	UNIVEN	Dr. M.N
Co-supervisor	UNIVEN	Mr. E.T

UHDC approved Masters proposal



PROF. J.E CRAFFORD
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

APPENDIX 2: ETHICS CERTIFICATE

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mr MS Khosa

STUDENT NO:
11671109

PROJECT TITLE: **Evaluation of sentence construction in English
essay: A Case study of Grade 10 learners in
Malamulele North-East Circuit.**

PROJECT NO: SH55/20/ENG/03/0807

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr JAN Lombard	University of Venda	Supervisor
Mr ET Sibirwa	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Mr MS Khosa	University of Venda	Investigator - Student


Type: **Masters Research**
Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment**
Approval Period: **July 2020 – July 2022**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

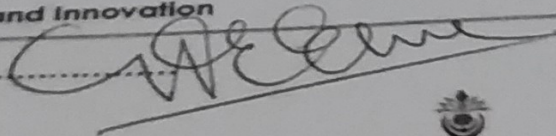
- Approval Conditions**
This ethical approval is subject to all instructions, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please read the following:
- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC, and upon completion of the project, and during the course of the project, and any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles during the course of the project.
 - Accessibly (as an observer requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project, and during the course of the project, and any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles during the course of the project.
 - Withdrawal in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project, and any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit. Would any changes to the proposal be deemed necessary?
 - The approval applies strictly to the project as stipulated in the application form. Would there be deviations from the proposal provided?
 - In the event of any changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
 - The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date?
 - To ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or to the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
 - To ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or to the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Informal consent process.
 - Withdrawal or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misreported.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Date Considered: July 2020

of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: **Mashau Takalani Samwel**

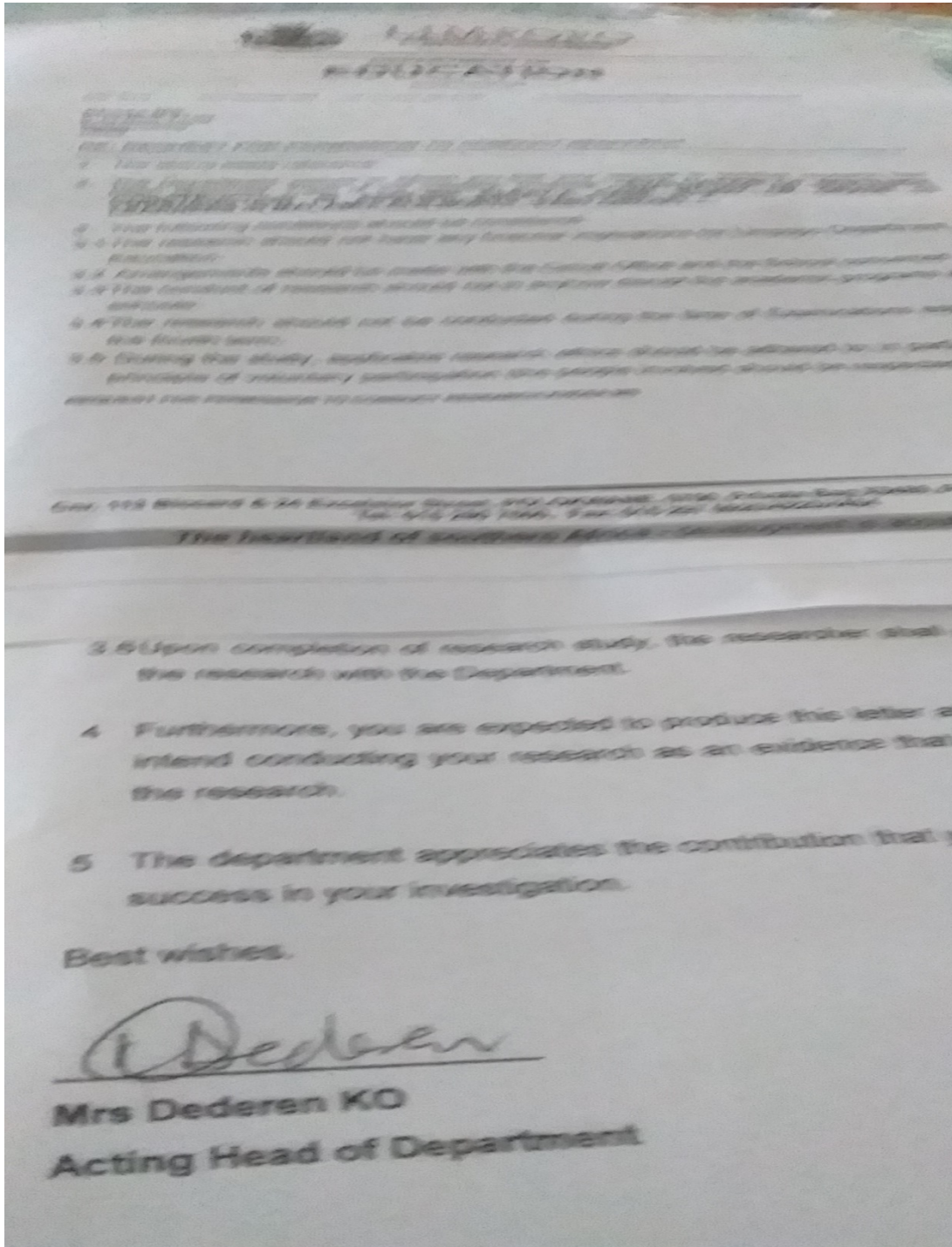
re: 

