

ERROR ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF ERRORS
COMMITTED BY ISIZULU SPEAKING LEARNERS OF
ENGLISH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS

BY

MUZI V. NZAMA

BA, BA Hons, ACE, DIP.ABET, DIP.YD. SEC, PTC, ASSESSOR

SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE

REQUIREMENTS FOR

DEGREE:

MASTER OF ARTS

IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL LINGUISTICS

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND

SUPERVISOR : PROFESSOR C.T. MOYO

CO: SUPERVISOR : DR. E.M. MNCWANGO

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to determine learner errors in both rural and urban schools. The first aim was to determine through literature the types of errors and their probable causes. The second aim was to conduct an investigation into errors committed by learners and experienced by educators from learners. The questionnaires were developed by the researcher for both educators of English as a second language and learners of English as a second language. By using the questionnaires the researcher was interested in determining whether factors such as lack of resources such as libraries, learning material, under qualification in English as a subject, lack of training in the structure of English and other factors had any influence in the committing of errors by learners.

In terms of factors associated with errors, the most common factor to which all educators responded as a causal factor was the lack of facilities, among others, was the shortage of libraries and library books in cases where there are libraries. One other factor which was prominent was the lack of training in the structure of English as a subject. The last chapter of this investigation recommends a variety of strategies that could be employed both by the educators and the Department of Education to minimise English errors among learners of English.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following people who have been so instrumental in making this research project a success.

My supervisors, Professor C.T. Moyo and Dr. E.M. Mncwango for their guidance and patience during the course of this study, their encouragement, interest and enthusiasm is highly appreciated.

My friend Elijah S. Ncube and N.D. Ntshangase for their motivation and support.

All the educators and learners who took their time to respond honestly and timeously to the questionnaires sent to them.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my only two daughters Nosipho and Hlengiwe for the love and support they always give me, and my two grandsons Thato and Tumelo.

Finally, I dedicate this work to my wife Dudu for the love, encouragement, perseverance and unending support she has given me during the course of this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction	1
2. Statement of the problem.....	8
2.1 What error analysis is.....	10
2.2 Why error analysis is done.....	11
2.3 Models for error analysis.....	13
2.4 The sources and causes errors.....	14
2.4.1 Mother tongue interference.....	14
2.4.2 Selinker's sources of errors.....	15
3. The objectives of the study.....	16
4. Definition of Terms used in the study.....	16
5. Hypotheses.....	18
6. Ethical considerations.....	18
7. Significance of the study.....	19
8. Limitations.....	19
9. Organisation of chapters of the thesis.....	20

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction.....	21
2.2 Interlanguage theory.....	21

2.3 General principles of interlanguage.....	22
2.4 Analysis of IL as a system.....	23
2.5 Error analysis procedures.....	24
2.6 Problems with error analysis procedures.....	24
2.7 Description and definition of interlanguage.....	25
2.8 Adjemian's definition of interlanguage.....	28
2.9 Tarone's definition of interlanguage.....	29
2.10 Nemser's definition of interlanguage.....	30
2.11 Corder's definition of error analysis.....	30
2.12 The influence of mother tongue.....	32
2.13 Fossilisation as an important element of an interlanguage.....	33
2.14 Research findings.....	39
2.15 Criticism of error analysis.....	41
2.16 Error versus mistake.....	43
2.17 Summary.....	46

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.

3.1 Introduction	48
3.2 Research design.....	49
3.3 Advantages of the questionnaire.....	52

3.4 Disadvantages of the questionnaire.....	52
3.5 Sampling Techniques.....	53
3.5.1 The study population.....	53
3.5.2 Sampling.....	54
3.6 Data collection procedure.....	54
3.7 Summary.....	56

CHAPTER 4

4. DATA PRESENTATION ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction.....	57
4.2 Learner questionnaires.....	57
4.3 Teacher questionnaires.....	65
4.4 Identified learner errors.....	71
4.5 Summary.....	81

CHAPTER 5

6. CONCLUSION, SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction.....	82
6.2 Findings and conclusions.....	83
6.2.1 Findings with regard to educators.....	83
6.2.2 Findings with regard to learners.....	83
7. Recommendations.....	85
8. Conclusion.....	86
9. Bibliography.....	87

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

This chapter focused on the rationale for the study. It outlined the research problem, and its context. It also looked at the objectives of the study and various definitions of kinds of errors. It also presented hypotheses, ethical considerations, and significance of the study, limitations as well as the organisation and work plan of the study.

Error analysis is an invaluable source of information to teachers. It provides information on students' errors which in turn helps teachers to correct students' errors and also improves the effectiveness of their teaching. According to Richards et al., (1996:127), error analysis has been conducted to identify strategies which learners use in language learning, to track the causes of learner's errors, obtain information on common difficulties in language learning or on how to prepare teaching materials. Similarly, Michaelides, (1990:30) states that the systematic analysis of student's errors can be of great value to all those concerned, i.e., teachers, students and the researchers. For teachers it can offer clear and reliable picture of his students' knowledge of the target language. Willcott, (1972:73) conducted an error analysis to discover some of the problems that native speakers of Arabic had with the syntax of written English.

In another study, Scot and Tucker, (1974:186) examined the errors generated by 22 Arab students enrolled in the first semester of a low-intermediate intensive English course at the American University of Beirut with the purpose of describing the approximative system and identifying the source and type and

frequency of the generated errors. Many error analysis studies are conducted after researchers have noticed that the students generate a large number of errors in syntax. El- Sayed,(1982:73) revealed that the subjects of his study generated 1140 errors: 640 errors were verbs and verbals, 159 errors in pronouns, 143 in articles and the rest were nouns, prepositions and adjectives. Karma and Hajjaj, (1989:151-152) and Farhat, (1994:47) attribute many of the article errors to mother tongue interference. Belhhaj, (1997:120) investigated the errors his students generated in the translation papers The result showed verb formed tense errors, relative clause, adjective errors, preposition errors, noun errors, articles errors and miscellaneous. Radwan, (1988) examined the types of grammatical and lexical errors in the nominal group. The result showed that the errors made in the use of articles had the highest percentage. Dessouky, (1990:195) found that similar errors occur in all levels of these subjects, but the difference was in the frequency of their occurrence. Likewise, Farhat, (1994:47) found similar types of errors generated by his Sudanese students but with different order and frequency of occurrence.

The study of errors themselves without proper analysis would have been misleading. The number of correct responses gives a good picture of which items are being mastered and which are not. Therefore, this study hopes to enlighten teachers on the errors that require remedial work so that time is not wasted on teaching grammar items which pose little or no problems to the majority of the students in relation to writing compositions.

The definition of error analysis by Corder, (1974) is very relevant to isiZulu learners in this study. Corder (ibid), argues that "what has come to be known as error analysis has to do with the investigation of the language of second language learners." One of the main aims of error analysis is to help teachers

assess more accurately what remedial work would be necessary for English as a Second Language (ESL) students preparing for an English Language test, so as to help students avoid the most common errors.

Corder, (1981:112) also held the same view regarding the function of error analysis and that there are two justifications for studying learners' errors: its relevance to language teaching and the study of the language acquisition process. He mentioned that:

... the pedagogical justification, namely that a good understanding of the nature of error is necessary before a systematic means of eradicating them could be found, and the theoretical justification, which claims that a study of learners' errors is part of the systematic study of the learners' language which is itself necessary to an understanding of the process of second language acquisition.

It is appropriate to define what is meant by errors. The terms 'mistake' and 'error' are often used interchangeably. However, there is a clear difference between the two. The following definitions of 'errors' and 'mistakes' are applicable to this study. Norrish (1983) made a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He postulated that errors are "a systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong." He added that when a learner of English as a second or foreign language makes an error systematically, it is because he or she has not learnt the correct form. Norrish (ibid) defined mistakes as "inconsistent deviation." When a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is called a mistake.

Systematically analysing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder, 1974). Error

analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the Target Language (TL) and that Target Language itself. In the article titled, “The significance of Learner Errors” Corder, (1967) observed that Error analysis (EA) took a new turn. Corder (ibid) contended that those errors are “important in and of themselves.” For learners themselves, errors are indispensable, since the making of errors can be regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn. Selinker, (1972) defined errors as “red flags” that provide evidence of the learner’s knowledge of the second language.

Researchers are, therefore, interested in errors because errors are believed to contain valuable information on the strategies that people use to acquire a language (Richards, 1974; Taylor, 1975; Dulay and Burt, (1974). According to Richards and Sampson, (1974:15), “At the level of classroom experience, error analysis will continue to provide one means by which the teacher assesses learning and teaching and determine priorities for future effort.” According to Corder, (1974) error analysis has two objects: one theoretical and another applied. The theoretical object serves to ‘elucidate what and how a learner learns when he studies a second language.’ And the applied object serves to enable the learner ‘to learn more efficiently by exploiting our knowledge of his dialect for pedagogical purposes’

The study came out of the need to investigate the reason why learners of English produce written language which is full of errors which seem to be persistent. Error fossilisation in the written English of learners in both the general education and training and further education bands which disturbs language educators needs to be investigated for the good of both learners and

educators. According to Selinker, (1972) as quoted in McDough (1986), these errors are classified into various types.

English is one of the recognised official languages in South Africa. It is utilised by the majority of schools as a language of learning and teaching. The majority of learners in South African schools are Black and they speak various Black languages, which interfere with their learning of English as a second language. The English produced by Black African learners only deviates from the native norm and as a result there is what is known as South African Black English (SABE).

There is thus a need to look into the present classroom practice in this investigation. Teachers are therefore, concerned with the fossilised structures in the language of their learners. These fossilised structures would be stabilised and therefore, result in errors of what is internationally accepted English.

It is observed that children in rural areas start school very late since boys first have to start by looking after cattle and girls first have to learn to do domestic work and look after their younger siblings in preparation for womanhood. Rural schools experience a lack of facilities such as pre-schools or crèches, and as a result the majority of rural children go to school without having gone through pre-schools. This is the opposite of what happens in the urban areas where children are only taught the household chores, and others do not even get that training since their families have house keepers who do everything for them. In that way urban children start to attend school at an early age. At the same time parents of urban children are mostly educated and have facilities such as televisions. That being the case, urban children have better chances of

getting more opportunities of speaking and listening to English than the rural children.

Rural school children do not have libraries. Even the books they use at school are not enough for the whole school. Learners do not have access to newspapers and magazines. Besides, learners are not exposed to spoken English since no one usually speaks English in the vicinity, except the local language, isiZulu in this province. According to Ntombela, (2009: 17) the success of Second Language learners in English is increased by the amount of exposure to English, either spoken or written. Moyo, (2007:186) in Ntombela states that many schools, especially in rural areas, are reported to be under-resourced in terms of library materials with which learners could enhance their exposure to English, and audio-visual materials like television and radio where learners would be exposed to spoken English by native and educated speakers of English. It is only those few households with televisions which provide access to spoken English.

Equipment or utensils used at home are traditional, and as a result English vocabulary is scanty. The only exposure the learners get to English language is at school where English is a medium of instruction. Even at school learners find it difficult to get more practice in English as a second language, since during English periods a teacher of English either uses the mother tongue as a medium of instruction or code switches by explaining difficult concepts in isiZulu. Teachers sometimes even use isiZulu as a medium of instruction, particularly between grades 1-3.

Hoffman, (1996:110) in Ntombela says the most general description of code-switching is that it involves the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation. She goes on to say that in the case of bilinguals speaking to each other, switching can consist of changing languages – in that of monolinguals, shifts of style. Hoffman, (ibid: 110) cites McLaughlin, (1984) who emphasises the distinction between mixing and switching by referring to code switches as language changes occurring across phrase or sentence boundaries, whereas code-mixes take place within sentences and usually involve single cases of single lexical items. Spolsky, (1998:49) also argues that bilinguals often switch between their two languages in the middle of a conversation; these code-switches can take place between or even within sentences, involving phrases or words or even parts of words. Like Spolsky, (ibid: 49) and Hoffman, (ibid: 110) Sridha, (1996) in McKay and Hornberger, (1996:56) in Ntombela, (2009) asserts that the phenomenon known as code-switching occurs when two or more languages exist in a community, and speakers frequently switch from one language to another.

Mawasha, (1996:21) in Ntombela outlines three realities, which he argues that most practising educators in African education are aware of:

- a) In practice many African educators code switch routinely from English to an African language in routine content-subject presentation to facilitate comprehension and to speed up progress through the syllabus;
- b) Many African teachers often find it necessary to resort to an African language where their personal facility in English as classroom language falters;

- c) A teacher code-switches to deal with what he considers practical educational problems bearing on the understanding of a particular subject content or concept, as a matter of need.

Maclaughlin (1984) refers to code switches as language changes occurring across phrase or sentence boundaries.

In most cases, teachers in the rural areas are either unqualified, or under qualified in English as a subject, or else they do not have linguistic knowledge to be able to deal with learner errors (Buthelezi, 1995). As a result they concentrate more on literature and poetry because these do not consider grammatical or linguistic rules.

With regard to socio-economic situation, the learners come from very poor homes where the standard of living is very low. The majority of the parents of the learners are unemployed and uneducated. The majority of the learners depend on pension fund from their grandparents. In some cases one finds child-headed homes because both parents have died of HIV/ AIDS, and as a result the eldest child in the family finds himself or herself being responsible for his or her younger siblings. In such a case, children rely on government social grant for survival.

2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English occupies the status of a L2 for the majority of the Black learners of South Africa both in the primary and secondary schools. However, learning English as a L2 is not an easy task. According to Brown (2000), in order to master the English language, learners have to be adequately exposed to all of

the four basic skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing. In all, they need to know what the internationally accepted English is, apart from the variety used in South Africa. However, the standard of English among Black children is claimed to be on the decline, despite learning English for several years. Black learners are still weak in English, especially in their writing skills. They still seem to commit errors in all aspects of language. According to James, (1988) errors in writing such as tenses, prepositions and weak vocabulary are the most common and frequent type of errors that are committed by learners. Such errors can be seen clearly in the learners' written performance (Nik Safiah 1978). In addition, "all language learning is based on continual exposure, hypothesising and, even with the correct hypothesis, testing and reinforcing the ideas behind them" (Bartholomae, 1980:07). Learners make a lot of common errors which can be attributed to other factors such as mother tongue interference, transfer of training and other factors. Learners tend to overgeneralise some grammatical rules. Some errors are committed through literal translation from the native language. Technology such as television advertisements, sopies and cellular phone language influence the language used by both rural and urban children.

