



**NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**FACULTY OF COMMERCE, HUMAN SCIENCES AND EDUCATION**

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**

**A CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE ESSAYS OF OSHINDONGA SPEAKING GRADE  
9 LEARNERS OF JAN MÖHR SECONDARY SCHOOL**

**KLAUDIA NAMUTENYA NGHINANHONGO**

**STUDENT NUMBER: 219141126**

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AND TECHNOLOGY**

**September 2022**

**SUPERVISOR: PROF. HAILELEUL ZELEKE WOLDEMARIAM**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: DR THULHA HN FRANS**

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**Name of the supervisor:** Prof. Haileleul Zeleke Woldemariam

Signature: *Haileleul Zeleke Woldemariam*

**Date:** 26 September 2022

**Name of co-supervisor:** Dr Thulha Frans

Signature: *Thulha Frans*

**Date:** 26 September 2022

## DECLARATION

I, Klaudia Namutenya Nghinanhongo, hereby declare that this dissertation, entitled: '*A Contrastive Linguistic Analysis of the Essays of Oshindonga Speaking Grade 9 Learners of Jan Möhr Secondary School*', is a true reflection of my own research, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



**Klaudia Namutenya Nghinanhongo**

**Date:** 22 July 2022

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my mother, Alina Shavuka, for the major role she plays in my life, and for the love and support she always gave me throughout my study.

## **ABSTRACT**

Using the Contrastive Analysis Theory of language, the study sought to analyse Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners' essays, written in English, at Jan Möhr Secondary School (Windhoek, Namibia) and to compare the writing/pronunciation systems, punctuation and noun formation processes of the two languages with the ultimate goal of examining causes of errors made by Oshindonga learners in their English essays. Systematically comparing the structures of English and Oshindonga can be a good avenue to identify the areas of difficulty that English as a Second Language may present to Oshindonga L1 learners when they write essays in English. Employing the qualitative research method design to collect data, the study identified multiple word choice errors, word formation errors and spelling errors in written essays in English by the Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners, which were established to culminate from L1 interference. The selection of the appropriate words to use when writing in English was observed to be difficult for the learners because such decisions are frequently based on L1 knowledge, which is frequently, partially or completely contradictory to L2 knowledge. The study found that a majority of Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners have difficulties with the spelling English words. The study revealed that the errors made by learners in their English essays are attributed to the following factors: inter-lingual interference, intra-lingual inference, limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, carelessness and over-generalisation.

**KEYWORDS:** Contrastive analysis, Oshindonga, English as a Second Language, grammar, inter-lingual interference, intra-lingual inference

## ACRONYMS

CA	Contrastive Analysis
CAH	Contrastive analysis hypothesis
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
FL	First Language
L1	First language
L2	Second Language
LEP	Language in Education Policy
LOLT	Languages of Learning and Teaching
MBESC	Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture
NSSCO	Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary Level
NAEYC	Namibian Association for the Education of Young Children
NSSC	Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate
SMS	Short Message Services



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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The English language has transformed into a global language that many nations worldwide use as a method for international communication. Oshindonga is a dialect of the Oshiwambo language, which is spoken in northern Namibia. There are several dialects of Oshiwambo, of which Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama have the officially recognised orthography in Namibia. Namibians speak in an assortment of languages, estimated to be around 30, which include: Oshiwambo, Otjiherero, Silozi, Setswana, Thimbukushu and Rukwangali. These languages belong to the Bantu language family. English, Portuguese, Afrikaans and German fall under the Indo-European language family, while south-eastern !Kung and Khoekhoegowab are Khoisan languages (Frydman, 2011). The officially recognised languages of Namibia are 13, comprising 10 indigenous languages and three European languages (Sabao & Nauyoma, 2020; Simataa & Simataa, 2017).

At the attainment of independence in 1990, the Namibian government proclaimed the English language as the official language and the medium of instruction – beginning from Grade 4 through tertiary and higher education (Frydman, 2011; Sabao & Nauyoma, 2020; Simataa & Simataa, 2017). Despite English having enjoyed this status for over 30 years, students, and learners in Namibia struggle with the English language – both written and spoken (Kamati & Woldermaria, 2016). This has been largely attributed to challenges associated with the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL), which are not unique to Namibia but are a global problem.

Sercombe, James and Kesharvarz (as cited in Nghikembua, 2014, p. 1) explains that “Second language learning is a difficult task ... because one struggles to cope with the new structures of the target language, which includes grasping its phonology, syntax, morphology and lexical system”. As such, “learners tend to transfer the native language systems into that of the second language. Teachers can compare between the two systems to be able to find out the

differences and to avoid mistakes” (Nur Da’i, 2006, p. 1). The comparison of the structures of two languages (in the case of this study English and Oshindonga) is referred to as Contrastive Analysis (CA). Al-khresheh (as cited in Al-khresheh, 2016, p. 331) submits that “CA was first developed by Charles Fries (1945) as an integral component of the methodology of First Language (FL) teaching.” Contrastive Analysis (CA) can thus be imagined as “the systematic comparison of two or more languages, with the aim of describing their similarities and differences” (Johansson, 2008).

Johansson (2008, p. 9) further asserts that “when we use a second language, we may make mistakes because of influence from our mother tongue – mistakes in pronunciation, grammar and other levels of language – often referred to as interference”. Abdi (n.d.) elaborates that:

...learning a second language is not quite the same as the native language. A child learning English as a mother tongue makes perceptual contrasts about various languages, this child acquires the language system. Yet, a Persian child who is learning English as a second language does not have this insight about various circumstances; they simply learn the language.

Observing such challenges, contrastive analysis is considered an invaluable way of comparing languages to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second language-learning situation (Jakobson, n.d.).

Based on previous studies on contrastive linguistics, one of the biggest problems that ESL learners face is mother tongue interference. Hamakali and Mbenzi (2016, p. 45) believe that “learning English has been a test to numerous learners, and a few studies done in English link the high failure rate in Namibia to poor capability in English”. As a result, “in language learning, errors in learners’ English work are arguably caused by several different processes, which include borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending these patterns to the target language and expressing meanings, using common vocabulary and grammar” (Richards & Schmidt, as cited in Mungungu, 2010, p. 12).



Frans (2020) conducted a contrastive analysis of English and Oshikwanyama at a phonological level to explain the difficulties that oshikwanyama speakers are likely to encounter when using some English consonants (such as liquids and fricatives). In her study, Frans (2020) linked the difficulties in pronunciation of English consonants to the negative transfer, caused by the interference of L1.

Since English has been the official language of Namibia from the time of independence in 1990, learners are expected to learn in English with the hope that they become fluent and effective users of the language so that they can function in an English-speaking community locally and globally (MoE, 2003). For the reasons mentioned above, English has become a prominent subject that needs to be passed for a learner to proceed to a following grade. In addition, academic writing skills are crucial for students to fully express themselves and be able to continue their university education (Shousha, Farrag & Althaqafi, 2020, p. 46). The challenging nature of English in schools, particularly high schools, is documented by Malaba, Wolfaardt, Shimhopileni, Munganda and Compion (2007), who studied Namibian learners' poor English language competency and the impact it has on their overall academic performance in English at Grade 10 and 12 national examinations, as well as at tertiary level (Shaumana, 2019, p. 2). This study is specifically centred on examining the challenges the Oshindonga speaking learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School (Windhoek, Namibia) experience when they compose essays in the English language.