Research and Innovation



UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
OFFICE OF THE DEAN
RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2020
Private and Confidential

APPENDIX 3: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DEPT OF EDUCATION



APPENDIX 4: ESSAY WRITING TEST

English First Additional Language/P3 3 NSC Lin

SECTION A: ESSAY

QUESTION 1

INSTRUCTIONS AND INFORMATION

- Spend approximately 70 minutes on this section.
- Write an essay of 150 - 200 words on **ONE** of the following.
- Write down the number and title of your essay correctly, for example:
1.1 I felt proud to be a South African.
- Give your own title if your choice is either QUESTION 1.7 or QUESTION 1.8.

1.1 I felt proud to be a South African.

1.2 Write a story in which these words appear.
'I was no longer afraid...'

NOTE: The words given in the topic **MUST** be included in your essay. Provide your own title.

1.3 Honesty.

1.4 The most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

1.5 School sports must be compulsory. Do you agree?

1.6 Young people spend too much time on social media.
Discuss this statement.

1.7 Choose **ONE** of the following pictures and write an essay in which the picture comes to mind. Write the question number (1.7.1 OR 1.7.2) and a suitable title.

NOTE: There must be a clear link between the topic and the picture chosen.

APPENDIX 5: LEARNERS' SCRIPTS

Pollution ~~is~~ ^{Complex} the throwing away of used resources ^(SS) in the environment. Pollution is a way of causing the area to be dirty. Pollution is a bad influence to the natural environment and habitat. If pollution continues ⁱⁿ it may destroy wildlife. We should be aware of the pollution ⁱⁿ our environments. P

Habitats are ^{Complex} often polluted by people. They will throw their waste products anywhere. They are not aware that they ~~are~~ ^{Complex} destroying the environment. People that pollute do not care of the environment. Most people are charged with the destruction of the environment, when caught polluting. ~~Complex~~ P

There is pollution due to the people. They are not aware of the damages they are causing. They throw away plastics, paper and empty bottles, which can not decompose ^{Complex} into the soil. They people forget about the wildlife in the area. Which will result in the extinction of animals and plants. P

Pollution will be stopped only when people become aware of the damage they are causing to the environment. They need to ^{Complex} be taught about pollution and the effects that will follow. People should be taught to recycle waste products like plastics, empty bottles and ^{Complex} etc. It will reduce the pollution of the environment. Government should also provide a service to clear up the pollution in the area to keep the places ^{Complex} clean. P

CP = 16
LE = 08
S = 08

THE PARTY I ATTENDED

It was May 2020 and ^{SL} it was Saturday, when my friend invited me to his mother's birthday. I prepared myself for the party a night before the party that had to take place the next morning. ✓ Complex sentence

I woke up morning and faced the reality that the morning had for me. I bathed and wore new clothes that my ^{complex} parents bought for me. When I arrived there, my friend told me that there was no Master of Ceremony and he asked me ^{compound sentence} to be the master of ceremony.

Since it was my first time to be a Master of Ceremony, I asked Amos to help me. Amos also find it hard, he asked them to do the work. ^W Thomas, ^{and} Amos were masters of the ceremony, but there were

That day, I have learned that it is not easy to talk in front of people. Thomas was stammering and Amos could look on the ^{opposite} direction away from the crowd. Mr. party was very bored. Everything turn into a celebratory party after some beers. Masters of Ceremony were ^W active and the ^W party was also all danced until late.

Education is a Key for Success

I agree with the topic that ^{complex} says education is a key for success. Success is defined as a stage in life where one is able to access the properties easily.

Without education you cannot get paper, house, job or cars. There were times when something bad happened in my neighbour. People who came to support them were educated people. We all went to support them even there is something good. Because people who ^{are} not educated have no money to support when something bad happens.

Education helps people to talk good. The things that they talk about ^{are} always constructive. Education makes people to respect elders. I was disappointed by their answers during meetings because they do not have education.

Education makes people to live good life everytime. They buy good food. Education is key for everything. People must go to school and education because it a way of life.

Cp = 13

LSE 07

So 03 23

The party I attended

The day started so well with a blowing air to the eastern direction. The better day Party of one of my friends was well prepared.

I had to prepare myself so I may be presentable but I didn't get enough time to buy fashionable clothes as this was a warn to our village to dress to kill in such occasions like a party. I woke up early in the morning to Malamulele to get myself some clothes to wear, I had to be ~~so~~ ^{so} early because that was the same day in which the party had to start.