English as a language again plays an important role as an international language of politics, commerce, industry and education. Many countries have declared English as an official language, and it has become a language of teaching and learning in higher education. This has happened although English is not the mother tongue of most of the people in countries such as South Africa. Many second language speakers in those countries are not proficient in English which they desperately need for both communication with the world and for commercial purposes. The learners, who are isiZulu speakers

that are used in this research project, experience problems in expressing themselves in English. They do not have any contact with English outside the classroom. These learners start to use English as a language of teaching and learning from grade four, and yet they find it difficult to express themselves in grammatically acceptable English.

Ellis, (1994) explains Corder's definition of an error when he says it takes place when the deviation arises as a result of the lack of knowledge. A mistake occurs when learners fail to perform their competence. That is, it is a result of processing problems that prevent learners from accessing their knowledge of a target language rule and cause them to fall back on some alternative, non standard rule that they find easy to access. The language teacher, therefore, has to deal with these errors by devising some strategies after he or she has done error analysis, although it is quite challenging since they become fossilised, and fossilisation is related to interlanguage.

2.1 What Error Analysis is

Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors learners make. It consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language (TL) and that TL itself. Pit Corder is the 'Father' of Error Analysis. It was in his article entitled 'The significance of Learner Errors' (1967) that Error Analysis took a new turn. Errors used to be 'flaws' that needed to be eradicated. Systematically analysing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching (Corder, 1967).

Error Analysis (hereafter EA) is the examination of those errors committed by students in both the spoken and written medium. Corder, (1967: 125) who has contributed enormously to EA writes thus:

The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of language learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and may give us indications as to the learning process.

It is essential here to make a distinction between mistake and error. Both Corder, (1967, 1971) and James, (1998) reveal a criterion that helps us to do so: it is the self-correctability criterion. A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are 'systematic,' i.e. likely to occur repeatedly and not recognised by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner would not (Gass and Selinker, 1994). And it is in this light that the researcher chose to focus on students' errors and not mistakes.

Corder introduced the distinction between systematic and non-systematic errors. Nonsystematic errors occur in one's native language. Corder calls these 'mistakes' and states that they are not significant to the process of language learning. He keeps the term 'errors' for the systematic ones, which occur in a second language. According to Corder (ibid), errors are significant in three ways. They show a student's progress to the teacher. To the researcher they show how a language is acquired and what strategies the learner uses. The learner can learn from these errors

2.2 Why Error Analysis is done

Error Analysis is useful in second language learning because it reveals to us - teachers, syllabus designers and textbook writers of what the problem areas are. We could design remedial exercises and focus more attention on the 'trouble shooting' areas, as it were. Corder, (1967) states that errors are visible proof that learning is taking place. He has emphasised that errors, if studied systematically, can provide significant insights into how a language is actually

learned by a foreigner. He also agrees that studying students' errors of usage has immediate practical application for language teachers. In his view, errors provide feedback; they tell the teachers something about the effectiveness of his teaching. According to Ancker, (2000), making mistakes or errors is a natural process of learning and must be considered as part of cognition.

Weireesh, (1991) considers learners' errors to be of particular importance because the making of errors is a device the learners use in order to learn. Weireesh, (ibid.) says EA is a valuable aid to identify and explain difficulties faced by learners. He goes on to say that EA serves as a reliable feedback to design a remedial teaching method. This emphasises the fact that problematic as the errors may be, when they are identified, learners get helped and teachers find it easy to do remedial work.

Sercombe, (2000) explains that EA serves three purposes. Firstly, to find out the level of language proficiency the learner has reached. Secondly, to obtain information about common difficulties in language learning, and thirdly, to find out how people learn a language. From this statement it can be concluded that the study of errors should also be looked at as something positive both for learners and teachers.

Candling, (2001) considers EA as 'the monitoring and analysis of learner's language'. He refers to an error as a deviation. Candling (ibid.) adds that the L2 learners' errors are potentially important for the understanding of the processes of SLA.

Olasehinde, (2002) also argues that it is inevitable that learners make errors. He also cited that errors are unavoidable and a necessary part of the learning curve.

Mitchell and Myles, (2004) claims that errors if studied could reveal a developing system of the students L2 language and this system is dynamic and open to changes and resetting of parameters. This view is supported by Stark (2001:19) in his study, who also explained that the teachers need to view students' errors positively and should not regard them as the learners' failure to grasp the rules and structures but view the errors as process of learning. He subscribes to the view that errors are normal and inevitable features of learning.

Vahdatinejad, (2008) maintains that error analyses can be used to determine what a learner still needs to be taught. It provides the necessary information about what is lacking in his or her competence. He also makes distinction between errors and lapses (simple mistakes). According to Vahdatinejad, (ibid) lapses are produced even by native speakers, and can be corrected by themselves. They call for on the spot correction rather than remedial, which is needed for errors.

2.3 Models for Error Analysis

Corder (1967) identified a model for error analysis which included three stages:

1. Data collection: Recognition of idiosyncrasy
2. Description: Accounting for idiosyncratic dialect
3. Explanation (the ultimate object of error analysis).

Ellis, (1994) elaborated on this model. Ellis et al. (1985) gave practical advice and provided clear examples of how to identify and analyse learners' errors. The initial step requires the selection of a corpus of language followed by the identification of errors. The errors are then classified. The next step, after

giving a grammatical analysis of each error, demands an explanation of different types of errors. Moreover, Selinker, (1992) identified six steps followed in conducting an error analysis: Collecting data, Identifying errors, Classifying errors, Quantifying errors, Analysing source of error and remediating for errors.

2.4 The sources and causes of errors.

The following factors have been identified by various error analysts including the present study.

2.4.1 Mother tongue interference

Wilkins (1972: 199) observes that:

When learning a foreign language an individual already knows his mother tongue, and it is this which he attempts to transfer. The transfer may prove to be justified because the structure of the two languages is similar- in that case we get 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation' – or it may prove unjustified because the structure of the two languages are different in that case we get 'negative transfer' – or interference.

The process in which incorrect linguistic features or errors become a permanent part of the way in which a person uses language is called fossilisation. According to Nakuma, (1998) fossilisation is a term used to denote what appears to be a state of permanent failure on the part of an L2 learner to acquire a given feature of the target language. Interlanguage, on the other hand, is regarded as the kind of language that has aspects that are borrowed, transferred and generalised from the mother tongue. It is the type of language produced by second language and foreign learners who are in the process of learning a language (Richards et al. 1992).

2.4.2 In 1972, Selinker reported five sources of errors:

1. Language transfer. There is positive transfer that helps the learning of second language. There is also negative transfer, that hinders the learning of second language. Language transfer involves pronunciation, word order and grammars, semantic transfer, transfer in writing, pragmatic transfer and culture transfer.
2. Transfer of training. Transfer of training occurs whenever the effects of prior learning influence the performance of a later activity. Transfer of training is the influence of prior learning on performance in a new situation.
3. Strategies of second language learning. This is an attempt to develop linguistic and sociolinguistic competence in the target language.
4. Strategies of second language communication. This consists of attempts to deal with problems of communication that have arisen in interaction.
5. Overgeneralisation of the target language (TL) linguistic material. This happens when a second language learner applies a grammatical rule across all members of a grammatical class without making the appropriate exception.

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study includes the following:

- i. To investigate the types of errors made by both rural and urban learners.
- ii. To find the most common errors rural and urban learners make in their essays.
- iii. To make teachers aware of the influence the media has on learners' language acquisition.
- iv. To indicate some of the grammar items that have not been mastered by learners.

4. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. Error

An error according to Corder, in Ellis, (1994), takes place when the deviation arises as a result of the lack of knowledge. An error cannot be self-corrected.

B. A mistake

Corder says a mistake occurs when learners fail to perform their competence, that is, it is a result of processing problems that prevent learners from accessing their knowledge of a target language rule and cause to fall back on some alternative, non- standard rule that they find easy to access (Pit Corder in Ellis, 1994).

C. Interlanguage

According to Selinker (1972) interlanguage is a temporary grammar which is systematic and composed of rules which are a product of five main cognitive processes, that is, overgeneralisation, transfer of training, language transfer, strategies of second language learning and strategies of second language communication.

D. Fossilisation

It is described as ‘near-universal failure to attain full target-language competence’ (Rutherford, 1989). Shapira, (1978) describes fossilisation as ‘non-learning’ and Selinker and Lamendella (1979) describes it as ‘stabilisation’.

E. Language

The term ‘ language,’ according to Sapir’s (1921:8) definition as quoted in Manthata, 1990, is stated as follows:

Language is a purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols.

These symbols are in the first instance, auditory and they are produced by the so called ‘organs of speech.

F. Contrastive Analysis (CA)

According to Ellis and Tomlinson (1980:274) as quoted in Manthata 1990, CA is explained in the following way:

Useful information about learning problems can be discovered by comparing the learners’ mother tongue (s) and the learners’ target language to discover ways, in which they are the same, similar and different. Such a contrastive analysis is normally used to predict which errors are likely to be made by second language

learners as a result of negative interference from their first language and thus to decide which items from the syllabus to give special care and emphasis to.

5 HYPOTHESES

- i. The performance of the learners, both rural and urban, and in all the three grades is different.
- ii. There are no statistically significant gender differences in the performance of the learners in the three grades.
- iii. There is likelihood that, among other things, lack of educational facilities such as libraries, the absence of readers in the target language and pre-schools are contributory factors to errors.
- iv. Teachers of English are either not qualified or semi-skilled in English language to be able to provide necessary skills to the learners.

6. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission was obtained from the school principals as well as from the educators. Confidentiality and protecting the anonymity of research participants was guaranteed. Respondents were informed of the aims and the objectives of the study so that they would have a choice whether they wanted to be part of the research project or not. It is here that serious thought needed to be given to what might be reported, what had to remain confidential, to the legitimate use certain types of information gained in the field and, above all, to preserving the confidentiality of research material and the anonymity of informants and of the communities to which they belonged (Mouton and Joubert 1990).

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the findings from this study would highlight areas of development in order to eradicate errors. It might encourage and increase the equal distribution of educational resources without discrimination. This would also assist with the identification of the relevant and competent educators of English. It is also hoped that underqualified educators will receive assistance and be empowered in terms of how to teach syntax through departmental workshops. These workshops will again assist by making educators aware of the influence the media through advertisements and technology such as cellular phones impacts on English learning, especially when it comes to error analysis. It will also make educators aware of the fact that the English which learners learn, should be the English which they are supposed to write and ensure that they minimise errors as far as possible.

8. LIMITATIONS

This involved distribution costs. Respondents delayed in returning the questionnaires. At the same time questions were not answered as honestly as one could have expected. Some respondents did not answer all questions.

Among other things some questionnaires were not answered on time, hence causing a delay. Others were lost along the way, causing the researcher to supply more questionnaires to be filled in.

ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS AND WORK PLAN OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE

This chapter consists of the motivation of the study, statement of the problem, aims of the study, hypotheses, definition of terms and the plan of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

This chapter provides a theoretical background of the study and a review of literature which is relevant for the study. There is detailed information, that is, it provides the purpose or value of the theoretical tenet in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

This chapter provides details of the research design and methodology of the study. It also involves organising, justification and selection of subjects, as well as data collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

This chapter deals with the analysis of data collected for this study. This chapter also discusses the results of the investigation and gives a detailed analysis and interpretation of data. It provides a detailed presentation of statistical results so as to test the hypotheses.

CHAPTER FIVE

This concluding chapter provides a brief overview of the entire study. It summarises the findings of the study, provides different conclusions, suggestions and some recommendations based on the findings.

CHAPTER 2

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter forms the theoretical background of this study. It focuses on concepts such as fossilisation and interlanguage. The aim includes, among other things, looking at error fossilisation, interlanguage and other contributory factors such as mother tongue influence, strategies of second language learning, strategies of second language communication, overgeneralisation of target language rules and transfer of training. Research conducted on the above mentioned concepts will be discussed at length.

The person who is better able to identify and deal with all the above mentioned factors is a teacher. He or she is sometimes part of the causal factors although he or she is supposed to be instrumental in dealing with the causes. A teacher may look bad to his or her learners for focusing only on what mistakes learners have made in written work instead of focusing on and appreciating what the learners have done well. Mistakes made by learners may reveal to the teacher what level of proficiency the learners have and thus what needs to be done further. However, the analysis of such mistakes should not be conducted without reflection.

2.2 The Interlanguage theory

The word, 'interlanguage,' is made up of two words, 'inter' and 'language' which means the language that is in between. This implies that, it is the language which is neither the mother tongue nor the target language. It is a lingua franca of some kind. This is the type of language which is produced by

the non-native speakers of the language in the process of learning a second, third language or foreign language.

The interlanguage theory refers to the idea that the language produced by the second language learner is systematic in the same way that first language performance is systematic. The first language and the second language reflect a set of rules that can be understood and described. The language of the second language speaker is the product of a linguistic system that is different from the first language and the target language. According to the interlanguage theory, the interlanguage system is based on the data to which the second language learner is exposed and shares properties with both the mother tongue and the target language (Cohen and Robbins, 1976:45).

2.3 General Principles of Interlanguage

According to Hobson, (1999), analysis of interlanguage (IL) needs to be carried out very carefully and in a cyclical fashion so that patterns can be identified and genres (tasks) can be compared, Johnson, (1992). Difficulties may be encountered because of the transitional nature of the system, the presence of idiosyncratic rules and the importance of taking the first language (L1) into account, Jagtman and Bongaerts, (1994).

Corder, (1981), in Hobson, advises that every utterance should be seen as idiosyncratic until it can be shown that it is not. In fact, Selinker, (1992) cautions that an analyst should not accept the first plausible interpretation, but should continually look for alternative explanations. Furthermore, Corder, (1981) suggests that the analysis should be based on inferring the intended meaning of the learner before conclusions can be reached about the presence or

absence of error. In support of this view, Douglas and Selinker, (1994:121) say that 'primary interlanguage data are always ambiguous; at the minimum, one needs to gain access to interlanguage intention' and that the learner's perspective needs to remain at the forefront of any analysis. Perdue, (1993a: 13) cautions that:

the nearer a learner's production appears to be to the TL, the more tempting it becomes to imagine a 'corresponding' TL version and use the analytic categories relevant to the latter version to analyse the former. The 'closeness fallacy' ... is insidious and ubiquitous, and leads inevitably to false dichotomies such as 'error/non error'. Hobson (ibid) goes on to say that, taking the above caution into account, it is evident that a consideration of the context is a vitally important aspect of the analysis.