As one of the English language skills, writing is perceived to be an important aspect of language to be learnt by learners at school (Gita & Muhd, 2014, p. 1). This is because writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organising them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader (Nunan, 2003, p. 88). According to Benjamin (2004), after Namibia's independence in 1990, English became the official language of the country as well as medium of instruction in schools. This implementation of English as the language of instruction resulted in major problems for most learners in some parts of the country, especially in communities where it is not a first language, including Oshiwambo speaking communities. These problems deserve to be explored so as to set the basis for solutions to improve the situation in Namibia and any context that the problem may be relatable.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Writing in English as a Second Language is believed to be difficult for most Namibian learners (Simataa & Simataa, 2017). This is a worrisome situation, especially considering that the English language is not only the medium of instruction in schools but, as aforementioned, it is the official language (Frydman, 2011; Sabao & Nauyoma, 2020). From the review of literature, it is evident that minimal research has been carried out on Namibian languages or much less comparative linguistic analysis in English and a Namibian language, which could be due to “a lack of interest in the languages and a very limited number of available and able linguists” (Zimmermann & Hasheela, 1998). However, such an analysis is important because, to educators, it suggests methods of teaching for them to successfully positively transfer skills in the formation of skills in the second language system, thereby preventing and overcoming the mother tongue interference.

Mother tongue interference is likely to occur in the case of Namibian learners/students because learners are required to be taught in their mother tongue as a medium of instruction from Grade 1-3 and in English from grades 4-12 and beyond. While multilingualism, where code-switching and code-mixing occurs, may be considered important by competent language users for deliberate reasons, the opposite is consequential to learners or students when the vocabulary or grammar is interfered by their mother tongue. Thus, some of these issues are language development problems, and these problems are sometimes not addressed correctly, which, in turn hinders learners to become effective users of the English language.

Even though English has prominence in Namibia, a high percentage of learners in Grade 12 barely pass with a C grade, which is the minimal requirement for most tertiary institutions. The researcher is a product of the Namibian education system, and she teaches English in the same education system. During the researcher’s five years of teaching at Jan Möhr, she has observed that learners at this school demonstrate poor writing skills when they compose in English. Based on the researcher’s observation, Grade 9 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School have difficulty spelling words, writing down their correct forms and using them correctly in sentences; thus, they commit errors in their English work, which makes their work

difficult to comprehend, and they ultimately score a low mark. Through the experience of teaching Grade 9 for four years, the researcher has observed that learners in this grade possess poor English writing skills, especially when it comes to continuous writing, which is evident in their essays.

The history of poor English grades is concerning, as it reflects that those learners do not meet the expectations of the Namibian Senior Secondary Certificate (NSSC) syllabus for Grade 9 English Second Language (ESL), which clearly outlines the skills learners are expected to have. The results from previous examinations evince that Grade 9 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School struggle with writing in the English language. This is further evidenced by their English results. The Grade 9 group of 2018 was the first to write semi-external national examinations and the numbers at Jan Möhr Secondary School indicate English as a Second Language examination results at the school were very poor. According to the grade summary sheet of December 2018 for Grade 9 at Jan Möhr Secondary School, out of all 360 learners who sat for the ESL examinations in November 2018, only 1 learner attained an A symbol. 23 learners obtained the B symbol, 80 obtained a C grade, 145 got D symbols, 95 achieved E symbols, 16 obtained F symbols and none of the learners got the G or U symbols.

These figures are clear evidence that the English as a Second Language writing skills of the learners at the school are poor and worrisome. Jan Möhr Secondary School is a multicultural school, and this translates to the fact that the learners at this school have different and diverse first languages. The current study, however, was interested only in examining the essays written in English by Oshindonga L1 Grade 9 learners at the school to investigate and establish whether the reason for their poor performance in English is caused by Oshindonga L1. Totemeyer (as cited in Iipinge, 2018) postulates that “in the Namibian context, English writing difficulties are likely to be experienced because learners switch to the English medium too early – and as a result, they fail to attain the desirable reading and writing proficiency in both the mother tongue and English”. This study focused on contrasting between features of English and Oshindonga to find out why Grade 9 Oshindonga First Language speakers of Jan Möhr Secondary School face difficulties when they write English essays.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The objectives of this study were to:

- evaluate the lexical differences between English and Oshindonga that contribute to errors in writing;
- compare the structures of English and Oshindonga; and to
- explore the causes of the errors made by learners in English essays.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Contrastive studies are important because they compare linguistic and socio-cultural data across different languages (cross-linguistic/cultural perspective) or within individual languages (intra-linguistic/cultural perspective) to establish language-specific, typological and/or universal patterns, categories and features (Jakobson, n.d.). This study is significant in that it will help teachers improve their teaching and assessment approaches.

Mother tongue interference is a common factor that is observed to exist during second language learning across cultures (Kamati & Woldermariam, 2016). By examining differences in lexical structures between English and Oshindonga, the study makes contributions to solutions related to teaching and learning, thereby improving learner performance.

### **1.5 Limitations of the Study**

It would have been ideal to have a comparative study with at least three schools, but since it is not within the scope of this study, the wealth of the data may have been affected. Moreover, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, consultation with supervisors and other mentors was limited, especially face-to-face consultations. This situation has, to a huge extent, slowed down the progress.

### **1.6 Delimitations of the Study**

The scope of the study was Jan Möhr Secondary School, situated in the Khomas region of Namibia. Since the study focused only on examining essays written in English by learners in Grade 9, whose first language is Oshindonga, the qualitative research method was used to analyse data. Atieno (as cited in Haifidi, 2019, p. 74) explains that “qualitative research is

disadvantaged because its findings cannot be extended to larger populations, unlike findings of quantitative studies, if their samples are representative and large enough". Even though Oshindonga is spoken in many other areas of the country, this study focused only on the essays written by Grade 9 Oshindonga First Language learners at the above-mentioned school. This means the conclusion made in this study may not apply to learners from other schools in different parts of the country, where Oshindonga is also a mother tongue.

### 1.7 Definition of Terms

The following terms were used throughout the study:

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

**Contrastive:** "Contrastive is an adjective, taken from the word contrast. A contrast means to compare one thing with another, so the differences are made clear, showing a difference when compared" (Da'i, 2006, p. 5).

**Medium of instruction:** Is the language used by the teacher to teach in the classroom.

**Errors:** Hammer (as cited in Lukamba, 2013, p. 14) defines error as "mistakes that learners make because they have not learned some language correctly".

**Writing:** "the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organising them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader" (Nunan, 2003, p. 88).

**Second language:** "It is a language other than one's mother tongue, used for the purpose of communication in public institutions, for example, education or government" (Ministry of Basic Education Sports and Culture, as cited in Kaputu, 2016, p. 8).

**Mother tongue:** refers to "the first language a child acquires at home" (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, as cited in Feris, 2017, p. 9).

**Language:** refers to the "systematic and conventional use of sounds, signs or written symbols in human culture for communication and self-expression" (Neufeldt, & Guralnik, as cited in Shaumana, 2019, p. 6).

**Linguistics:** "a description of languages or a feature of language" (Neufeldt & Guralnik, as cited in Shaumana, 2019, p. 6).

**Language policy:** “a document showing an agreement that has made concerning a system of communication as a medium of instruction used by the schools” (Amutenya, 2019, p. 4).

### **1.8 Research Format**

This study is organised into five chapters:

**Chapter 1** is the general Introduction and provides an overview of the study. It explains the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations as well as the delimitations of the study.

**Chapter 2** is the literature review and theoretical framework, and it contains the theoretical literature, empirical literatures, the conceptual/theoretical framework as well as definitions and explanation of the various critical terms.

**Chapter 3** is the research methodology, and it explains the general methods used in the study. The discussions in the chapter also include explanations of the methodology, such as the population, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection instruments and the profile of the area of study.

**Chapter 4** presents the major finding of the study and their discussions. The presentation and analysis of data is conducted in manners that respond to the concerns of the objectives.