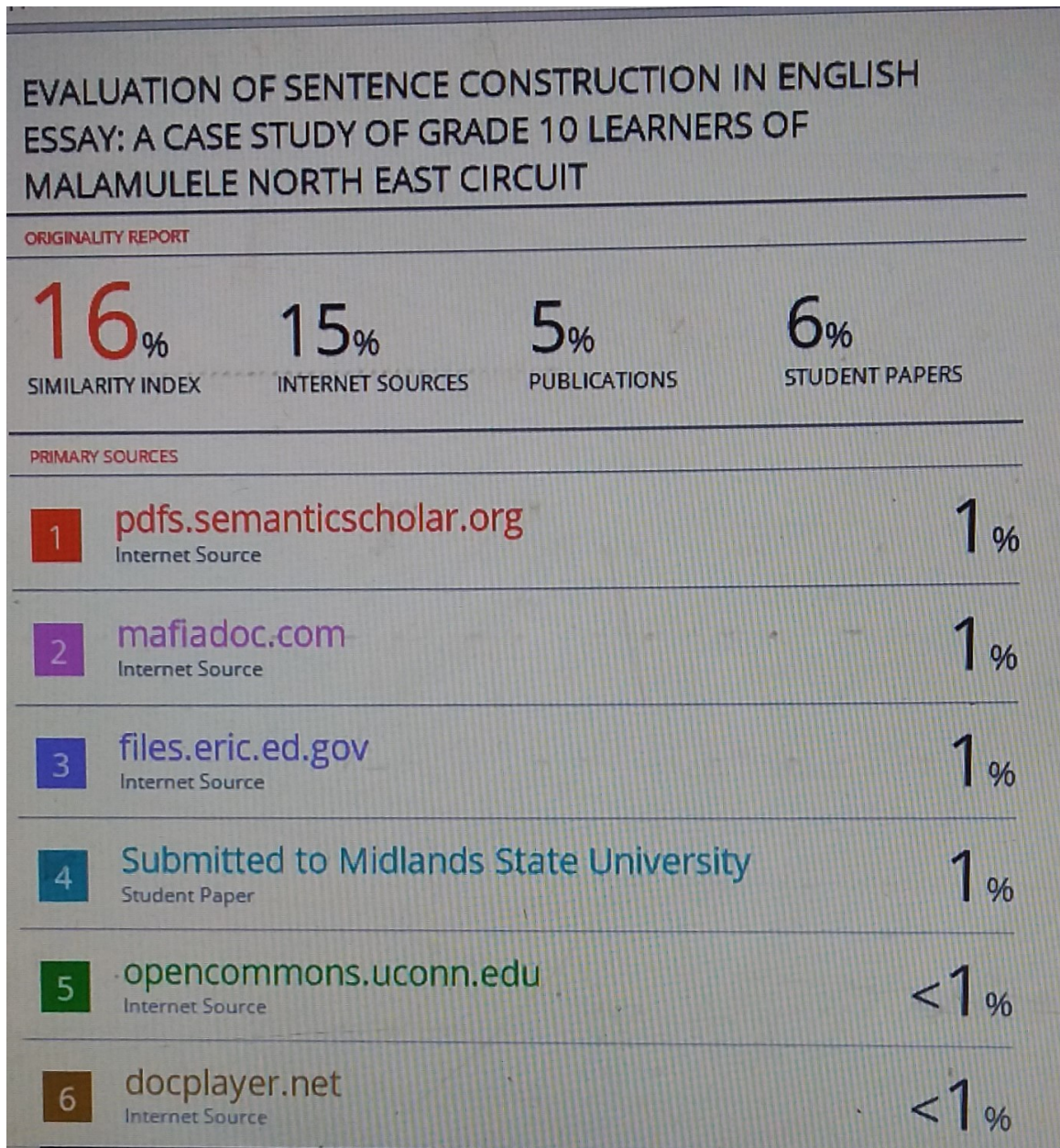
I went to the well known stores with big labels but neither of the two stores were open. Time was no long on my hand because it was 10:00 and the party had to start at 11:00. As I was waiting there, the owner of the shop came and open the shop I dress to kill.

When I got into the party everyone waiting for me because it was my time in a short words as friend. People were laughing as I was speaking because shirt and the trousers were still in rice paper that was embarrassing.

APPENDIX 6: PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS UNDER MALAMULELE NORTHEAST CIRCUIT

1. Jim Chavani
2. Basopa
3. Ngula
4. Xikundu
5. Joseph Rhangani
6. Ripambeta

APPENDIX7: SIMILARITY INDEX RESULTS



APPENDIX 8: EDITOR CERTIFICATE



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1020
28 April 2021

To whom it may concern

Certification of language editing done.

I hereby declare that I have edited the language, grammar front matter and reference list of the master's dissertation of Mr M.S. Khosa that aims to evaluate sentence construction in English essays written by Grade 10 First Additional Language learners in Malamulele Northeast Circuit.

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