2.4 Analysis of IL as a system

According to Hobson, (1999: 78) the systematicity of IL has been widely documented, but a quasi-longitudinal study, systematicity may be difficult to determine. Adjemian, (1976), Selinker and Douglas, (1985) argue against the notion of a single system, and they prefer to posit a variety of different distinct and coexistent systems which change over time and according to context. Transition is also systematic, so there is both horizontal (and synchronic) and vertical (or diachronic) systematicity. Klein, (1986); Perdue (1993a). A different view is that there are degrees of systematicity (Labov, in Young 1988) which need to be discovered for different areas of data. In addition, it should not be forgotten that it is the system apparent in performance, rather than competence, which is actually analysed Young, 1988, in Hobson).

2.5 Error analysis procedures

The first stage of error analysis consisted of what James, (1998) calls the 'broad trawl'. This initial analysis enables the researcher 'to gain a first impression of the learner's capacities and limitations to identify the areas of TL competence where they are most susceptible to error' (James, 1998:19). Part of the study consists of a description of errors and James (1998) lists three reasons for describing data:

- 1) the need for labels so that intuitions can be compared with those of other people;
- 2) the need to count errors; and
- 3) the need to create categories of errors which can be compared intralingually and crosslingually (Hobson,1999).

The second stage of error analysis is where one counts the number of obligatory contexts and then calculates suppliance of the morpheme according to van Els et al.'s (1984) categories. Problems with this approach include instances where the learner avoids the structure. This is especially problematic when comparing learners where one learner uses the form and another learner avoids the form (Tarone, 1987).

2.6 Problems with error analysis procedures

The use of TL labels on IL data is problematic, as Pienemann (1992) points out, especially if it is assumed that IL is a system in its own right. However, no studies have completely reinvented terminology which will effectively account for IL data, (Hobson, 1999). According to Hobson (ibid), error analysis as an analysis procedure has a number of shortcomings, but it is nevertheless a useful starting point for a description of the data (James, 1998).

2.7 Description and definition of interlanguage

An American linguist, Larry Selinker, coined the term 'interlanguage' when he realised that many mistakes second language learners (L2) made could not be explained by solely looking at L1 or L2 structures, and that the learners thus create unique language systems (Ellis, 1997: 33). Selinker first used the term interlanguage to describe the linguistic stage second language (L2) learners go through during the process of mastering the target language (TL). According to Selinker, (1972), interlanguage is a temporary grammar which is systematic and composed of rules. According to him these rules are the product of five cognitive processes:

- (i) Overgeneralisation. Some of the rules of the interlanguage system may be the result of the overgeneralisation of specific rules and features of the target language.
- (ii) Transfer of training. Some of the components of the interlanguage system may result from transfer of specific elements via which the learner is taught the second language.
- (iii) Strategies of second language learning. Some of the rules in the learner's interlanguage may result from the application of language learning strategies 'as a tendency on the part of the learners to reduce the target language (TL) to a simpler system'.
- (iv) Strategies of second language communication.
Rules of the interlanguage system rules may also be the result of strategies employed by the learners in

their attempt to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

- (v) Language transfer. Some of the rules in the interlanguage system may be the result of transfer from the learner's first language. Selinker's description of the interlanguage system has a cognitive emphasis and a focus on strategies the learners employ when learning a second language.

Selinker,(1972) says that a group of speakers may share the same interlanguage and that there would be mutual intelligibility among such speakers of the same interlanguage. Selinker, (1972:214) goes on to say 'the set of utterances for most learners of a second language is not identical to the hypothesised corresponding set of utterances which would have been produced by a native speaker of a target language had he attempted to express the same meaning as the learner.

The two sets of utterances prove the existence of a separate linguistic system based on the speech of a learner. This linguistic system is called interlanguage. Selinker (ibid) attaches importance to the relationship between the mother tongue and the target language. Richards et al., (1992:186) refer to interlanguage as the type of language produced by learners of a foreign second language. Second language researchers and teachers realised that the language which second language learners produced differed from both the mother tongue and the target language. They regarded this language as bad and ungrammatical due to the proliferation of errors. Learners were encouraged to avoid errors. According to Stem, (1983:125), little or no attention was paid to

the characteristics of the learner's language. The term interlanguage refers to the second language of the learner's language at a specific time as well as to the developmental aspects of the language.

Various researchers have given various definitions and descriptions of interlanguage. Consequently, various terms are utilised to refer to interlanguage. The term was used by Selinker, (1972), who referred to it as the learner's intermediate language system. Nemser, (1971) referred to the interlanguage system as the 'approximate' system. Corder, (1971) referred to what he called an 'idiosyncratic' dialect or the learner's 'transitional competence' or 'transitional dialect'. All these terms are used to refer to the language used by the learner on his or her way to master the target language.

Ellis, (1985a:229) described interlanguage as "the series of interlocking systems which characterised acquisition." It can be implied from Selinker's and Ellis's views that interlanguage is a combination of the learner's native language and target language. Ellis, (1985a:47) argues that the concepts 'interlanguage' and 'approximate systems' refer to the structured system which the learner constructs and also refer to a series of interlocking systems: the interlanguage continuum.

Ellis, (1985b:119) submits that each interlanguage which the learner forms contains "alternative rules for performing the same function. On some occasions one rule is used, on another a different rule." Despite the uniform way in which different learners develop, they vary in the course of development that they follow. For Ellis, all language use is characterised by systematic and non-systematic variation. Systematic variability is determined by the situation and context in which a learner uses the language. A learner may vary language depending on whether the context of language use is formal

or informal. Non- systematic variability has two versions; one is the result of performance lapses, false starts and deviations from rules, and the second occurs when the language user is unable to perform to his competence (Ellis, 1985 b 1:21).

Appel and Muysken, (1987:83) argue against Selinker's view that interlanguage is a language somewhere between the first and the second language with structural features from both. They argue that interlanguage is 'an intermediate system characterised by features resulting from language learning strategies'. They emphasise that interlanguage is an unstable language.

Barnard, (1995:85) argues that interlanguage is the internalised result of a learner's creative attempts to produce second language. It is evidence of a learner's cognitive strategies and hypotheses and it is variable. Larsen-Freeman and Long, (1991:60) argue that the learner's interlanguage is systematic, that is, it is rule-governed and all learners pass through a stage of developing an interlanguage.

2.8 Adjemian's definition of interlanguage

A different approach to the theory of interlanguage was adopted by Adjemian, (1976) in his attempt to describe the nature of the interlanguage systems. Adjemian (ibid) argues that interlanguages are natural languages but they are unique in that their grammar is permeable (Adjemian, 1976). He also differentiates between the learning strategies that learners employ and the linguistic rules that are 'crucially concerned in the actual form of the language system'(Adjemian, 1976). Adjemian, (1976:300) argues that interlanguages can normally be used for communication among their speakers. They share the

function of communication with natural languages. The property of mutual intelligibility cannot, therefore, be considered one of the properties that differentiates interlanguages from other languages. Adjemian (1976:300) writes:

Mutual intelligibility is an inherent property of interlanguages as a result of their being members of possible human languages.

Adjemian (1976) concludes that the description of these linguistic rules that will reveal the properties of the learner's grammar should be the primary goal of linguistic research.

2.9 Tarone's definition of interlanguage

The third approach to the description of interlanguage was initiated by Tarone (1979, 1982). She describes interlanguage as a continuum of speech styles. Learners shift between styles according to the amount of attention they pay to language form- from the superordinate style in which attention is mainly focused on language form, to the vernacular style in which the least attention is paid to language form. The new target language forms first appear in the more careful style and progressively move towards the vernacular style. Tarone refers to interlanguage as a chameleon. This metaphor reflects the variability of interlanguage. The systematic variability of interlanguage systems is reflected to the variable effect which the different tasks and different linguistic contexts have on the learner's use of syntactic, phonological and morphological structures (Tarone, 1982). Even though Tarone does not deny that other theories can provide explanations of second language acquisition, she argues that 'any adequate model of second language acquisition (SLA) must take interlanguage (IL) variation into account (Tarone, 1990).

2.10 Nemser's definition of interlanguage

Nemser, (1971) refers to the interlanguage system as an approximate system. He defines an approximate system as 'the deviant linguistic system actually employed by the learner attempting to utilise the target language.' He argues that such approximate systems vary in character in accordance with proficiency level, learning experience, communication function and personal learning characteristics. According to Nemser (ibid), the approximate system develops in stages from the first attempt to use the target language to the most advanced. The approximate system of one learner will coincide with that of another learner at the same level of proficiency with some variations due to different learning experiences (Roodt, 1993).

2.11 Corder's definition of Interlanguage

Corder (1981: 116) refers to the interlanguage system as an idiosyncratic dialect of the target language. The concept of idiosyncratic dialect is a development of Corder's earlier concept of transitional competence. These terms refer to the rule- governed system (an interlanguage) a learner produces at a given time in his development. This refers to the language the learner develops as he moves from his mother tongue to the target language. Corder (ibid) argues that the language of second language learners is a special kind of dialect. Corder, (1981:14) describes the learner's language as follows:

The spontaneous speech of the second language learner is language and has a grammar. Secondly, since a number of sentences of that language are isomorphous with some of the sentences of his target language and have the same interpretation, then some, at least, of the rules needed to account for the target language. Therefore the learner's language is a dialect in the linguistic sense: two languages which share some rules of grammar are dialects.

Corder argues that a dialect should be the shared behaviour of a social group and makes a distinction between the dialects which are the languages of a social group (social dialects) and the dialects which are not the languages of a social group (idiosyncratic dialects). Corder classifies idiosyncratic dialects into four classes:

- 1) The language of poems (deliberately deviant);
- 2) The speech of an aphasic (pathologically deviant);
- 3) The speech of an infant (no plausible interpretation); and
- 4) The speech of learners of a second language.

Another characteristic of interlanguage is that it is unstable and dynamic. The learner's language is constantly changing. As the learner approaches the target language norm, he reviews his language and his rule system changes. Rutherford, (1984a:41) believes that syntax is the most unstable aspect of interlanguage. Rutherford (ibid) states that interlanguage is vulnerable or permeable to invasion by features of both native and target languages. The learner constantly revises existing hypotheses about the target language to accommodate new ones. Writing on the interlanguage of advanced learners, Azevedo, (1980:217) observes that learners move through successive stages towards mastery of the target language. When a learner learns the target language, he or she uses the raw data and grammatical information available to him or her in the target language, as well as his own mother tongue and also whatever his or her '... Innate *faculte de langage* tells him what language should be like'. Azevedo, (1980:217) describes interlanguage systems when he writes:

An interlanguage is an imperfect, incomplete linguistic system as well as a set of working hypotheses about the target language.

As learning proceeds, some hypotheses are found adequate and retained, others are expanded into more general ones, and still others are dropped as inappropriate. More often than not, however some inadequate rules are kept in the learner's system. Regardless of whether these are mother tongue rules or rules devised by the learner, they represent gaps in his competence and are one of the causes of errors.

Interlanguage has certain features and characteristics which distinguish it from the language that the native speakers of the language speak. Bialistok and Sharwood Smith, (1985:106) argue that interlanguage implies that the speech of second language learners is deviant with respect to native speaker models. They argue that interlanguage is systematic language performance of L2 speakers who have not achieved sufficient levels of analysis of linguistic knowledge or control of processing to be identified completely with the native speakers.

2.12 The influence of mother tongue

Interlanguage is based on the data and information that the learner is exposed to and has features from both the mother tongue and the target language. This means that the mother tongue of the learner influences the learning of the target second language. The phenomenon which results when second language learners use elements of one language (mother tongue) when using another language (target language) is called language transfer. According to Selinker, (1972), language transfer is one of the central processes which produce what he calls fossilised competences and which are central to L2 learning processes. These processes cause fossilisation, and combinations of these processes produce 'entirely fossilised IL (interlanguage) competence' (Selinker, in Richards, 1974: 37). Language transfer therefore causes the fossilisation of interlanguage structures.

According to the idea of language transfer, individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture when attempting to speak a second language. Richards et al. (1992:205) refer to two types of transfer, that is, negative transfer and positive transfer. Positive transfer makes learning easier and may occur when both the native language and the target language have the same form. This similarity in forms facilitates second language acquisition. Negative transfer or interference refers to the use of a ‘native-language pattern or rule which leads to an error or inappropriate form in the target language’ Richards et al., 1992:205).

2.13 Fossilisation as an important element of an interlanguage

Fossilisation is described as ‘near-universal failure to attain full target-language competence’ (Rutherford, 1989a: 442). This view contextualises the problem of this study which pertains to the prevalence of error fossilisation in the written English of high school students.

Shapira, (1978) describes fossilisation as ‘non-learning’ while Selinker and Lamendella, (1979) describe it as ‘stabilisation’. Selinker and Lamendella go on to say that it is a permanent cessation of LI learning before the learner has attained TL norms at all levels of linguistic structure and in all discourse domains in spite of the learner’s positive ability, opportunity and motivation to learn and acculturate into target society (Selinker and Lamendella, 1978:187).

Selinker, (ibid) also refers to fossilisation as the process whereby the learner creates a cessation of interlanguage learning, thus stopping the interlanguage from developing, it is hypothesised, in a permanent way....The argument is

that no adult can hope to ever speak a second language in such a way that she or he is indistinguishable from native speakers of that language (Selinker, 1996).

Furthermore, Lowther, (1983:127) says fossilisation as presented in much of the literature, is understood to be the inability of a person to attain native-like ability in the target language. According to Ellis, (1985:48) fossilisation structures can be realised as errors or as correct target language forms. If, by the fossilisation it occurs that the learner has reached a stage of development in which feature 'x' in his interlanguage has assumed the same form as in the target language, then fossilisation of the correct form will occur. He goes on to say, that if, however, the learner has reached a stage in which feature 'y', still does not have the same form as the target language, the fossilisation will manifest an error.

Vigil and Oller, (1976: 282) say, "we will extend the notion of fossilisation to any case where grammatical rules, construed in the broadest sense, become relatively permanently incorporated into a psychologically real grammar...". They go on to say that, it is not only the fossilisation of so-called 'errors' that must be explained, but also the fossilisation of correct forms that conform to the target language norms.