**Chapter 5** is the conclusion of the study and presents a summary (conclusion) and recommendations of the study culminating from the analysis and discussion of data.

### **1.9 Summary**

This chapter presented the background of the study, further deliberating on the statement of the problem and detailing the objectives. The chapter also justified the study by discussing the significance of the study. Finally, the chapter provided the definition of technical terms as well as the format of the study. The next chapter discusses the literature from various sources that share affinities with the concerns of the current study

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

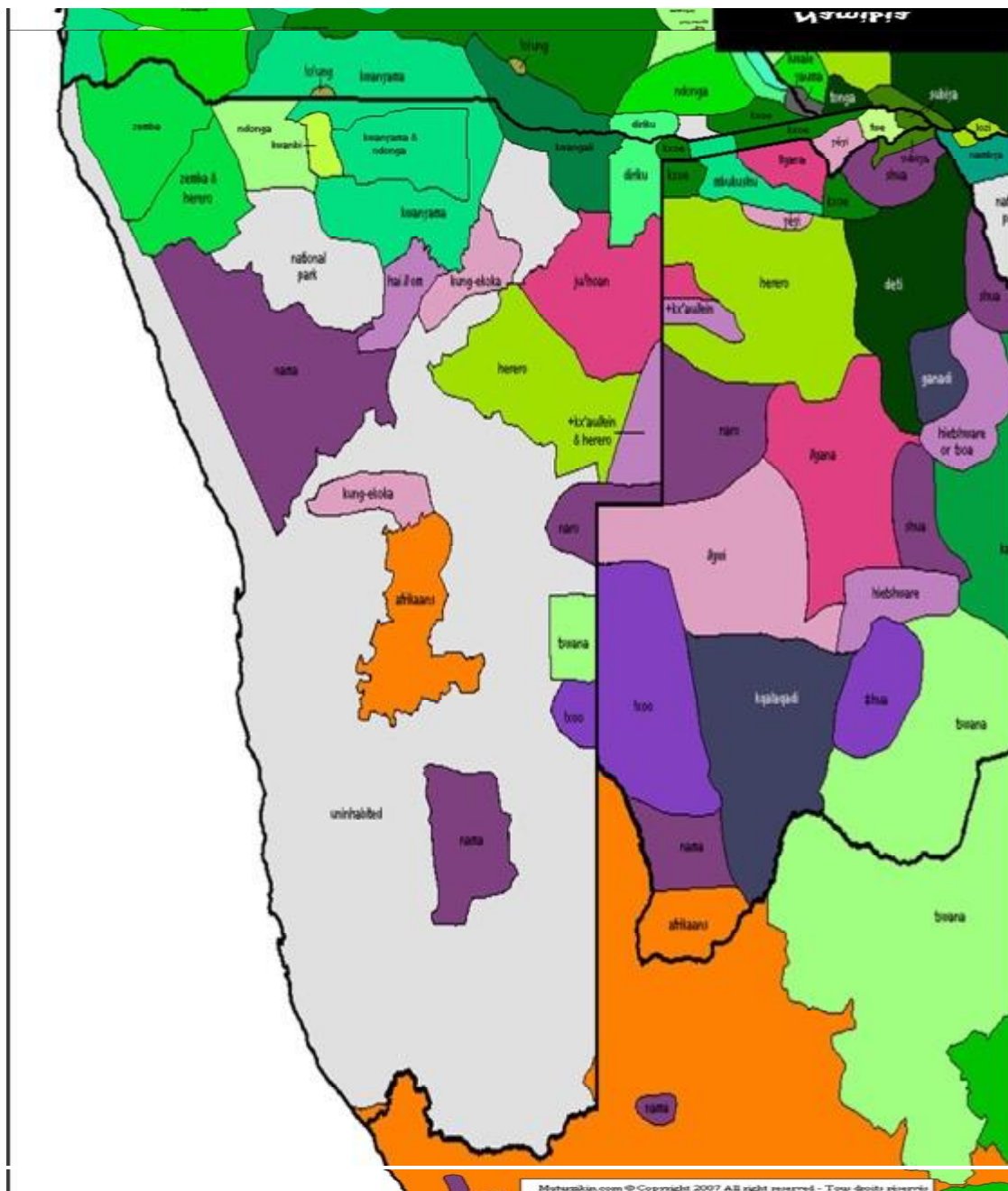
#### **2.1 Introduction**

Hart (as cited in Shaumana, 2019, p. 9) defines literature review as “a critical evaluation, analysis and synthesis of knowledge relevant to your research problem”. Literature review establishes a theoretical framework for the topic or subject area, to define key terms as well as to identify studies, models and case studies to support the topic under study (Sutton, 2016). This chapter discusses literature on contrastive analysis, undertakes a comparison of errors made by English L2 learners, highlights the difference between error analysis and contrastive analysis, and deliberates on the status of the English language in Namibia. Moreover, the chapter discusses concepts related to the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TOESL). The chapter further offers a general overview of writing ESL in schools, explains concepts related to the teaching of writing skills to ESL learners, and explores spelling errors in written English in schools. To provide key strategies to eliminate English L2 errors, the chapter engages previous studies that sought to determine why English L2 learners make errors in English. It is through the review of literature that the chapter established the research gap. Finally, the chapter discussed the theoretical framework of the study – Contrastive Analysis.

#### **2.2 The status of English in Namibia**

Namibia is a coastal country in Southern Africa, bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the north and north-east by Angola and Zambia – and on the east and south by Botswana and South Africa (SACMEQ, 2018). “It has an area of 824 000 km<sup>2</sup>, and it is 1 440 kilometres wide at its widest point; it is 1 320 kilometres long from north to south” (Harris, 2011, p. 10). Namibia is one of the many African countries that are multilingual, with a diversity of local languages spoken by multiple ethnic groups. Tötemeyer (2010) confirms Namibia is a multilingual country, with 13 languages used as Languages of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) with a standardised orthography. According to the Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (2003), the following languages are available for such purposes: Afrikaans, English,

German, Khoekhoegowab, Oshindonga, Rukwangali, Setswana, Thimbukushu, Otjiherero, Silozi, Rumanyo, Oshikwanyama and Ju|'hoansi.



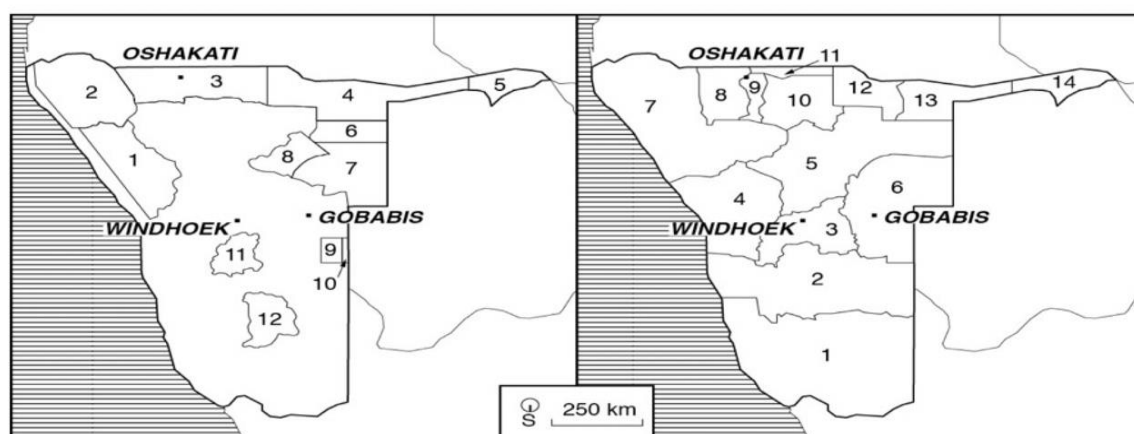
**Figure 1: Namibian communities.** Source: Muturzikin (as cited in Nambala, 2012).

Figure 1 demonstrates that Namibia is indeed a multilingual community. Understanding the language practices in Namibia is critical to understanding the challenges learners face when learning English. Lumbu (2013) explains that during the colonial era, education in Namibia was provided along racial segregation. Namibia became a German colony in 1884, and it was known as South West Africa at the time. Education was segregated at the time, and German



was the official language and medium of instruction in primarily white schools (Ashikuti, 2019). Missionaries were in charge of education in black schools, and the medium of instruction was indigenous languages. Education was intended to separate and divide Namibians. Benjamin (2004) affirms this view by also postulating that “prior to independence, the education system in Namibia was isolated along ethnic racial lines. There were eleven educational authorities, and every authority ran its own schooling issues for that particular racial collection”. Namibia was a colony of the apartheid South African government from 1915 to 1990, and the Bantu Education system was instituted in Namibia during this time.

According to Ashikuti (2019), reading, writing and mathematics were taught in black people's mother tongues, while white people received higher education. English and Afrikaans were taught to black students exclusively for instructional purposes. As such, Afrikaans became the “transcendent medium of instruction in Namibian schools” (Mwaamukange, 2018, p. 3). After beginning school in a national language for the first four years, the medium of instruction switched to Afrikaans for the balance of the primary grades and entire secondary school. However, following the lower elementary grades, the language of teaching in the Caprivi region was always English – and in 1981, the schools in what was then known as 'Ovamboland' switched from the Afrikaans medium to English (Legère, Trewby & van Graan, 2000, p. 3). Figure 3 below highlights the distribution of different ethnic groups in Namibia.



**Figure 8** (Left) Odendaal plan: 1. Damaraland, 2. Kaokoland, 3. Ovambo, 4. Kavango, 5. East Caprivi, 6. Bushmanland, 7. East Hereroland 1, 8. West Hereroland, 9. East Hereroland 2, 10. East Hereroland 3, 11. Rehoboth, 12. Namaland. (Right) Today: 1. //Karas, 2. Hardap, 3. Khomas, 4. Erongo, 5. Otjozondjupa, 6. Omaheke, 7. Kunene, 8. Omusati, 9. Oshana, 10. Oshikoto, 11. Ohangwena, 12. Kavango West, 13. Kavango East, 14. Zambezi.

**Figure 2: Ethnic homelands.** Source: Delgado (2018).

Figure 3 identifies the ethnic “homelands” of Namibians as established to the Odendaal plan. This was a plan “implemented in 1968 as a political policy to establish ten homelands, based on indigenous ethnic groups as a plan to empower Whites’ domination in the territory” (Odendaal, as cited in Haifidi, 2019, p. 11).

Immediately after the attainment of independence in 1990, Namibia perceived the need to create a new language policy for schools. This was chiefly aimed towards the promotion of mother tongue use, alongside English within schools and colleges of education. As Kamati and Woldemariam (2016) explain, the South West Africa People’s Organisation’s (SWAPO) policy document, titled ‘Towards Education for All’, formulated a language policy for an independent Namibia (UNIN, 1981). English was designated as the sole official language of Namibia in this policy document – even though it was spoken only by 0.8% of the population at the time, according to the 1991 Census. Kamati and Woldemariam (2016) further state that the official language of a country is usually the national language, which is the language used in government, courts of law and official business. In multilingual countries, however, there may be more than one official language; thus, the phrase ‘official language’ is frequently used, instead of ‘national language’. There is no single ‘national language’ in a multilingual country like Namibia.

Bock (as cited in Mbangula, 2010) defines a language policy as a “plan of action and a statement of aims and goals, especially one made by a government, a political party, a business company, an established organisation, such as a trade union or a student body”. However, after the introduction of the new language policy, “little was done to guarantee the smooth change from Afrikaans to English as the mode of instruction. Subsequently, teachers who were taught in Afrikaans were relied upon to utilise English as a medium of teaching”, resulting in a situation where English was not taught properly (Ministry of Education and Culture, as cited in Mwaamukange, 2018).

It has been well argued that the choice of English was actually made as a way of fostering unity amongst the many ethnic identities and populations of Namibia. Lewis (as cited in Feris, 2017) observes in light of the foregoing that “English was chosen as the official language for government and education because it was not associated with any particular ethnicity, and it

could facilitate interaction with the outside world". According to Benjamin (as cited in Lumbu, 2013), one needs to understand this in the context that

...people from different regions of Namibia speak different languages; a local language could not be used as *lingua franca* because one ethnic group would be empowered at the expense of others. Afrikaans could not be used either because it was generally regarded as the language of the oppressor, leaving English as the most suitable alternative.

However, according to Shaumana (2019, p. 2), "the implementation of English as the official language and its introduction as a medium of instruction in all state schools and schools, subsidised by the government, was met with a diversity of reactions from Namibians". In observing this development, critics were quick to point out that English was fundamentally a second language, and only a few people could speak it. A document, titled 'The Language Policy for Schools: 1992-1996 and beyond', was formulated and implemented shortly after independence (MBESC, 2003). The document clearly states that English would become the medium of instruction only from Grade 4. "Although the Namibian constitution makes provision for the use of other languages for educational, legislative, administrative and judicial purposes under certain circumstances, English has been predominant since Independence – to the extent that the other languages are rarely used for official purposes" Tötemeyer (as cited in Feris, 2017).

The policy states that learners should be taught through the medium of their mother tongue in the early years of schooling, and that all languages should be treated equally – but this was not equally applied across the country. The document presented its own problems, which Mbangula (2010) describes as follows:

One of its broad goals states that 'education should promote the language and cultural identity of learners through the use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction in Grade 1-3'. The statement continues 'if parents or the school wish to use English as the medium of instruction in the Lower Primary phase, permission must be obtained from the Ministry of Basic Education Sports Culture with well-grounded, convincing motivation. This statement is seen to be contradictory. The phrase 'if parents or the

school wish' it is suggested opens the way for English to be used as a medium of instruction at the expense of the mother tongue right from Grade 1 (p. 20).

Based on the statements above, there is a clear clash among the goals of the Namibian language policy. One of the goals states that all learners from grades 1-3 should be taught in their mother tongue in schools to promote language and culture, but the same policy also allows for those parents who do not want their children to learn through their mother tongue to seek permission to opt for English, which is not their mother tongue, as the medium of instruction. This means the goal of promoting language and cultural identity will not be achieved countrywide, as some learners may choose to use English as the medium of instruction in their lower primary years.

Mathias (2013) observes that for the past years, Namibia has been witnessing a high failure rate in English in secondary schools. This possibly means the language has been a nightmare for many learners. Mathias (2013) further postulates that being taught in your mother tongue could be a solution. The major innovation in the policy was to ensure English became the medium of instruction from Grade 4. Although the policy states that learners should be taught through the medium of their mother tongue in the early years of schooling and that all languages should be treated equally, the implementation of the policy was not evenly applied across the whole country.

Baumann (as cited in Feris, 2017) opines that "if a child has acquired sufficient vocabulary in the mother tongue, with a strong foundation laid in that specific mother tongue, it will assist in second language learning and learning in general" (p. 3). Mathias (2013) also notes that mother tongue education has proven to be of vital importance to the social development of children because it can enhance the socio-economic well-being of learners in future and groom worthy citizens, capable of leading, because they understand and recognise the essential role that culture, and tradition play in everyday life. Up to the present day, however, as explained by Shaumana (2019), not much has changed.