Hyltenstam, (1988:68) says fossilisation ...according to observations ... is a process that may occur in the second language acquisition context as opposed to first language acquisition. He goes on to say that it covers features of the second language learner's interlanguage that deviate from the native speaker norm and are not developing any further, or deviant features which- although

seemingly left behind—re-emerge in the learner’s speech under certain conditions. Thus the learner has stopped learning or has reverted to earlier stages of acquisition.

Tarone, (1994:1715) says, a central characteristic of any interlanguage is that it fossilises—that is, it ceases to develop at some point short of full identity with the target language. Han, (1998: 50), says fossilisation involves those cognitive processes, or underlying mechanisms that produce permanently stabilised interlanguage (IL). He goes on to say that fossilisation involves those stabilised interlanguage forms that remain in learner speech or writing over time, no matter what the input or what the learner does.

Selinker, (1972), regards fossilisation as a feature of the interlanguage system. Selinker (in Roodt, 1983:21), regards fossilisation as a ‘...mechanism which exists in the latent psychological structure of a person’s mind’. Selinker (in Richards, 1974:36) also writes:

Fossilisable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language (NL) will tend to keep in their interlanguage (IL) relative to a particular target language (TL), no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation and instruction he receives in the target language (TL).

Selinker, (ibid) further argues that a crucial factor which any adequate theory of second language will have to explain is the re-appearance and re-emergence of interlanguage structures that were thought to eradicate. Selinker and Lamendella, (1979:363) point out that fossilisation is a concept that is central to the interlanguage hypothesis. They argue that persistent failure of the majority of adult learners to achieve complete mastery of a second language is

a phenomenon whose existence appears to be generally accepted by the researchers in second language acquisition, as well as by many second language teachers. This 'stopping short' has been referred to as fossilisation (Selinker,1992) or incompleteness (Schachter, 1990). It is one of the noticeable characteristics of the second language acquisition.

Bernard (1995:4) defines fossilisation as a process which is an interlanguage phenomenon and when interlanguage structures remained so stabilised for at least five years, they are regarded as being fossilised. Bernard, (1995) refers to this as interlanguage fossilisation because natural second language development had been arrested before target language levels were attained.

Kohn, (1980:46) refers to fossilisation as a plateau at which students come to 'rest after studying or acquiring English over a period of time...'MacDonald ,(1988:115) contends that fossilisation reflects the different degrees of mastery, varying from little or no control of specific aspects of the target language to a post systematic level, with only occasional appearances of the fossilised form.

Krashen, (1985) says, fossilisation is attributed to various factors by different theorists. Krashen (1985) explains fossilisation by proposing what is known as the Input Hypothesis. Richards et al., (1992:182-183) says that the Input Hypothesis states that for language acquisition to take place in a second or foreign language, it is necessary for the learner to understand input language which contains linguistic items that are slightly beyond the learner's present linguistic competence. Learners understand such language by using cues in the situation. Eventually, the ability to produce language is said to emerge naturally, and need not be taught directly.

Krashen, (1985:43) claims that most second language acquirers fossilise, that is, they stop short of the native speaker level of performance in their second language. In response to the question whether second language theory can account for fossilisation, Krashen suggests several possible causes of fossilisation. They are:

- 1) insufficient quality of input;
- 2) inappropriate quality of input;
- 3) the affective filter;
- 4) the output filter; and
- 5) the acquisition of deviant forms.

About insufficient input, which he calls the most obvious cause of fossilisation, Krashen, (1985:43) says that second language performers may cease progress simply because they have stopped getting comprehensible input. This applies to the foreign language student who does not reside in the country where the language is spoken and who has little access to native speakers, books in the target language and other material resources. Even residents who live in a country where little interaction with native speakers occurs are also affected by insufficient input.

The second cause of fossilisation- inappropriate quality of input, refers to the case of a person whose input is sufficient but is of the wrong kind. Krashen (1985:43) gives an example of a case of a gas station attendant who communicates in English every day but hears phrases like ‘fill up’ could you check the oil?, etc. This input is filled with routines and patterns and has a limited range of vocabulary and little new syntax. Krashen (ibid) says that even

long term residents who interact greatly with the native speakers may be constrained by the inappropriate input they get over and over again.

The third cause, the Affective Filter Hypothesis (Krashen, 1985: 44), was hypothesised to account for cases in which comprehensible input of sufficient quality is available, but in which full acquisition does not take place. The acquirer needs to be 'open' to the input. A lower affective filter accounts for the child's superiority in ultimate attainment. Krashen (ibid) defines the affective filter 'as a mental block that prevents acquirers from utilising the comprehensible input they receive for language acquisition. When it is 'up' the acquirer may understand what he hears or reads but input will not reach the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) This occurs when the acquirer is not motivated, lacks self confidence or is anxious, and when he considers the language class to be a place where his weaknesses will be revealed. The filter is the 'lowest' when the acquirer is so involved that he is hearing or reading another language.

Krashen, (1985:44) says that fossilisation can be explained in terms of 'lack of need', that is, 'acquisition stops because the acquirer simply does not 'need' any more competence- he can communicate adequately with his current grammatical system'. Krashen recommends that fossilisation can be cured if communicative demands are raised and the performer focuses on grammatical accuracy.

The fourth cause of fossilisation, the Output Filter Hypothesis, tries to explain why second language users do not always perform according to their competence (Krashen, 1985:45). These acquirers appear to be fossilised but in

reality they have acquired more rules than they normally perform. The output filter prevents acquired rules from being used in performance. Krashen (1985:46) also hypothesises that the factors responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the output filter are just those factors responsible for the output or affective filter.

The last cause of fossilisation is the acquisition of deviant forms by beginning acquirers who are 'exposed nearly exclusively to imperfect versions of the second language' (Krashen, 1985:46). Some students are exposed to a second language in extreme foreign language situations.

Krashen, (1985) suggests that the acquisition of intermediate forms can be prevented by providing good comprehensible input from the beginning. Because of the scarcity of teachers with the required levels of second language competence, language laboratories, tape recorders, films and books can be utilised to provide comprehensible input.

2.14 Research findings

There have been studies conducted on themes related to fossilisation. A study on the causes of errors in the English of Black senior secondary school pupils and teacher trainees conducted by Wissing (1998) reveals that they are intralingual and not completely attributable to direct transfer. He argued that they were the result of idiosyncratic language usage or merely mistakes rather than errors.

Roos, (1990) performed a syntactic error analysis of the written work of Vista University students. She recommends the use of remedial feedback which should be in the form of problem solving activities. She suggested that activities could focus on the most serious or frequent errors which occurred and should lead the individual student to review his hypothesis about the rules which govern the use of the problematic language structures.

Wissing, (ibid), also refers to the fact that there is a high frequency of standardised errors caused by direct interference and overgeneralisation in the speech and writing of L2 learners. Manthata (1991) also performed error analysis on the writing of North Sotho speaking students. The study categorises errors, and it gives possible reasons for their occurrence and does a frequency count of the various categories.

Roodt, (1993) conducted a research on fossilisation in South African Black English (SABE). Her findings are that the English of Black college students is characterised by a number of deviant structures that consistently crop up in their written and spoken work. The aim of this study was to determine whether these deviances have fossilised or whether they can be regarded as developmental errors. The results revealed that the English of Black students at college has particular features that were not eradicated by two years of tuition by lecturers who did not speak the first language of the students.

In addition to the above, Parkinson (2001) conducted a study to find out whether formal teaching of grammatical constructions results in a change in English second language students' written use of these constructions. The research also tested the assumption that given a large amount of comprehensible input in academic English, English second language students

would automatically acquire this variety including its grammatical features. The results showed that grammatical improvement was not observed either as a result of formal teaching or as a result of extensive communication in the language.

Platt, (1989:395) conducted a research on the different values of 'New Englishes' which are not 'merely fossilised interlanguages but display creativity'. He says research on 'New Englishes' requires a complex paradigm combining different viewpoints, comparison across varieties and joint project by speakers of native and indigenised varieties.

2.15 Criticism of error analysis

According to Hobson, (1999:10) error analysis has been criticised, both from theoretical and methodological point of view. Firstly, in error analysis the norm is the target language and any deviation from the target is viewed as an error. However, determining a norm is problematic because it depends on a variety of factors including the linguistic context, 'the medium (spoken or written), the social context (formal or informal), and the relation between speaker and hearer (symmetrical or asymmetrical)' (van Els et al., 1984:47, cited in Hobson, 1999). According to her, deviation from the norm is viewed negatively, which means that these studies do not acknowledge the creative processes learners use in building new language. They, therefore, ignore a large part of the developmental process.

From a methodological point of view, many limitations are discussed in the literature (Hobson, 1999: 10). Firstly, EA measures production (which may be fairly restricted), rather than perception (which may be less restricted)

(Alexander 1979, cited in Hobson ,1999). Secondly, EA studies focus on only a small part of the production data (i.e. the error) rather than all the learner language produced (Alexander, 1979; Corder, 1975; Schachter and Celce-Murchia, 1977). This means that some 'errors' would not appear to be errors because they seem to be well-formed, although they may be misformed from a pragmatic point of view (Zydatiss cited in Alexander, 1979). Furthermore, learners may avoid some of the TL constructions because they do not know how to produce them or because certain structures are perceived as difficult and more likely to induce error (Alexander, 1979; Kleinmann 1977; Schachter 1974). The group that does produce these constructions, albeit with errors, is not directly comparable to the group which avoids the constructions and, therefore, makes fewer errors overall (Hobson, 1999:11).

Another methodological problem is that the task used to elicit data may have an effect on the errors produced, so that different types and numbers of errors may be produced in different tasks. Shachter and Celce-Murcia 1977, cited in Hobson, (1999) claim that errors were also often classified very subjectively and that analysts did not always know enough about languages they were studying to notice subtle but important differences. Analysts did not always correctly identify L1 influence on the learner language since different L1s may influence the source of the error. For example, what is probably a transfer error for a speaker of one language may be simplification error for a speaker of another language. Related to this point is the way in which errors are classified and quantified. Some studies ascribe errors to one source when there could have been more than one source and other studies ascribe errors to several sources when there was only one source. As Long and Sato (1984: 257 cited in Hobson, (1999) note:

Explanations were often impressionistic and vague. Two or more sources of error were often plausible, yet analysts sometimes opted for just one. This is a criticism taken up by Burt, Dulay and Krashen (1982), who see the root of the problem as a researcher's attempts to describe and classify error simultaneously. Burt et al. argue for a two-stage analysis. First, errors should be described, e.g. by reference to linguistic domain (word order, morphology, lexis, etc or 'surface strategy' (omission, addition, misinformation or misordering). Only then should causes, such as generalization or interference, be attributed.

Another quantification problem occurs when an error is found over a larger linguistic domain than a word (Schachter and Celce-Murcha 1977 cited in Hobson, 1999). In some cases, one error may create additional errors in a text and it may be difficult to decide how to quantify these error forms. Quantification is also problematic since some studies count error types (the occurrence of an error is noted once) and some count tokens (every example of the error is counted; etc (Lennon, 1991). Making comparisons across studies is, therefore, unreliable and comparing error frequencies or generalising the results is not a simple matter (Nickel 1989; Schachter & Celce-Murcia 1977 cited in Hobson, 1999).

2.16 Error versus mistake

According to Hobson, (ibid) at the level of analysis, deciding whether a deviation is an error or a mistake is another problem. Corder (1967, 1971, and 1981) contends that mistakes should not be included in the quantification or analysis of errors and this is the approach taken by most analysts. Johnson (1988) believes that mistakes can be corrected by the learner, but in practice determining whether a learner cannot correct his or her own deviant utterances is very problematic. Errors occur when the learner does not know the rule and needs to be taught it or when the learner needs to be shown that the wrong

knowledge or partial knowledge has been applied to the particular situation (Shaughnessy 1977). In a different view, Edge (1989) rejects this error-mistake classification and calls all deviations from the norm mistakes. These mistakes include:

- 1) slips, which are a result of ‘processing problems or carelessness’ Edge, (1989:11);
- 2) errors, which are comprehensible but which the learner is unable to correct, although the form has been taught; and
- 3) attempts, which are fairly incomprehensible and uncorrectable by the learner.

Snow 1996 (cited in James 1998) argues for two steps in error development. The first step is the presence of errors which the learner does not recognise as errors, and the second step is the presence of errors that the learner recognises as errors but which he or she cannot correct. The mistake, where the learner is able to correct the wrong form, may be a third step. In other words, mistakes are a performance problem rather than a competence problem (Corder 1967), rather like the lapses made by LI speakers (Johnson 1988). This performance-competence distinction is maintained by most theorists in distinguishing errors from mistakes.

Another way of determining whether a deviant form should be classified as an error or a mistake is to decide on the gravity of the error. In order to do this, James 1994:191) believes that criteria for error gravity need to be established (e.g. ‘are lexical errors more serious than grammatical?’), as well as who will judge the gravity (e.g. LI teachers / L2 teachers / non-teachers). An additional criterion is that errors have a lack of speaker intention; otherwise they may be

classified as deviances (James 1998) in Hobson. The classification of an utterance as deviant is further confused by the distinction between unacceptability and ungrammaticality; e.g. a grammatical utterance may be unacceptable because of non-linguistic factors (de Beaugrande and Dressler 1981). Acceptability is judged by use in a particular context, while grammaticality can be judged by a native speaker of the language and a grammatical utterance is necessarily acceptable as well (Lyons, 1967) in Hobson.

Despite the above criticisms and methodological difficulties, there is evidence of a more positive approach to error analysis in some recent writing. According to James, (1998) in Hobson, there are two reasons for the continued use of error analysis when investigating Second Language data. Firstly, the empirical design is simple, with a clear indication of an error if a particular norm is chosen. Secondly, teachers play this normative role and encourage their students to achieve these target norms. This negative view of error may be held by many teachers, but many second language acquisition theorists tend to regard errors in a more positive way because they regard them as signs of creative hypothesis construction and testing (Hobson, 1999).

James, (1998) feels that those conducting Interlanguage studies and those engaged in Error Analyses have different goals, the former is concerned with developing a theory of acquisition and the latter with pedagogic goals. Cook (1993) in Hobson feels that Error Analysis is an effective way of dealing with data in the absence of a suitable analytical framework in Interlanguage studies. An Error Analysis alone does not provide a sufficient description or explanation of learner language, but it has a significant contribution to make as

part of an analysis of this type of language because it can offer insights into the sequence of acquisition, the patterns of acquisition and the types of structures which learners find difficult (Hobson, 1999).