Since English was received as the medium of instruction in all government and some private organisations, it has been seen as a troublesome and challenging language. Thus, numerous students are fizzling or passing English with lower marks that authorise them a place in higher

educational organisations, since assessments are taken in English, which is a second language (p. 2). As established in Chapter 1, the decision to make English the official language in Namibia was because the country is multilingual and multicultural (Ausiku, 2010). According to Lewis (2009), Namibia has approximately 28 languages spoken by different ethnolinguistic groups. As a result, the true number of linguistic varieties in Namibia is unknown.

## **2.3 Writing English as a Second Language in Schools**

Writing is one of the four skill areas of learning content in English Second Language (ESL), among listening, speaking and reading. Writing is one of the most important language modes for school success (Kapolo, 2013). According to Lerner (2000), these skill areas are interconnected in the sense that good listening skills promote speaking, good speaking skills improve reading, good reading instruction improves writing, and good writing skills improve one's knowledge and skills in speaking and reading. This means that these skill areas complement one another in terms of communication development.

### **2.3.1 Teaching Writing Skills in English as a Second Language**

Cole and Feng (2015, p. 6) submit that “Data regularly shows that English Second Language learners on all levels score lower in writing than any other area”. It is undeniably true that learners experience various difficulties when they first attempt to gain proficiency with any language, since all they try to learn is new to them. For example, the new lexicology, syntax, articulation and how to use that specific language. When one learns a new language, they are expected to rehearse and put effort for them to learn the new language fully and completely. In this respect, a second language learner should acquire the necessary skills of the target language for them to be able to communicate with people all over the globe all together. “The process of writing suggests that the students are actually taught how to write with coherence, acceptable spellings and appropriate grammar structure in second language” (Freedman, as cited in Hussain, 2017, p. 209). Rao (2019, p. 140), commenting on the importance of writing in SLA, also submits that “composing is a useful expertise, and it is the most intricate ability of the four language abilities”.

Along these lines, writing in English is viewed as the most troublesome expertise because of its intricacy of design and vocabulary. Peter and Singaravelu (2020, p. 1503) thus underscore

the pertinence of the writing skill, describing it as “a useful ability, a type of proficiency, an open movement, and here and there a method through which students can be evaluated”. Nunan (as cited in Novariana, Sumardi & Tarjana, 2018, p. 216) further demonstrate the criticality of the skill by also observing that writing is the “process of thinking to invent ideas, thinking about how to express into good writing, and arranging the ideas into statement and paragraph clearly”. Composing has, thus, been argued across scholarship of diverse origins as the most perplexing strategy for articulation. As has been observed in many studies, it is ordinarily the final skill that is achieved in the order of acquisition. Crystal (as cited in Rao, 2019, p. 142) postulates that “writing is a way of communicating, which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression”.

Cole and Feng (2015) in an examination of potentially effective strategies for improving the writing skills of elementary English language learners believe that composing has been distinguished as quite possibly the most fundamental skill in light of the fact that the world has become so text situated. Banda (as cited in Tshotsho, 2006) contends in this regard that

The capacity to compose a text that is without any errors is anything but a normally procured knowledge, yet it is officially mastered or socially communicated as a resource of practices in formal educational settings. Learners can just gain the skill in a school circumstance. Writing abilities should be learned and practised through experience (p. 41).

In conformity to observation of the importance of the writing skill, Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal (2016) argue that poor writing skills originate from two factors: the teacher and learner. According to them, “teachers lack the appropriate pedagogic approach to teach writing, including providing prompt and effective feedback to learners. Teachers also lack the ability to motivate students. Then again, learners face numerous challenges: effects of L1 transfer, lack of reading, motivation and practice”.

Puteha, Rahamata and Karima (2010), in investigating low achievers’ views towards writing skills in English, identify their writing difficulties as well as their needs to master the skills, observe that learners have positive sentiments towards the abilities of writing in English, as they accept that it is significant for their educational purposes as well as for their future expert

careers. Bereiter and Scardamalia (as cited in Tshotsho, 2006) submit that coming up with new ideas can be difficult, as it entails revising information. When a writer puts thoughts together, they employ a two-way interaction between developing knowledge and developing text. Despite these observed challenges, Peter and Singaravelu (2020) insist on the importance of writing by submitting that:

Composing expertise in English is exceptionally critical in present day times. Having a decent composing capacity in English is vital in the present world. Computerised period has not lessened the use of writing in English. The present corporate world requires competitors who can compose and impart viably in English. Messages, Fax, Online Chat and Website refreshers require an amazing capability in English composition to impart our need and request successfully. If the correspondence in English is clear, the likelihood of succeeding is more prominent (p. 1503).

Tirumalesh (as cited in Chowdhury, 2015) suggests some reasons why people have limited knowledge with regards to writing in English. These included the “lack of proficiency in the language, large classes, unqualified teachers, unmotivated beginners and lack of resources became the part of the etiology”. Alfaki (2015, p. 44) points out that “grammatical, mechanical, sentence structure and problems of diction are linguistic problems that hamper the students’ effective writing skills in English”.

Nonetheless, there are observed and established strategies that can be followed to help a second language learner to write well, such as:

### **1. Pre-writing**

For second language learners, pre-writing, often known as brainstorming, is critical. It is "the first and most important action in which the writer generates ideas that will be interwoven throughout his or her essay" (Simachew, 2011, p. 19). "Pre-writing is critical for essayists, whose first language is not English, especially at lower levels of competence, because learners have a limited vocabulary – and, as a result, frequently have difficulty articulating their views" (Frans, 2016, p. 57).

## **2. Drafting**

"Before beginning to write their final texts or expositions, learners must first create a draft on a piece of paper on which they record their thoughts using some of the notes, vocabulary and designs created during the pre-composing tasks" (Frans, 2016, p. 57).

"In the drafting stage, learners are expected to put the plan of action (outline task) that they set in the arranging step" (Simachew, 2011, p. 19). Mechanical language aspects, such as spelling, grammar and other similar errors, are not emphasised at this stage."

## **3. Revising or editing**

"Correction is a significant advance, which includes re-evaluating to the bigger theoretical issues of composing: organisation, content of thoughts, how an author puts his/her thought reasonably, what to incorporate and what to prohibit from a first draft arrangement" (Simachew, 2011, p. 19). Frans (2016, p. 57) also submits that students also need to check the style and language, such as word choice, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and spelling.

## **4. Publishing**

Publishing is the last step of writing in which the learner writes his or her final essay.

"In this step, the students rewrite the text that they edited in the above step as a final draft" (Simachew, 2011, p. 19).

Writing is a process that involves some stages. The stages mentioned above help learners improve their writing skills by reminding them to consider their purpose and audience. A good writer needs to know the stages in the writing process and adhere to them, because skipping one stage could have an impact on the final product.

## **2.4 Contrastive Analysis**

On the necessity of Contrastive Analysis studies, Lado and Stockwell et al. (as cited in Kung, 2013, p. 12) believe "It is very important for Contrastive Analysis to be conducted when the L1 and L2 are linguistically distant". Jakobson (n.d.) further defines contrastive linguistics as "a branch of linguistics that describes the similarities and differences among two or more



languages at such a level, such as phonology, grammar and semantics, especially to improve language teaching and translation" (p. 1).

The programme of contrastive linguistics was initiated by Charles Carpenter Fries from the University of Michigan in the nineteen forties (Gast, 2012). As a discipline, Contrastive Analysis "is the study and comparison of two languages: the learners' target language and the learners' native language. This is done by looking at the structural similarities and differences of the studied languages" (Mahripah & Ling, n.d.). In other words, "Contrastive Analysis is a comparison of languages to identify potential errors for the purpose of determining what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a situation of foreign or second language learning" (Gass & Selinker, as cited in Okičić & Osmankadić, 2014, p. 189).