This chapter has presented a thorough view of interlanguage and fossilisation emphasizing different definitions of both. The research findings on errors has offered this study a theoretical basis.

2.17 Summary

This chapter has attempted to define and classify the interlanguage and fossilisation as outlined by various researchers. It is clear from their theoretical inputs that as the learner acquires a second language, he or she goes through various processes, and in the process a lot of errors are committed, and the way in which they are committed can be attributed to a variety of reasons as it has been shown in this chapter. It can be observed that the discussion in this chapter has revealed a lot of shortcomings that can be expected from students who are used as samples in this investigation.

The value of this chapter has, among other things, been that, it has tried to shed some light on factors that contribute to the commitment of errors by the learners of the second language. Some factors, as they have been highlighted in the introductory paragraph, are fossilisation, interlanguage, mother tongue influence, overgeneralisation of the rules, strategies of L2 communication, strategies of L2 learning and transfer of training. This chapter has again added value in this study in terms of looking, especially, at fossilisation and interlanguage concepts from various perspectives through the different theorists. In the following chapter these factors will be explored with an aim

of establishing how much influence they have in the process of second language learning.

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the description and explanation of the research method and procedures used during data collection. It describes the design of the study, the sampling techniques, explains data collection and data analysis procedures. The data that has been described in this chapter were collected by the researcher himself. This was done to ensure that there was reliability of the data collected and to ensure that scientific procedure had been followed in data collection. According to Maree et al.(2007), reliability has to do with the consistency or the repeatability of a measure or an instrument (e.g. a questionnaire). High reliability is obtained when the measure or instrument will give the same results if the research is repeated on the same sample. Hence the researcher observed the whole process to ensure that the process was done scientifically in a controlled environment. This was also done to ensure that all factors that might interfere with data collection were eliminated. This again ensured that all questions related to the instruments used for data collection were explained by the researcher himself and also to save time and minimise expenses which otherwise would have been incurred.

According to Welman et al., (2005) research has shown that questionnaires posted to respondents either do not come back, are not filled in correctly or they delay in coming back. According to Welman et al.(2005), the researcher has the least control over the conditions under which postal questionnaires are completed. The chances are great that some

questionnaires may be omitted or not to be responded to in the order presented, or even that someone else may complete or censor some of the questions. They go on to say that when a respondent leaves a single question unanswered, it may mean that the remainder of his or her responses cannot be used for purposes of analysis. The researcher's lack of control over the completion of the questionnaires may result not only in poorly completed questionnaires, but also a poor response rate (the percentage of questionnaires handed back, returned or posted back.) Postal surveys accordingly tend to have the lowest response rate of all survey methods (ibid).

3.2 Research design

The method used in this study was quantitative. Richards et al. (1992:302) define quantitative research as “research which uses procedures which gather data in numerical form.” Quantitative research uses statistics and controlled measurement. As a result the quantitative approach is regarded as objective and reliable. Quantitative approaches use methods in which an “idea or hypothesis is tested or verified by setting up situations in which the relationship between different subjects can be determined” (Richards et al.,1992:133).

Maree et al., (2007:145) define quantitative research as processes that are systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied. They go on to say that the three most important elements in this definition are: objectivity, numerical data and generalisability. The research design of this study is categorised under the

analytic and deductive approaches. Seliger and Shohamy, (1989:27) define analytic approach as one which identifies a single factor or a cluster of factors. It focuses on a more specific aspect of language proficiency, for example, pronunciation. An analytic approach means that the “second language phenomenon is analysed in its constituent parts and one or a cluster of these constituent parts is examined in greater detail to the exclusion of other factors” Seliger and Shohamy, (1989:56). This study looked at one factor: error analysis in the written English of isiZulu speaking students.

This study involves a descriptive design. According to Macmillan Schumacher (1993:35), researches using a descriptive design “simply describes an existing phenomenon by using numbers to characterise individual or group.” They further argue that in descriptive research there is no manipulation of subjects. The researcher measures things as they are. This study, thus, describes phenomena that occur naturally without the intervention of an experiment. The research exercised some control of factors in the research context by selecting the subjects randomly, selecting the language data to be collected and choosing the method of measurement. The data was collected from a naturally occurring group of subjects.

Questionnaires were also used to collect data from English educators so as:

- (a) to establish their professional qualifications.
- (b) to establish their experience.
- (c) to find out the level at which English was studied.
- (d) to find out the academic qualifications of the educators.

(e) to find out the types of errors found from the learners.

Questionnaires were also used for learners so as to:

- (a) establish the age, sex, grade and dwelling place.
- (b) establish their access to media such as newspapers, radio, journals and private reading.

According to Welman et al., (2005) we may use questionnaires to obtain the following types of information from the respondents:

- a) biographical details (age, educational qualifications, income and so on;
- b) typical behaviour (which television programmes they favour and so on;
- c) opinions, beliefs, and convictions (about any topic or issue;
- d) attitudes (for example towards Outcomes Based Education).

According to Best and Khan, (1993) a questionnaire is an instrument in which respondents provide responses to questions or mark items that indicate their responses. A questionnaire is used when factual information is desired. When opinions rather than facts are desired an attitude scale is used. Questionnaires may be personally administered or mailed to respondents (ibid.)

According to Maree et al., (2007), the designing of a questionnaire requires the researcher to give attention to the following:

- a) appearance of questionnaire
- b) question sequence
- c) wording of questions

d) response categories

These aspects of a questionnaire create an opportunity for the researcher to select different options which will best suit the particular survey. When carefully considered and applied, the questionnaire should be natural, ready-to-use instrument to elicit information (ibid).

3.3 Advantages of the questionnaire

Questionnaires were used in this study as a method of investigation for the following advantages given by Best and Kahn, (1993:231)

- i) It seeks only the information, which cannot be obtained from other sources such as school reports or census data.
- ii) The questions are objective, with no leading suggestions to the responses desired.
- iii) It is easy to tabulate and interpret.
- iv) It can be completed at a convenient time.
- v) Travelling and subsistence costs are minimal.
- vi) Anonymity of the respondents is guaranteed because their names are not given.

3.4 Disadvantages of the questionnaires

Tuckman, (1994:381) warns that despite the advantages of the questionnaire, it should be used with caution for the following reasons:

- i) It limits the kind of questions that can be asked and kind of answers that can be obtained.
- ii) Personally sensitive and revealing information is difficult to obtain from the questionnaire.

- iii) It is difficult to get useful answers to indirect and non-specific questionnaire.
- iv) On questionnaires the researcher must decide all of his or her questions in advance.
- v) Printing, travelling and postage become very expensive.
- vi) Rate of return of the questionnaire is normally very poor.
- vii) The questionnaire may not convey the same meaning to all respondents.

3.5 Sampling techniques

3.5.1 The study population

Three rural schools and three urban schools were chosen as samples for this research. Six high schools were sampled, all of which were from Mthunzini Circuit under Empangeni district in the Zululand region of KwaZulu Natal. The three urban high schools were sampled from Esikhawini Ward and the three rural high schools were from Nsingweni Ward. This was done so as to enable the researcher to find the possible influence of factors such as media on second language teaching and learning and also to see if there was a significant difference in terms of the errors committed both by learners from rural and urban learners.

The population of ninety (90) which consisted of seventy two (72) learners from Further Education and Training band (FET) of the six high schools and eighteen (18) educators, (three from each school), teaching those grades were selected from the same high schools. Both learners and educators had to fill in questionnaires so as to give their views on the teaching and learning of English as a second language. According to Welman et al.

(2005) the population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions. Terre Blanche et al. (1999) define population as the larger pool from which our sampling elements are drawn, and to which we want to generalise our findings.

3.5.2 Sampling

Six schools, three of which were selected from the urban area, and three of which from the rural area. A total of seventy two (72) learners were randomly selected from the school population of learners. Four learners were selected from each school, consisting of two boys and two girls for representativeness, thus four learners were selected from each grade of each school. Mulder, (1989: 55) defines a sample as “a group which is selected from the population while remaining as representative as possible.” The selected subjects represented the overall population. Terre Blanche et al., (2006) define sampling as a process of selecting research participants from an entire population, and involves decisions about which people, settings, events, behaviours and / or social processes to observe. Maree et al., (2007) say that sampling refers to the process used to select a portion of the population for study.

3.6 Data collection procedure

All grade ten, eleven and twelve learners chosen as samples were required to write essays chosen from a given list. They were given topics according to their levels. They were given topics based on things they knew and understood. Grade ten had to choose one from the following essays:

- 1) Our school team.

- 2) My home.
- 3) My first journey by bus; and
- 4) Why I like my parents.

Grade eleven had to choose from the following essays:

- 1) When my friend saved my life.
- 2) The day I shall never forget.
- 3) My first visit to a town; and
- 4) The day my father beat me.

Grade twelve had to choose from the following essays:

- 1) Corporal punishment should be reinstated.
- 2) My first visit to a nature reserve.
- 3) The causes of high failure rate in schools; and
- 4) Where I want to see myself five years time.

Two sets of data were collected. One set was collected from the English educators of the respondents under study, from four different schools, with an aim of establishing their level of education and their syntactic knowledge. The second set of data was collected from learners of the six different schools. This consisted of four grade ten four grade eleven and four grade twelve learners.

The seventy two (72) essays were marked according to the requirement of the study, that is, identifying the errors committed by the learners.

The essays used to collect data for this study were designed to show data concerning the various kinds of errors that are the focus of this study. The essays were written during the third term, in August. A period of one (1) hour was allocated for this task. They were written under the supervision of the

educator in the presence of the researcher to ensure that learners wrote under the same condition as control groups. This was done to ensure that learners did not get assistance outside the classroom and to prevent them from prior preparation. The essays had to be about 200 words long or one to one and half pages.

The next step was the description of errors. This is essentially a comparative process, the data being the original erroneous utterances and the reconstructed utterances. A description of the errors committed shows the respects in which the realisation rules of the target language differ from those of the learner's dialect (ibid.).

The last step was the explanation of the errors. This is concerned with accounting for why and how errors come about Corder,(1981:128). Observation suggests that many errors bear a strong resemblance to characteristics of the mother tongue, indeed many erroneous utterances read like word-for- word translations. This observation has led to the widely accepted theory of transfer, which states that a learner of a second language transfers into his performance in the second language the habits of his mother tongue. In other words, the LI interferes with the L2 (cf Corder 1981).

3.7 Summary

In this chapter the researcher has attempted to give the details of the research methods used in conducting this study. This included the selection and description of the tools or instruments used, how the population was selected, what sampling procedure and administration was followed and why. It has also given details on the perspectives of other researchers about the tools or instruments used to collect the data.

In the next chapter an in-depth interpretation and analysis of data has been done showing how the various variables contribute towards the conclusion of this study.

CHAPTER 4

4. Data Presentation analysis and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from learners and educators from various schools. It presents statistical responses from questionnaires from both rural and urban educators, as well as rural and urban learners. It again presents the various types of errors as they appear in the essays given. All this has been presented in the form of tables.

4.2 Learners' questionnaires

There were seventy two (72) learners selected as respondents for this investigation. There were two boys and two girls from each grade of each school, both urban and rural. That meant three schools were from the rural area with thirty six learners and three schools from the urban area with thirty six learners as respondents. This was done to ensure that every sector of the population was represented and also to find out if there was any significance difference in terms of performance and exposure to facilities of the rural and urban learners. There were, therefore, seventy two questionnaires distributed to each school, which included questions to be answered and a list of essay topics to choose from.

Questions were asked inter alia, to find the background or environment in which the learners lived and their exposure to learning material. Each grade was given four essay topics to choose from. All the seventy two (72) learner questionnaires distributed to respondents were filled in and returned on time. From the seventy two essays distributed, sixty two returned and four were

missing. The reason given for the missing essays was that they were lost. The researcher had to redistribute the four essays which returned later.

The following tables show the responses of both urban and rural learners as they were received by the researcher.

A. Learners

Table 1

4.2.1 Distribution according to gender

	Male	Female	Total
Urban	18	18	36
Rural	18	18	36
Total	36	36	72

Table 1 of learners' information show the gender of the participants in the investigation. This is important for this study to know as much as possible the type of respondents to be dealt with. This can sometimes assist in establishing the choices certain genders make because of attitude based on gender. It should be noted that the researcher recorded 14 teachers instead of 18 that appeared on p.53. The reason for that was, that 4 teachers among them were teaching more than one grades.

Table 2**4.2.2 Distribution according to age**

Age	15	16	17	18	19	20	Total
Urban	2	10	7	4	9	4	36
Rural		2	11	7	6	10	36
Total	2	12	18	11	15	14	72

Table 2 shows the ages of learners in the various grades both urban and rural. The observation here is that the youngest age in the urban schools is 15 years as opposed to the rural schools where the youngest is 16 years. In the urban schools there are few learners who are 20 years, i.e. 4 as opposed to the rural schools with 10 learners who are 20 years. This has helped the researcher to establish the school going age for both urban and rural learners, since the researcher assumed that children in the rural areas start schooling very late since boys first have to start by looking after cattle and girls first have to learn to do domestic chores and look after their younger siblings in preparation for womanhood (see p. 5).

Table 3**4.2.3 Distribution according to grade**

Grade	10	11	12	Total
Urban	12	12	12	36
Rural	12	12	12	36
Total	24	24	24	72

Table 3 of the learners' information shows the number of learners who were selected as respondents in each grade for this investigation, both from the urban and rural schools. It was important for the researcher to know the level of his population for investigation hence he was able to prepare the questionnaires according to their number and level.

Table 4

4.2.4 Distribution according to dwelling Place

Urban	Rural	Total
36	36	72

Table 4 of the learners' information shows the number of respondents according to the place where they live i.e. urban or rural. The researcher did this so as to determine the level of performance between the urban and the rural respondents. This was due to the view that schools in rural areas are under-resourced. This was confirmed by Moyo (2007) in Ntombela when he stated that many schools, especially in rural areas, are reported to be under-resourced (see p. 6)

Table 5

4.2.5 Distribution according to pre-school attendance

Age	Yes	No	Total
Urban	28	8	36
Rural	11	25	36
Total	39	33	72

Table 5 in the learner category shows learners who attended pre-school before going to the primary school, both in the urban and rural schools. This analysis shows that the majority of the urban learners i.e. 28 out of 36 attended pre-school prior to attending the primary school and only 8 did not attend.. With the rural learners the opposite happened since the majority i.e. 25 out of 36 learners did not attend pre-school. Only 11 out of 36 attended the pre-school. This again, concurs with what Moyo in Ntombela (ibid) says. This is again in line with the assumption made by the researcher earlier (see p. 6) that schools experience a lack of facilities such as pre-schools or crèches, and as a result the majority of rural children go to school without having gone through pre-schools.