Geethakumary (2002) defines Contrastive Analysis as "the strategy for studying the structure of any two languages so as to appraise the differential parts of their organisations, regardless of their inherited similarity or level of advancement". Based on these definitions, it is evident that contrastive analysis requires a focus on more than one language. The language in question is referred to as language in touch. The first language is referred to as the source language, while the second language is referred to as the target language. The importance of conducting such an exercise is summated by Lado (as cited in UKEssays, 2018) who observes that:

Such comparisons have proven to be quite useful in the creation of teaching materials, as well as in testing and language teaching trials. Teachers of foreign languages who are familiar with this field will gain insights and methods for analysing the language and cultural content of textbooks and examinations, augmenting existing resources, creating new materials and assessments, and effectively diagnosing students' challenges. Second, Contrastive Analysis provides useful insights to the instructor who has conducted a Contrastive Analysis between the learners' L1 and L2 and then aware of the genuine learning challenges and the best way(s) to educate them: The teacher who compares a second language to the student's native language will have a better understanding of the student's true learning challenges and will be able to deliver better instruction (pp. 1-2).

In addition, there are three basic assumptions in Contrastive Analysis as outlined by Maledo and Igbomene (2020):

1. The first is that interference from the first language causes most difficulties in learning or using a new language.
2. Secondly, these difficulties can be predicted using Contrastive Analysis, which helps second language learners or users to perceive or recognise the differences between their first language and the target language they are learning or using.
3. Thirdly, teaching materials can benefit from Contrastive Analysis, which provides insight into how the effects of first language interference can be reduced (p. 40).

#### **2.4.1 Positive and Negative Transfer**

Johansson (2008, p. 10) observes that “The background for Contrastive Analysis, as applied to language teaching, is the assumption that the native language plays a role in learning a second language”. In addition, Hamakali and Mbenzi (2016, p. 45) submit that “in CA, descriptions of the features of two languages (L1 and L2) are contrasted to make predictions about the type of difficulty students may have when learning a L2”. Zagood (2012, p. 10) observes that structuralists paid special attention to second language acquisition. As such, “they embarked on identifying the areas where learners of a second language face difficulties and tried to find suitable remedies for such difficulties. One of the most important techniques for the identification of the areas of those difficulties was contrasting and comparing the students' native language with the target language that they learn”. Qasim (2013), in the same vein, also observes that:

Lado (1957) elaborated on this hypothesis, implying that second language (L2) learners are drawn to the basic principle of ‘transfer’. The learner prefers to transfer the habits of their native language framework to the second language’ he stated emphatically. The term “transfer” refers to “carrying over his MT behaviours into the L2”. First language (L1) serves as a stand-in for further learning in specific contexts, according to this definition. Because the structure of the MT influences the acquisition of the L2, it is expected that characteristics that are similar in both languages will be easy to learn, while those that are dissimilar will be harder to grasp. As a result, CA aims to improve the field of Second Language learning by making it easier for students

and teachers to communicate. The teacher will be able to identify between which grammars need to be addressed deductively or inductively, and which grammatical structures are the root causes of potential errors, after studying the common factors between L1 and L2 (p. 18).

There is a wide range of terms used by linguists in explaining mother tongue influence on second language acquisition. 'Transfer' is one of the widely used terms. At "the focal point of applied contrastive linguistics is the idea of transfer. This alludes to the way that speakers of a language are probably going to move underlying components of their native language when learning a second. This transfer may be positive or negative" (Hickey, 2017, p. 2). Hong (2014, p. 27) explains that "one cannot neglect the fact that language learners – no matter what level they are in – can hardly learn a second language well under the influence of MT (mother tongue), especially the negative influence of MT". Gass and Selinker (as cited in Skoog, 2006, p. 4) defines 'transfer' as "a term that was used extensively in the first half of the century, and it refers to the psychological process whereby prior knowledge is carried over into a new learning situation". Dost and Bohloulzadeh (2017, p. 33) further indicate how "Lado (1957) and Fries (1945) define transfer as the imposition of native language information on a second language utterance or sentence". Odlin (as cited in Skoog, 2006, p. 4) also prepossess a different definition of transfer, stating that "Transfer is the impact coming about because of similitudes and contrasts between the target language and whatever the other language that has been beforehand (and maybe defectively) gained". Wilkins (as cited in Hamakali & Mbenzi, 2016) observes further, with regards to the concept of 'transfer', that:

When learning a second language, a person already knows their mother tongue, which they try to transfer to the new language. The transfer may be justified because the two languages' structures are comparable – in which case we obtain 'positive transfer' or 'facilitation' – or it may be unreasonable because the two languages' structures are dissimilar – in which case we get 'negative transfer' or interference (p. 45).

Tajareh (2015, p. 1107) furthers that 'transfer' is "a general term describing the carryover of previous performance or knowledge to subsequent learning. Positive transfer occurs when the prior knowledge benefits the learning task – when a previous item is correctly applied to present subject matter. Zhao (2019) also explains that positive transfer refers to how a target

language's closeness to one's mother tongue might aid in the learning of a second language by speeding up the development of certain inter-linguistic skills. It can assist learners in mastering some linguistic concepts in a second language. Odlin (as cited in Skoog, 2006, p. 5) aptly conclusively submits that “positive transfer effects can only be determined by comparing the success of groups with different original languages”.

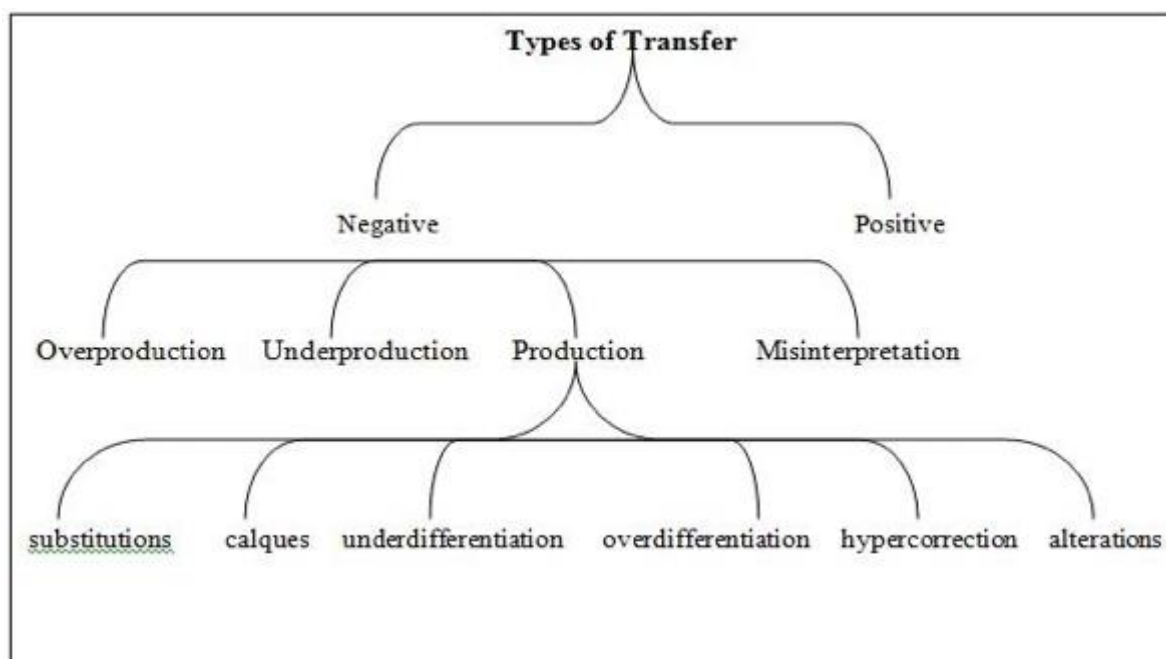
On the other hand, ‘negative transfer’ refers to “instances of transfer that result in errors because old, habitual behaviour differs from the new behaviour” (Dulay et al., as cited in Skoog, 2006, p. 4). Negative transfer occurs when a person's native language information and thought tendencies adversely affect and obstruct their learning of a second language. Tajareh (2015, p. 1107) explains this process more vividly by postulating that “when a previous task's performance interferes with the performance of a subsequent task, this is known as negative transfer. The latter is known as interference, because previously taught content interferes with newly learnt material”.

The reason for the occurrence of such situations, as Zhao (2019) observes, is that “the mother tongue and target language have different forms and regular systems, yet the learner considers them to be the same”. It is, however, important to also remember that while the concept of ‘negative transfer’ is in most instances associated with production errors, “there are additional ways in which a second language learner's performance differs from that of native speakers. Underproduction, overproduction and misinterpretation are some instances” (Odlin, as cited in Skoog, 2006, p. 5).

Sutrisno (n.d.) in line with the foregoing debate, identifies four factors of negative transfers:

- **Age:** The younger – the less interfered.
- **Mastery of the target language:** The better the mastery, the less affected by native language.
- **Level of differences:** The more the two languages differ, the more the negative transfers.
- **Method of exposure:** If the target language is exposed in a bilingual situation, the tendency of doing negative transfer is greater (p. 7).

The following diagram demonstrates the types of transfer that occur in second language learning:



**Figure 3: Types of transfer.** Source: Al-Kresheh (2016).

It is also critical at this point to point out the fact that “negative transfer is given far more attention by applied linguists than positive transfer, because it is widely assumed that only negative transfer poses teaching and learning difficulties” (Chen, 2020, p. 3017).

#### 2.4.2 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) was propounded by Lado (1957), and it was for some time the most influential and most followed approach, especially from the 1950s to the 1970s. Lado (1957) opined that “L2 learners transfer their complete L1 system into the language he learns and replaces native language features with that of L2”. In further explaining the birth of the CAH, Dost and Bohloulzadeh (2017, p. 33) observe the hypothesis was proposed in the 1960s when structural linguistics and behavioural psychology were still quite popular.

Consequently, the CAH language model, which is structuralist in nature, was developed by Fries (1945) and Bloomfield (1933). The birth of the hypothesis was driven by the observation that “language was considered as a rule-governed system that could be divided into

hierarchically structured sub-systems – each with its own inherent patterns and structure – according to structural linguistics” (Lennon, 2008).

The contrastive hypothesis was developed by Lado (1957), who believed that “contrasting two languages would help predict the features that would represent difficulty or ease in learning a second language due to realising the differences and similarities between the first and the second language” (Zaki. 2015, p. 3). According to Byung-gon (1992, p. 133), the phrase ‘contrastive hypothesis’ relates to the theory itself, whereas Contrastive Analysis refers to how the hypothesis is implemented.

Accordingly, within the CAH, “the main barrier to second language acquisition is interference from the first language system, and that a scientific, structural comparison of the two languages in question would allow people to predict and describe which are problems and which are not” (Fang & Xue-mei, 2007, p. 10).

The CAH, on the other hand, emphasises both theory and method at the same time. Tajareh (2015, p. 1106) believes the CAH to be a branch of comparative linguistics that is chiefly “concerned with comparing two or more languages to determine their differences or similarities – either for theoretical or non-theoretical reasons. It presupposes that you believe in universals in language; otherwise, there would be no point of comparison”. Tajareh (2015) further explains that:

The CAH claimed that the interference of the first language system with the second language system is the primary barrier to second language acquisition, and that a scientific, structural analysis of the two languages in question would yield a taxonomy of linguistic contrasts between them, allowing linguists and language teachers to predict the difficulties a learner would face. (p. 1110)

This can, therefore, be understood to mean that “L2 learners' productive and receptive skills are influenced by their L1 patterns, according to the CAH, and similarities and contrasts between L1 and L2 are major determinants of L2 learning ease and difficulty” (Karim & Nassaji, 2013, p. 118).

### **2.4.3 Versions of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis**

There are two versions of CAH – the strong version and the weaker one. In this section, the researcher first discusses the tenets of the strong version of CAH, which was described by Qasim (2013) as follows:

Fries and Lado created the strong version, which they consider unrealistic and impracticable due to its stringent standards. It had not provided linguists with a definite set of universal standards from which they could derive correct contrasts. This perspective is concerning because Contrastive Analysis has had a huge impact on research by allowing specialists to undertake additional research, demonstrating that Fries' initial thoughts were only the beginning, and the research he undertook has had a beneficial and long-lasting impact (p. 19).

The strong version is also described by John and Seid (2006, p. 3) as "the variant of Contrastive Analysis, made famous by Lado (1957), which claims that wherever there are discrepancies between the student's native language and the target language, there would be interference from the native language". The current research has also established that a large corpus of researchers seems to "suggest that errors in second language learning can be linked to patterns in the native language in the strong version of the paradigm" (Al-khresheh, 2016, p. 332). Furthermore, the strong version of CA has been over the years imagined to refer to the "areas of target language (TL) complexity that are expected when L1 and L2 are compared. The contrast areas will subsequently be used to create educational materials" (Al-khresheh, 2016, p. 332). The strong version of the CAH strongly believed that "recognising the differences between first language (L1) and second language may forecast all second language (L2) faults. The strong version of CAH is clearly based on a priori L1 and L2 Contrastive Analysis" (What is Contrastive, 2013).

On the other hand, "the CAH's weak version is based on a follow-up investigation. This is diagnostic in nature. It is used to figure out which errors are caused by interference" (What is Contrastive, 2013). Tajareh (2015) believes that the 'weak version' of CAH postulates that when studying L2, the learner's native language does not necessarily "interfere" much with his learning, as it has been observed to also "serve as an 'escape hatch' when the learner is in

a bind. In other words, it states that when a student is unable to express himself in the target language, he would 'pad' from his original tongue" (p. 1111). Qasim (2013) in this regard, further explains that:

The weak version of CAH 'simply requires the linguist to employ the best linguistic knowledge accessible to him to account for observed challenges in second language acquisition'. It does not imply the prediction of difficulty, like the strong version does, because this sort of Contrastive Analysis requires a reference to errors, as it tries to detect errors for future prevention and to improve teaching materials. In general, it is better to focus effort on what is known to be a barrier to second language acquisition rather than wasting time on guesses that may or may not be right (pp. 20-21).

Ellis (as cited in Kung, 2013, p. 11) identifies four procedures for conducting Contrastive Analysis, "description: linguistic systems of each language are described; selection: particular areas within the two languages are compared; comparison: areas of similarity and difference are identified – and prediction: potential areas for causing future errors are determined."

#### **2.3.4 Error Analysis Critics**

Error Analysis (EA) "has proven to be quite successful, but that does not mean it can be employed as the sole source of analysis" (Schachter, as cited in Mehmeti, 2020, p. 4). According to Brown and Ellis (as cited in Sutrisno, n.d.), EA research has limitations in that it provides only a partial view of learner language and is substantive in that it does not account for avoidance strategies in second language acquisition (SLA). This is because EA looks only at what learners do. Learners who avoid sentence constructions that they find challenging due to the differences between first language and the target language may appear to not have problems. In other words, "when a student finds a structure difficult to grasp, they become more inclined to avoid producing it altogether. In addition to evaluating language errors, non-errors should also be considered to gain a better understanding of language acquisition processes" Schachter (as cited in Mehmeti, 2020, p. 4-5).