Table 6

4.2.6 Distribution according to English reading

	Nil	once	twice	thrice	four	Total
Urban	3	6	13	10	4	36
Rural	18	14	4			36
Total	21	20	17	10	4	72

Table 6 shows the statistics on how much time is spent by both urban and rural learners reading English material such as magazines and newspapers. Among the urban learners the majority, 33 out of 36 reads English material at least once. Only 3 out of 36 learners do not read at all. Among the rural learners 18 out of 36 read English material and 18 learners out of 36 do not read at all. One can deduce that, this scenario is caused by the view that has been stated above in table 4 about under-resourced schools. This was alluded to earlier (see p.6)

by the researcher when he stated that rural children do not have access to newspapers and magazines.

Table 7

4.2.7 Distribution according to English programmes watched

	Nil	once	twice	thrice	four	Total
Urban	1	1	3	12	19	36
Rural	20	2	7	7		36
Total	21	3	10	19	19	72

Table 7 indicates that urban learners do watch English programmes. The table shows that only 1 out of 36 learners never watched any English programmes. The rest of them watch programs up to four times. The opposite is true with the rural learners, 20 of which do not watch any English program. Only 16 out of 36 watch English programmes. This can be attributed to factors, which Moyo, in Ntombela (ibid) refers to the lack of audio-visual materials like television and radio where learners would be exposed to spoken English by native and educated speakers of English (see p.6)

Table 8

4.2.8 Distribution according to library visits

	Nil	once	twice	thrice	four	Total
Urban	9	10	12	3	2	36
Rural	20	7	6	2	1	36
Total	29	17	18	5	3	72

Table 8 shows the number of instances learners of both urban and rural schools visit libraries. According to this table urban schools have the majority of 27 learners out of 36 who visit libraries, with only 9 who never visit the library. On the contrary rural schools have the minority of 11 learners out 36 who visit libraries with 25 out of 36 who never visit libraries. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that according to the responses of the teachers investigated only 1 urban school had a library out of 3, and non of the rural schools had a library. This is in accordance with table 15 of the teachers' responses. This is again attributed to the same factor of under-resource referred to earlier.

Table 9

4.2.9 Distribution according to how often English is spoken at home

	Yes	No	Sometimes	always	Total
Urban	4	9	23	0	36
Rural	1	24	11	0	36
Total	5	33	34	0	72

Table 9 wants to establish if both urban and rural learners speak English at home. According to this table only four urban learners speak English at home, 9 never speak it and 23 sometimes do. It was not clear whether the 23 urban and 11 rural who sometimes speak it do so by mixing English and IsiZulu or they complete their communication in English, and that has left a gap still to be considered. The majority of the rural learners i.e. 24 do not speak English and only 1 speaks it. The rest which is 11 sometimes speak English. May be those who speak English do so because they come from an educated backgrounds.

4.3 Teachers' questionnaires

There were eighteen teachers selected as respondents for this investigation. They were all teaching grades ten, eleven and twelve who were participants in this investigation. It meant that three teachers were selected from each school. They were selected both from the urban and rural schools so that the whole teacher population could be represented in the research. Eighteen questionnaires were distributed to the six schools for teachers to respond to. Teachers were expected to make a cross on the blocks they felt were appropriate for them and they were also expected to comment on certain questions. All questionnaires were returned to the researcher on time.

The following tables reflect the status and the manner according to which the teachers responded to various questions as they appeared in their questionnaires.

Table 10

4.3.1 Distribution according to gender

	Male	Female	Total
Urban	5	2	7
Rural	2	5	7
Total	7	7	14

Table 10 of teachers' information show the gender of the participants in the investigation. This is again important for this study to know as much as possible the type of respondents to be dealt with. This can sometimes assist in establishing the choices certain genders make because of attitude based on gender. It should be noted that the researcher recorded 14 teachers instead of

18 that appeared on p.53. The reason for that was, that 4 teachers among them were teaching more than one grades.

Table 11

4.3.2 Distribution according to age

	20-30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	Total
Urban	3	3	1	0	0	7
Rural	2	4	1	0	0	7
Total	5	7	2	0	0	14

Table 11 displays the teachers' ages both in the urban and rural schools. The majority of teachers fall within 20 to 39 years. From this the researcher concluded that the majority of teachers are young and they do not belong to the old school of thought, and they are more communicative in their approach than being structural, and the language used is more informal than being grammatical.

Table 12

4.3.3 Distribution according to teaching experience

	0-4	5-9	10+	Total
Urban	1	2	4	7
Rural	2	2	3	7
Total	3	4	7	14

From Table 12 we learn about the teaching experience distribution of teachers both from the urban and rural schools. Among the 7 urban teachers the least experienced was 4 years and the other 4 were between 5 and 10 years experienced. Among the 7 rural teachers the least experienced was 2 years and the other 7 were between 5 and 10 years. What is learnt from this distribution is that more experienced teachers are found in the urban schools, which is probably because urban schools are more resourced than rural schools (Moyo in Ntombela (ibid)

Table 13

4.3.4 Distribution according to English teaching experience

	5 & less yrs	5yrs	10 yrs	10yrs +	15yrs	Total
Urban	4	0	3	0	0	7
Rural	5	0	2	0	0	7
Total	9	0	5	0	0	14

Table 13 indicates the experience in English teaching of urban and rural teachers. According to this table 4 urban teachers are four years experienced and less and the other 3 are 10 years experienced. 5 rural teachers are 5 years and less and 2 of them are 10 years experienced. That gives us 9 teachers both from urban and rural schools being 5 years experienced and less. This leaves the researcher with some questions as to whether these teachers are able to deal decisively with the learner errors.

Table 14**4.3.5 Distribution according to highest qualification in English**

	English 111	Honours	Masters	Doctorate	other	Total
Urban	4	2	0	0	1	7
Rural	5	1	1	0	0	7
Total	9	3	1	0	1	14

Table 14 shows the teachers highest qualifications in English. 4 of the urban teachers have English 111, 2 have an honours degree and one has marked the “other”, which could mean underqualified. The majority, which is 9, of the teachers both urban and rural have English 111 as their qualifications with only 3 with post graduate qualifications. The fact that there was 1 teacher without a qualification in English was indicative and a proof of what (Buthelezi, 1995) referred to when saying, in most cases, teachers in the rural areas are either unqualified, or under qualified in English as a subject, or else they do not have linguistic knowledge to be able to deal with learner errors (Buthelezi, 1995). (see p. 8)

Table 15**4.3.6 Distribution according to availability of a library**

	Yes	No	Total
Urban	1	2	3
Rural	0	3	3
Total	1	5	6

The above table (15) indicates that there was only 1 urban school that had a library, and 2 urban schools had no library. On the other hand no rural school had a library. For the rural schools, this can be attributed to the lack of resources. On the other hand even the urban schools do not have libraries, but they are better off in the sense that urban learners have opportunities of going to community libraries as opposed to rural learners who have no libraries both at schools and in the community.

Table 16

4.3.7 Distribution according to training in the structure of English

	Yes	No	Total
Urban	5	2	7
Rural	7	0	7
Total	12	2	14

Table 16 tries to establish if teachers received training in the structure of English. According to this table 5 urban teachers received training in this aspect and two did not. None of the rural teachers received training in this aspect and yet most of them have English 111 qualifications. This could mean that they did not qualify professionally as English teachers, in which case they are underqualified as English teachers.

Table 17

4.3.8 Distribution according to teaching preference

	Poetry	Grammar	Literature	Total
Urban	0	2	5	7
Rural	1	1	5	7
Total	1	3	10	14

Table 17 shows the aspects of English which teachers preferred to teach. This table has revealed that 5 of the urban teachers prefer to teach literature as opposed to 2 who prefer to teach grammar. The majority which is 5 teachers in the rural schools prefer to teach literature, 1 prefers poetry and 1 prefers grammar. This has been alluded to in the previous chapters by the researcher (p.8)

Table 18

4.3.9 Distribution according to need of Grammar for English teachers

	Yes	No
Urban	7	0
Rural	7	0
Total	14	0

Table 18 shows responses on whether English teachers need grammar. According to this finding all the 7 teachers, both urban and rural agreed that English teachers needed grammar. This was an indication that teachers were aware of their weaknesses in the grammar aspect.

Table 19

4.3.10 Distribution according to mother tongue impact on English errors

	Yes	No	Total
Urban	7	0	7
Rural	7	0	7
Total	14	0	14

Table 19 shows the responses based on whether mother tongue has an impact that contributes in creating errors. According to all the 14 teachers' responses mother tongue has an impact on learner errors. The researcher touched on this earlier in the previous chapters (see p.6)

4.4 Identified learner errors

These are examples of errors that have been identified from the essays presented by the learners of grades ten, eleven and twelve both from the urban and rural high schools which were selected as samples for this investigation.

4.4.1 Wrong tense formation.

- i. I have **never been seen** them fighting. Grade 10
- ii. She **tryed** her best. Grade 10
- iii. One boy who was cruel **beated** me. Grade 11
- iv. We **were finished** eating. Grade 11
- v. Learners **are not study** hard Grade 12
- vi. I **didn't knew** that dad came early Grade 12

- vii. I have **never been seen** them fighting. Grade 10
- viii. She **tryed** her best. Grade 10

Answers

- ix. I have never seen them fighting. Grade 10
 - i. She tried her best. Grade 10
- vii. One boy who was cruel beat me. Grade 11
- viii. We had finished eating. Grade 12
- xi. Learners are not studying hard or learners do not study hard. Grade 12
- xii. I didn't know that dad came early. Grade 12

In the grade 10 and 11 sentences, learners have not mastered the past tense since they write 'been' which is the auxiliary used for passive and '**were finished**' is passive. In the next sentences the rule of past tense formation has been overgeneralised by adding -ed (**tried**) and grade 11 -ed (**beated**) instead of -ied and **beat**. This is what Selinker (1972) refers to when saying, some of the rules of the interlanguage system may be the result of the overgeneralisation of specific rules and features of the target language. Even grade 12 has not mastered tenses since an auxiliary '**are**' has been wrongly used two negatives '**didn't knew**' have been used.

4.4.2 Prepositional errors.

- i. I asked + something to wear. Grade 10
- ii. They protect me **to** all things. Grade 10
- iii. Now she even take me to school **with** her car Grade 11
- vi. **On** that time I was doing grade five. Grade 11
- v. He was trying to lead me **in** the black shadow. Grade 12
- vi. The Table Mountain that is situated **at** Cape Town. Grade 12

Answers

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. I asked for something to wear. | Grade 10 |
| ii. They protect me from all things. | Grade 10 |
| iii. Now she even takes me to school by her car. | Grade 11 |
| iv. At that time I was doing grade five. | Grade 11 |
| v. He was trying to lead me into the black shadow. | Grade 12 |
| vi. The Table Mountain that is situated in Cape Town. | Grade 12 |

All the grades committed errors of omitting and using the wrong prepositions. This is probably because in isiZulu there are no prepositions. This is an indication that all grades are influenced by their mother tongue, and that they have not yet mastered the use of prepositions. The researcher alluded to this in the previous chapters.

4.4.3 Concord errors.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. Those who offers bursaries can help me. | Grade 10 |
| ii. I shall be glad when my dreams has come true. | Grade 10 |
| iii. Taverns does not help. | Grade 11 |
| iv. I want to have all the things that is needed | Grade 11 |
| v. My friends that makes us to absent ourselves. | Grade 12 |
| vi. Every one have got dreams. | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i.. Those who offer bursaries can help. | Grade 10 |
| ii. I shall be glad when my dreams have come true. | Grade 10 |
| iii. Taverns do not help. | Grade 11 |
| iv. I want to have all the things that are needed | Grade 11 |

- xi. My friends that make us absent ourselves. Grade 12
- xii. Everyone has got dreams. Grade 12

The concord errors reveal that all the grades have not grasped how concords work. They do not understand that the verb should always agree with the subject, i.e. a singular subject is followed by the singular verb form, and the plural subject is followed by the plural verb form. This error has been observed in almost all the respondents.

4.4.4 Use of auxiliaries.

- i. They+ not too old fashioned. Grade 10
- ii. Guess what I+ done after this. Grade 10
- iii. It+ because I listen to my parent. Grade 11
- iv. That + why I need to have this business. Grade11
- v. There are many challenges that +faced by today’s youth. Grade 12
- vi. It + like my mind was in the ocean. Grade 12

Answers

- i. They are not too old fashioned. Grade 10
- ii. Guess what I have done after this Grade 10
- iii. It is because I listen to my parents. Grade 11
- iv. That is why I need to have this business. Grade 11
- v. There are many challenges that are faced by today’s youth. Grade 12
- vi. It was like my mind was in the ocean. Grade 12

In all the grades the modal verbs have been omitted. This also shows that learners still struggle with the use of auxiliaries since this error is persistent in all grades. It is, therefore, clear that this type of an error has been fossilised.

4.4.5 Articles errors

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. I used an bus to travel with . | Grade 10 |
| ii. My mother buys me a expensive clothes | Grade 10 |
| iii. My school uniform was shining like a stars | Grade 11 |
| iv. I take a money and go. | Grade 11 |
| v. The education is my key. | Grade 12 |
| vi. It was my first time to see such + beautiful place | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. I used a bus to travel by or I travelled by bus. | Grade 10 |
| ii. My mother buys me expensive clothes. | Grade 10 |
| iii. My school uniform was shining like stars. | Grade 11 |
| iv. I take money and go. | Grade 11 |
| v. Education is my key. | Grade 12 |
| vi. It was my first time to see such a beautiful place. | Grade 12 |

The common error with the use of articles by the learners is the use of the wrong articles and the use of an article unnecessarily. This can be attributed to the fact that in isiZulu there are no articles. This is confirmed by Buthelezi (1983:28) when saying none of the black languages spoken in South Africa use the article system.

4.4.6 Pronoun errors.

- | | | |
|------|---|----------|
| i. | My parents they do all. | Grade 10 |
| ii. | Me asked him. | Grade 10 |
| iii. | They use to tell if they was something wrong. | Grade 11 |
| iv. | My dream is to have money which I work for it . | Grade 11 |
| v. | They were so many things that I saw. | Grade 12 |
| vi. | They will be two cars. | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | | |
|------|---|----------|
| i. | My parents do all. | Grade 10 |
| ii. | I asked him. | Grade 10 |
| iii. | They used to tell if there was something wrong. | Grade 11 |
| iv. | My dream is to have money which I work for. | Grade 11 |
| v. | There were so many things that I saw. | Grade 12 |
| vi. | There will be two cars. | Grade 12 |

There seemed to be a problem with the use of a noun and a pronoun. Learners used both the noun and the pronoun simultaneously. They seemed not to understand that a pronoun is used in the place of a noun. This could be a result of the way they speak in isiZulu. In isiZulu for instance you do say, **Umfana yena akakufuni ukudla**. This could be literally translated as, **The boy he does not like food**. Roos (1990:91) attributes pronoun errors to the first language interference which is a direct transfer from the mother tongue.

4.4.7 Plural formation errors

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. Some childrens do not care about parents | Grade 10 |
| ii. I wish to live with my beautiful childrens | Grade 10 |
| iii. Our teacher told us to prepare ourselves. | Grade 11 |
| vii. I want to be a man between mans. | Grade 11 |
| v. I would like to teach other childrens in my community. | Grade 12 |
| vi. I am now a man among mens. | |

Answers

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. Some children do not care about parents. | Grade 10 |
| ii.. I wish to live with my beautiful children. | Grade 10 |
| iii. Our teacher told us to prepare ourselves. | Grade 11 |
| iv. I want to be a man among men. | Grade 11 |
| v. I want to teach other children in my community. | Grade 12 |
| iv. I am now a man among men. | Grade 12 |

Regarding the formation of the plural form there was a tendency of generalising the rule. An 's' was added even on the irregular nouns. This was common in all the grades, which suggested that plural formation was not mastered.

4.4.8 Mother tongue interference.

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. I took my seat and stayed quietly. | Grade 10 |
| ii. Let me stay in the story.. | Grade 10 |
| iii. I will run with a Limousine. | Grade 11 |
| iv. My dream is not like of all other . | Grade 11 |
| v. After that I want to open my business. | Grade 12 |
| vi. I closed my cell phone | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. I sat quietly (on my seat.) | Grade 10 |
| ii. Let me get to the point. | Grade 10 |
| iii. I shall buy a Limousine. | Grade 11 |
| iv. My dream is different from that of others. | Grade 11 |
| v. After that I want to start my business. | Grade 12 |
| vi. I switched off my cell phone | Grade 12 |

Mother tongue played an important role in the above errors. Learners made direct translations from their first language. This is probably due to the tendency of thinking in the first language before writing. This is what Selinker (1972) refers to when talking about language transfer.

4.4.9 Use of past tense and infinitive

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i I wanted to built a beautiful house for them. | Grade 10 |
| ii. I used to cried. | Grade 10 |
| iii. He wanted to helped me. | Grade 11 |
| iv. He said he wants to saw my children. | Grade 11 |
| v. When I want to done all my dreams. | Grade 12 |
| vi. After that I want to bought my car. | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|--|----------|
| i. I want to build a beautiful house for them. | Grade 10 |
| ii. I used to cry. | Grade 10 |
| iii. He wanted to help me. | Grade 11 |
| iv. He said he wanted to see my children.. | Grade 11 |
| v. When I want to do all my dreams. | Grade 12 |

vi. After that I want to buy my car.

Grade 12

Learners had a problem of using the past tense with the infinitive. This is evident in all grades as it is observed in all sentences they wrote. Students sometimes apply a rule in areas where it is incorrect or appropriate, Richards (1974:38). It was clear that learners generalised the rule of past tense formation.

4.4.10 Use of auxiliary with the past tense

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. When I am completed my school. | Grade 10 |
| ii. Where I was lived before. | Grade 10 |
| iii. When I am visited my parents. | Grade 11 |
| iv. They will looked after my children. | Grade 11 |
| v. One boy will protect my family when I am died . | Grade 12 |
| vi. When my parents are died . | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. When I have completed my school. | Grade 10 |
| ii. Where I lived before. | Grade 10 |
| iii. When I visited my parents. | Grade 11 |
| iv. They will look after my children. | Grade 11 |
| v. One boy will protect my family when I have died
(am dead) | Grade 12 |
| vi. When my parents are dead. (have died) | Grade 12 |

With these errors learners seemed to have mastered the formation of the past tense but the use of the auxiliaries after the verbs suggested that they had not

yet mastered how they are used. This again can be attributed to the generalisation of the rule (ibid)

4.4.11. The cell phone errors

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. I luv them very much. | Grade 10 |
| ii We were there on tym . | Grade 10 |
| iii.. ... coz I was in Richards Bay. | Grade 11 |
| iv. I'll never 4get that dei . | Grade 11 |
| v. Every learner must get gud marks. | Grade 12 |
| vi. I want to say thanx to my parents. | Grade 12 |

Answers

- | | |
|---|----------|
| i. I love them very much. | Grade 10 |
| ii. We were there on time. | Grade 10 |
| iii. I'll never 4get that dei . | Grade 11 |
| iv.because I was in Richards Bay. | Grade 11 |
| v. I'll never forget that day. | Grade 11 |
| vi. Every learner must get good marks. | Grade 12 |
| vii. I want to thank to my parents. | Grade 12 |

Regarding this new type of errors, learners seemed to be more and more influenced by technology such as cell phones. They initially utilised this form of writing deliberately to create more space in the cell phones, probably with the knowledge of the correct spelling. This kind of writing is now applied even in the formal settings like schools. It is now not clear whether the learners who write in this pattern commit errors or mistakes, since one is not sure if they know the correct spelling or not. This is

because Corder (1981) differentiates between an error and a mistake (see p.15-16).

4.5 Summary

This chapter has attempted to elucidate both the learners' and teachers' responses as they were received. Both the rural and urban learners' collected data statistically presented and compared so as to establish, inter alia, the difference in terms of the availability of resources and the conditions under which teaching and learning occurred.

It has also attempted to highlight the various types of errors as they manifested themselves in the various essays that were written the various grade from the selected schools.

The next chapter will try to analyse the preceding data and look at whether this has been able to meet the objectives of the investigator and also to establish if it is in line with the researcher's hypotheses. It will also attempt to relate this data with the views of other researchers.

CHAPTER 5

6. Conclusion, suggestions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The main aim of the study was to determine error fossilisation as it shows itself in the written form by learners in both rural and urban areas and to investigate contributory factors that lead to those errors. Effort was made to identify, describe and explain possible causal factors of those errors. For the investigation to achieve its objectives, it was important to review literature on the nature and theories of error fossilisation. Literature review provided the conceptual framework for investigating error fossilisation among rural secondary school learners. Questionnaires for this study were used to collect data, both from educators and learners.

The investigator was concerned that learners persistently commit errors in the written form in spite of the interventions by educators, and that English is a medium of instruction in almost all subjects. These errors were identified from learners' written work, which comprised the use of auxiliaries, tenses, concords, articles, prepositions, pronouns, plurals and infinitives. Data analysis and interpretation provided the basis for the presentation of findings and recommendations. This chapter provides a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations that were established in the course of the investigation.

5.2 Findings and conclusions

5.2.1 The findings with regard to educators were as follows:

With regard to the hypothesis that English teachers are semi-skilled and underqualified to improve learner competence in English as a second language, the findings were that none of the teachers were above English three in English as a qualification. Among them was one who had not completed a junior degree and others had diplomas. The majority of teachers investigated had less than ten years experience in English teaching. With regard to training in the structure of English, the findings indicated that 75% of the teachers were not trained on the structure of English. Hence the conclusion that they do not have syntactic knowledge to deal with learner errors. Seventy five percent of the teachers investigated showed a preference to teach either poetry or literature instead of grammar.

It also emerged from the findings that most of the rural schools did not have libraries. The conclusion that could be drawn from the schools investigated was that the majority of rural schools did not have libraries. This was revealed by 100% of the schools investigated which did not have libraries. In their remarks teachers agreed that the absence of libraries contributes to learner errors

5.2.2 Findings with regard to learner errors.

The findings based on the essay written by grades ten eleven and twelve revealed that all grades committed the following errors: use of auxiliaries,

tenses, concords, articles, prepositions, pronouns, plurals, mother tongue interference, infinitives and auxiliary with past tense. The conclusion was that Further Education and Training band commits similar errors.

With regard to the use of auxiliaries, all grades had the tendency of either omitting or overgeneralising the rule in the use of auxiliaries. Concerning the tense formation the findings revealed that learners were not sure about tense formation. This was seen when they mixed tenses in their essays. With regard to the concord, learners revealed that they had problems with the subject and the verb agreement.

In as far as the appropriate use of the articles was concerned, the study revealed that learners of all grades either used the wrong articles or used them where they were not necessary. The conclusion was that learners did not know where and when to use articles. Learners had a tendency of using the wrong prepositions in their essays. This could probably be attributed to either, the fact that there are no prepositions in their mother tongue, isiZulu or that prepositions could have different meanings. The implication was that the meaning and the use of prepositions was not taught to them. Pronoun errors formed part of the findings, since learners could not distinguish between the pronouns 'there' and 'they.' They used them interchangeably. They again tended to use both the noun and the pronoun simultaneously in their sentences. The conclusion was that isiZulu as a mother tongue had influence in this error. There was a lot of overgeneralisation of the rule in the formation of plural. Findings also revealed a lot of mother tongue interference. Some sentences showed direct translation from mother tongue. Again all grades had a tendency of using the infinitives and the auxiliaries with the past tense.

6. Recommendations.

- (i) All second language teachers should receive training in the structure of English.
- (ii) Subject advisors should conduct capacity empowerment workshops for teachers who have not been exposed to the structure of English.
- (iii) After the learners' writing, teachers should identify and record errors and discuss them with learners.
- (iv) Teachers should pay more attention to writing to help learners to develop skills in producing standard language.
- (v) Teachers should use English as a medium of instruction instead of code switching.
- (vi) Teachers should expose learners to English through newspapers, magazines, and school radio programmes.
- (vii) Teachers should upgrade their qualifications in English.
- (viii) Teachers should introduce competitions in both writing and reading among different grades so as to improve writing and reading skills.
- (ix) All rural schools should have libraries and the general head for the Department of Education to fully resource rural schools, in particular.
- (x) Learners should use most of their spare time in reading English books and newspapers.

- (xi) Learners should make sure that they use English as a medium of communication, especially in the classroom as well as inside the school premises.
- (xii) Learners should listen to English news both in the radio and television.
- (xiii) Learners should participate in debates and symposia.

7. Conclusion

Although the findings of this investigation were based on samples obtained from only four schools, it led the researcher to the conclusion that rural school learners, on account of the lack of exposure to English, commit more and similar errors. The errors made in all grades did not differ so much, so as to distinguish grade twelve from grade ten, although they have spent more years in school than the other grades. The findings also revealed that error fossilisation is unavoidable for second language learners.

8. Bibliography

Adjemian, C. 1976. On the nature of interlanguage systems. *Language Learning*, 26, 2: 279-320.

Alexander, R. 1979. *Elements of a theory of second language learning*. Frankfurt : Verlag Peter Long.

Ancker, W. 2000. Errors and corrective feedback : Updated theory and classroom practice. *English Teaching Forum*. 38 (4) 20-24.

Appel, R. and Muysken, P . 1987. *Language contact and bilingualism*. London : Edward Arnold.

Azevedo, M.M. 1980. The interlanguage of advanced learners : An error analysis of graduate students Spanish. *International Review of Applied Linguistics*.

Bartholomae, D. 1980. *Study of Error*. *College Composition and Communication*, 31, 253-269.

Barnard, Y. 1995. Semantico-grammatical consciousness raising in an ESL programme for primary school teacher trainees. Unpublished (PhD. Thesis). Vista University.

- Belhaj, A.M. 1997. Contrastive Textual Analysis: An Arabic-English, English-Arabic Translation Corpus. *Occasional Papers*, Vol. 24-25:103-150.
- Best, J.W. and Kahn J.V. 1993. *Research in Education*. London: Allyn and Bacon Publishers.
- Bialystok, E. and Sharwood Smith, M. 1985. Interlanguage is not a state of *mind*: An evaluation of the construct for second language acquisition. *Applied Linguistics*, 6 (2), 102-116.
- Brown, C. 2000. *The interrelation between speech perception and phonological acquisition from infant to adult*. London : Blackwell Publishers Limited.
- Buthelezi, Q. 1995. The English article system for black speakers. *Journal for Language Teaching* 17,2: 28-43
- Candling, R.B. 2001. *Vocabulary and Language Teaching*. New York: Longman Inc.
- Cohen, A.D. and Robins, M. 1976. Towards assessing interlanguage performance. The relationship between selected errors, learner's characteristics and learner's explanations. *Language Learning*, 26, 1 : 45-66.
- Corder, S.P.1967. The significance of a learner's errors.
In: *IRAL* 5, 4:161-170.

Cook, V. J. 1993. *Linguistics and Second Language acquisition*.
Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Corder, S.P. 1974. *Error Analysis*. (158-171). London: Longman.

Corder, S.P. 1975. Error analysis, interlanguage and second language acquisition. *Language teaching and linguistics: Abstracts*, 8, 201-218.

Corder, S.P. 1981. *Error Analysis and Interlanguage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Douglas, D. and Selinker, L. 1994. Research methodology in context-based second language research. In E.E. Tarone, S.M Gass, and A.D. Cohen (Eds.), *Research methodology in second-language acquisition* (pp.119-131), Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Dessouky, S.S. 1990. Error Analysis: A no-stop Area of research. An Analytical Study of English Verb and Preposition Errors in the Written Expression of Al-Azhar Students. *Studies in Curricula and Methodology*. No 8, July: 146-176.

Dulay, H. and Burt, M. 1974. *You can't learn without goofing*. In *error analysis*. ed. J.C. Richards. London: Longman.

Edge, J. 1989. *Mistakes and Corrections*. London: Longman.

Els ,T. 1984. *Applied Linguistics and the learning and Teaching of Foreign Language*, London: Edward Arnold.

El-Sayed, A.M.M. 1982. An Investigation into the Syntactic Errors of Saudi Freshmen's English Compositions. Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Ellis, R. 1985b. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. 1997. Two approaches for investigating second language acquisition in context. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Second Language Acquisition in Context* (pp. 3-29). London: Prentice-Hall.

Ellis, R.1994.*The study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Farhat, S.H. 1994. Error Analysis: A study of the Written Performance of University of Khartoum Freshmen. Unpublished M.A. Thesis in Applied Linguistics. Khartoum University, Sudan.

Gass, S.M. and Selinker, L. (Eds.). 1994. *Language transfer in language learning* (re.ed.).Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Han, Z. H. 1998. *Fossilisation in adult second language acquisition*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Hyltenstam, K. 1988. Implicational patterns in interlanguage syntax variation. *Language Learning*, 27 (2), 383-411.

Jagtman, M. and Bongaerts, T. 1994. Report-COMOLA : A computer system for the analysis of interlanguage data. *Second Language Research*, 10 (1) 49-83.

James, C. 1988 *Errors in Language Learning and Use: Exploring Error Analysis*. Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman Limited.

Johnson, D.M. 1992. *Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning*. New York: Longman.

Johnson, K. 1988. Mistake correction. *English Language Journal*, 42 (2), 89-97.

Karma, N. and Hajjaj, H. 1989. *Errors in English among Arabic Speakers Analysis and Remedy*. London: Longman.

Klein, W. 1986. *Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

Kleinmann, H. 1977. Avoidance behaviour in adult second language Acquisition. *Language Learning*, 27 (1), 93-108.

Kohn, J.J. 1980. What ESL teachers need to know about sociolinguistics. In

Croft, K. 1980 *Reading English as a Second Language*, Cambridge, Mass: Winthrop Publishers.

Krashen, S.D. 1985. *The input Hypothesis*. London: Longman.

Lennon, P, 1991. Error. Some problems of definition, identification and distinction. *Applied Linguistics*, 12 (2), 180-196.

Long, M. H. 1991. A design feature in language teaching methodology. In K. de Bot, R. Grimsberg, and C. Kramsch (Eds). *Foreign Language in cross-cultural Perspective* (pp.39-52) Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Larsen-Freeman, D. and Long, M. H. 1991. *An introduction to Second Language Acquisition Research*. London: Longman.

Lowther, M. 1983. Fossilisation, pidginisation and the Monitor.

In L. Mac-Mathuna and D. Singleton (eds,); *Language Across Cultures*.

Dublin : Irish Association for Applied Linguistics

McLaughlin, B. 1984. Restructuring , *Applied Linguistics*, 11 (2) , 114-128.

Manthata, S.M. 1991. Error analysis: a sample study of errors made by Northern Sotho speaking learners (urban and rural) in written English with special reference to standard 6,8 and 10 Unpublished M. Ed. Dissertation Sovenga, University of the North

Maree, J. 2007. *First Steps In Research*. Pretoria :Van Schaik Publishers,

MacDonald, M.G. 1988. Fossilisation and an emerging social Dialect.
Lenga Mordenas 15:115-124.

McDough, S.H.1986.*Psychology in Foreign Language Teaching*.
London : Edward Arnold.

Michaelides, N.N. 1990. Error Analysis: *An Aid to teaching*. *English Teaching Forum* Vol.XXXVIII/ 4: 28:30.

Mitchell, R. and Myles, M. 2004. *Second Language Learning Theories*. New York : Hodder Arnold.

Mouton, J. and Joubert, J. 1990. *Knowledge and Method in the human Sciences*. Pretoria: The Centre for Research Methodology.

Mulder, J.C. 1989. *Statistical techniques in education*. Pretoria :Haum.

Nakuma, C.A 1998. A new theoretical account of Fossilisation: Implications for L2 attrition. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*

Nemser, W. 1971. Approximate Systems of Foreign Language Learners
International Review of Applied Linguistics. 9: 115-124.

Nik Safiah, Karim. 1978. *BM Syntax: some aspects of its standardisation*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.

Norrish, J. 1983. *Language Learners and their Errors*. London: The Macmillan Press.

Ntombela, B.X.S., 2008. Communicative Competence in English among Rural African High School Learners in Eshowe Circuit. Unpublished PhD. Dissertation University of Zululand, South Africa.

Olasehinde, M.O. 2002. Error analysis and remedial pedagogy. In Babatunde S. T. and D.S. Adeyanju (eds.). *Language, Meaning and Society*. Ilorin : Itaytee Press and Publishing Co.

Parkinson, J. 2001. Explicit teaching of grammar and improvement in the grammar student writing. *Journal for Language Teaching*, 35, 4 : 278-293.

Platt, J. 1989. The nature of indiginised Englishes : interference – creativity-universals. *Language Sciences*, 11, 4 : 395-407.

Perdue, C. (Ed.) 1993a. Adult language acquisition: Cross-linguistic perspectives Vol. 1. *Field methods*. Cambridge: University Press.

Pienemann, M. 1992. COALA – a computational system for interlanguage analysis. *Second Language Research*, 8 (1), 59-92.

Radwan, M.A. 1988. A linguistic analysis of the grammatical and Lexical Errors in the Nominal Group Found in the Written English of Syrian University Students. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Nottingham. UK

Richards, J.C. 1974. Social factors, Interlanguage and Language Learning, in Richards, J.C. (Ed.) *Error analysis. Perspectives on Second Language Acquisition*. London : Longman.

Richards. J.C. Plott, J. and Platt H. 1996. *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* London: Longman.

Roodt, M.P. 1993. Fossilization in South African Black English. Unpublished (M.A. dissertation) University of Potchefstroom.

Roos, J.H. 1990. Syntactic error analysis of written work of Students at Vista University. Unpublished (M.A. dissertation) Rand Afrikaans University (R.A.U.)

Rutherford, W.E. 1984. Description and explanation in interlanguage syntax: State of the art. *Language Learning*.

Rutherford, W.E. 1989a. Preemption and the learning L2 grammars. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*. 11, 4: 44-457.

Schachter, J. 1974. *An Error in Error analysis. Language Learning* 24, (2): 204-214.

Schaschter, J. 1974. An error in error analysis. *Language Learning*, 205-214.

Schaschter, J. 1990. A new account of language transfer. In S.M. Gass and L. Selinker (Eds.), *Language transfer in language learning* (rev. ed.), (pp. 32-46). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Schaschter, J., and Celce-Murcia, M. 1977. Some reservations concerning error analysis. *TESOL QUARTERLY*, 11 (4), 441-451.

Scott, M. S. and Tucker, G.R. 1974, Error Analysis and English-Language Strategies of Arab Students. *Language Learning* 24 (1): 69-97.

Selinker, L. 1972. Interlanguage. *IRAL* 10, 3:209-23.

Selinker, L. and Douglas, D. 1985. Wrestling with 'context' in interlanguage Theory. *Applied Linguistics*, 6 (2), 190-204.

Selinker, L. and Lammendella, . 1978. Two perspectives on fossilisation in interlanguage learning. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin*. 3 (2), 144-191.

Selinker, L. Lakshmanan, V. 1992. Language Transfer and fossilisation: *The Multiple Effect Principle*. In Gass, S.M. and Selinker(eds) 1992. 197-216.

Shapira, R.G. 1978. *The non Learning of English: case study of an adult*. In : Hatch, E.M. & Marcussen, H.(eds) (1978). 246-271.

Shaughnessy, M. 1977. *Error and expectations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Spolsky, B. 1998. *Conditions for Second Language Learning*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Stark, L. 2001. *Analysing the interlanguage of ASL natives*. Newark: University of Delaware.

Stern, H.H. 1993. *Fundamental Concepts of Language Teaching*. Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Tarone, E.E. 1987. Methodologies for studying variability in second language acquisition in R. Ellis (Ed.). *Second language acquisition in context* (pp. 35-46). London : Prentice-Hall.).

Tarone, E.E. 1982. Systematicity and attention in interlanguage. *Language Learning* , 32 (1), 69-84

Tarone, E.E. 1994, A summary: Research approaches in studying second-language acquisition or 'if the shoe fits ...'. In E.E. Tarone, S.M Gass and A.D. Cohen (Eds.), *Research Methodology in Second Language Acquisition* (pp. 323-336). Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Taylor, B.P. 1975. The use of overgeneralisation and transfer learning strategies by elementary and intermediate students of ESL. *Language Learning*, 25:73-107.

Terre Blanche, M. 2006. *Research in Practice*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press.

Tuckman, B.W. 1994. *Conducting Educational Research*. Florida: Harcourt Brace College Publishers.

Vahdatinejad, S. 2008. Students' error analysis and attitude towards teacher feedback using a selected software : a case study. Unpublished Masters thesis. Univesiti Kabangsaan Malaysia, Bangi.

Vigil, N.A. and Oller J.W. 1976. Role fossilisation: a tentative *model*. *Language Learning*, 26,2: 281-295.

Weireesh, S. 1991. How to analyse interlanguage. *Journal of Psychology and Education*. 9 : 113-22.

Welman, C. 2005. *Research Methodology*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Wilkins, D.A. 1972. *Linguistics in Language Teaching*. London: Edward Arnold.

Willcott, P.J. 1972. An Analysis of the Written English of Native Speakers of Arabic as found in American History final Examination Given at the University of Texas at Austin. Unpublished PhD. Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, U.S.A.

Wissing, R.J. 1988. Language contact and interference in the acquisition of English proficiency by Bantu speaking students. Pretoria : Unisa (M.A. dissertation).

ANNEXTURE 1

P.O. Box 1352
Esikhawini
3887
02 August 2010

The Principal

Dear Sir / Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH
EDUCATORS AND LEARNERS AT YOUR SCHOOL.**

I hereby request a permission to conduct a research with English educators and learners in your school. My investigation is entitled “**ERROR ANALYSIS: A STUDY OF ERRORS MADE BY ISIZULU SPEAKING LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN SELECTED SCHOOLS.**”

Four learners two boys and two girls, who will be selected randomly from grade 10, 11 and 12 will be asked to write an essay of about one to one and half pages each on given topics. They will also be expected to fill in some learner questionnaires each. The educators, will similarly be requested to fill in the questionnaires which will be treated with a very high level of confidentiality.

Thanking you in anticipation.

M.V. Nzama

ANNEXTURE 2

To : The English Educators

I would like to appeal for your assistance with regard to the following task which will help me on my research on **Error analysis**:

N.B. This would be written by twelve learners, four from grade 10, four from grade 11 and four from grade 12 who have been randomly selected.

GRADE 10

Write an essay of about one page on one these topics.

- 1) our school team;
- 2) my home;
- 3) my first journey by bus and
- 4) why I like my parents

I would appreciate it if it can be written in class, if possible, in the presence of the educator.

I would also ask you as an English educator to complete the questionnaire **which will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.**

I would appreciate your cooperation very much.

Thanks.

.....

M.V. Nzama

ANNEXTURE 2

To : The English Educators

I would like to appeal for your assistance with regard to the following task which will help me on my research on **Error analysis**:

N.B. This would be written by twelve learners, four from grade 10, four from grade 11 and four from grade 12 who have been randomly selected.

GRADE 11

Write an essay of about one page on one these topics.

- 1) when my friend saved my life;
- 2) the day I shall never forget;
- 3) my first visit to a town and
- 4) the day my father beat me.

I would appreciate it if it can be written in class, if possible, in the presence of the educator.

I would also ask you as an English educator to complete the questionnaire **which will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.**

I would appreciate your cooperation very much.

Thanks.

.....

M.V. Nzama

ANNEXTURE 2

To : The English Educators

I would like to appeal for your assistance with regard to the following task which will help me on my research on **Error analysis**:

N.B. This would be written by twelve learners, four from grade 10, four from grade 11 and four from grade 12 who have been randomly selected.

GRADE 12

Write an essay of about one page on one these topics.

- 1) corporal punishment should be reinstated;
- 2) my first visit to a nature reserve;
- 3) the causes of high failure rate in schools and
- 4) where I want to see myself five years time

I would appreciate it if it can be written in class, if possible, in the presence of the educator.

I would also ask you as an English educator to complete the questionnaire **which will be treated with the highest level of confidentiality.**

I would appreciate your cooperation very much.

Thanks.

.....

M.V. Nzama

ANNEXTURE 3

Teachers' questionnaire

Particulars of the teacher.

Please mark with a cross in the appropriate block or space.

1. Gender

1	2
Male	Female

2. Age in years

1	2	3	4	5
Below 20-30	30-39	40-49	50-59	60 & above

3. Class/ Grade taught.

1	2	3
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12

4. Teaching experience

1	2	3
0-4	5-9	10 +

5.Experience in English teaching.

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 5 yrs	5 yrs plus	10 yrs	10yrs plus	15 yrs & above

6.Highest qualification in English

1	2	3	4	5
English 111	Honours	Masters	Doctorate	Other

7. Highest educational qualification.

Matric		B.Ed Bed Hons	
Diploma		MEd	
Degree Courses		MA/ MSc etc	
Degree eg BA,BSc etc		Doctorate	
Honours			
Other (Specify)			

8. Employment status.

1	2
Permanent	Temporary

9. Does the school have a library?

1	2
Yes	No

10. Do you think the absence of a library contributes to English errors committed by learners?

1	2
Yes	No

11. Did you get training in the structure of English?

1	2
Yes	No

12. What do you prefer to teach?

1	2	3
Poetry	Grammar	Literature

13. Do you think English teachers need to know grammar?

1	2
Yes	No

14. Do you think mother tongue has impact on English errors made by learners?

1	2
Yes	No

15. Comment on English errors made by your learners if any, particularly on questions 10 and 14.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ANNEXTURE 4

Learners' questionnaire

Particulars of the learner.

Please mark with a cross in the appropriate block or space.

1. Gender

1	2
Male	Female

2. Age in years

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 and Less	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20 and above

3. Grade

1	2	3
Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12

4. Place where you stay

1	2
Urban Area	Rural Area

5. Did you attend a pre-school class before grade one.?

1	2
Yes	No

6. How often do you read English newspapers a week?

1	2	3	4	5
Nil	once	twice	thrice	Four +

7. How often do you listen to /watch English programmes a week?

1	2	3	4	5
Nil	once	twice	thrice	Four +

8 . How often do you go to a library for English books a week?

1	2	3	4	5
Nil	once	twice	thrice	Four +

9. Do you speak English at home?

1	2	3	4
Yes	No	Sometimes	Always