Prastikawati (n.d) further postulates that "there is a risk in paying too much attention to the students' mistakes – and in the classroom, the teacher can become so focused on catching faults that the accurate utterance in the second language can be overlooked". Another



weakness of the EA approach is that many teachers of English are non-native speakers. They do not speak English as their first language but as a second. Subsequently, ESL teachers are more inclined to use incorrect features of the English language. Al-Sobhi (2019, p. 57) observes that “one major drawback with EA is that it considerably relies on errors and excludes other information”. Lastly, according to Dulay et al. (as cited in al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 57), another one of the flaws of the EA approach is “the lack of specificity in the delineation of error categories... the majority of EA research were unable to accurately explain the causes of learners' errors, and... conclusions were vague and confusing to the reader”.

#### **2.4.5 Error Analysis and Contrastive Analysis**

Khansir (2012) provides various reasons why Error Analysis differs from Contrastive Analysis:

1. Contrastive Analysis begins with a comparison of the systems of two languages and forecasts just the regions of difficulty or error for the second language learner, whereas Error Analysis begins with faults in second language acquisition and investigates their causes and relevance in a broader context.
2. Unlike CA, EA gives data on actual problems, making it a more efficient foundation for developing educational solutions.
3. EA does not have to deal with sophisticated theoretical issues like the equivalence problem that CA does.
4. EA provides linguists, particularly psycholinguists concerned in the process of second language learning, with valuable input. This is achieved by asking and answering the questions:
  - a. Is the process of learning a first language and learning a second language similar or not?
  - b. Is it true that children and adults learn a second language in the same way?
5. EA supports a far more complicated view of the learning process in which the learner is considered as an active participant in the formulation and refinement of hypotheses about the target language's rules.

6. Interlingual error (interference) is studied by CA, whereas intralingual mistakes are studied by EA (pp. 1029-1030).

## **2.5 Comparison of Errors made by English Second Language learners**

Al-Ghobra (as cited in Shousha et al., 2020, p. 46) affirms that “writing is an effective tool for language development and critical thinking in all disciplines. It is an active and productive skill of language use essential for professional and academic success”. Lerner (2000) defines writing as an active process – the most sophisticated process of putting oral language into graphic symbols and a complex achievement of the language system. Writing, according to Lerner (2000), “requires many abilities that are related to each other, and these include spoken language, reading skills, skills in spelling and knowledge of the rules of written language, cognitive strategies and planning”. Lerner further explains that a learners’ ESL often contains several errors in spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, handwriting and grammar. This is why, in most instances, their written work appears to be short, poorly structured and lacking a development of ideas.

ESL is an important component of this study. Richards and Schmidt (as cited in Mungungu, 2010, p. 22) refer to L2 as any language acquired after one has learnt one’s native language. Haegeman (as cited in Maledo and Igbomene (2020, p. 40) opines that “to figure out how a language is learned, researchers must first figure out how the qualities of that language differ from one language to the next, i.e., how much the properties are language-specific and how much they change across languages”. According to Nghikembua (2014), the differences between the learner’s first language and the second language often pose language learning problems, resulting in second language errors. As such, to understand the language errors learners make in producing their second language, an Error Analysis study becomes necessary. However, Amara (2019) believes that:

While Contrastive Analysis assumed that all errors were caused by first-language interference and were therefore harmful to the learner's development, Error Analysis assumed that errors were a natural and healthy part of the language learning process—a natural ‘by-product’ of the learners' step-by-step discovery of the second language's rules through a trial-and-error process. (p. 70)

Error Analysis is a critical and enabling source of data for educators. It provides data on the student errors, which greatly assist educators in rectifying these student errors. In the process, this also helps them improve the adequacy of their teaching (Hourani, 2008). Language errors can be defined as “a deviant form of a language that is objectionable by speakers of the standard version due to its deviation from the accepted norm” (Alobo, as cited in Alobo, 2015, p. 632).

Amara (2015, p. 60) also explains that one of the most influential ideas of second language acquisition is Error Analysis. It is concerned with “the analysis of the errors made by second language learners by comparing the acquired norms of the learners to the target language norms and explaining the errors found”. The analysis of errors is the method used to analyse errors made by English Foreign Language and English Second Language learners when they learn a language. Not only does this help reveal the strategies used by the learners to learn a language, but it also assists teachers and other concerned persons to identify the nature of the difficulties that learners encounter and, in the process, guide them towards improving their teaching (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, as cited in Sermsook, Liamnimitr & Pochakorn, 2017, p. 102).

Khansir (as cited in Shousha et al., 2020, p. 47) defines Error Analysis as “a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on the errors students make. It primarily consists of a comparison between the errors made in the target language and the target language itself”. Richards and Schmidt (as cited in Mungungu, 2010, p. 28) believe that Error Analysis is “the study and analysis of the errors made by second language learners”. Error Analysis is also considered to be “a method that both researchers and teachers use. It entails gathering samples of learners’ language, finding the errors in the sample, explaining the errors, classifying them according to their theorised causes, and determining the severity of the errors” (Ellis, as cited in Al-Sobhi, 2019, p. 52).

Corder (1967) observes the significance of errors and the need to analyse them to gain a better understanding of the errors that students make and to help them improve themselves. There are four functions of Error Analysis that are defined by Sridhar (as cited in Irawati, n.d.):

- a. To identify how material can be taught in class or how a textbook should be organised – from easy to tough courses.
- b. To determine the emphasis, explanation and application of teaching material at various levels.
- c. To organise and improve remedial instruction and practice.
- d. To create items for a learner's competence test.

It is also imperative to understand the criticality of knowing the clear distinction between 'errors' and 'mistakes'. According to Krishnamurthy, Kangira, Tjiramanga and Beukes (2010, p. 5), "errors are systematic and occur because students do not realise that they are wrong, whereas mistakes are non-systematic and could be because of a slip of the tongue or pen". All age groups, such as children learning their first language, adult native speakers and second language learners, make errors, which have a different name according to the group committing the error. Error Analysis enables teachers to identify the sources of errors and "take pedagogical precautions towards them" (Heydari & Bagheri, 2012, p. 1583).

Many analysts have been encouraged to study errors, as they were motivated by the desire to improve pedagogy. It is through errors that a learner's level in the target language can be measured, as errors contain valuable information on the approaches used by learners to learn a language. "Language errors also supply means by which teachers can assess learning and teaching – and they determine priorities for future effort" (Richards & Sampson, 1974). The first thing to do when analysing an error is to determine the features in the section of the mother tongue of a learner that drift away from the target language in some way – and, therefore, it becomes important that a difference is made between an error and a mistake.

Vahdatinejad (as cited in Shaumana, 2019, p. 10) posits that "Error Analysis can be utilised to evaluate what a learner still needs to learn. It provides crucial information regarding where the learner's abilities are lacking". One of the felicitous ways of going about these errors is by investigating the errors, describing the errors and outlining the main causes of these errors. Corder (as cited in Amara, 2019) recommends five steps for Error Analysis:

- **Collection of a sample of learner language:** The first step involves collecting several samples of language use from many learners to compile a comprehensive list of errors that represent the entire population
- **Identification of errors:** it depends on the analysts' correct interpretation of the learner's intended meaning in the context. In other words, a learner may produce an utterance that is well formed – but when taken in its context, it is not acceptable at all.
- **Description of errors:** it is essentially a comparative process when the data is the erroneous sentence and the reconstructed sentence. It is argued that not a single instance of an error is to establish that this is a real one. In other words, when an error is occurring regularly, it is a true error, while when it is committed only once, it is mistake. It must be pointed out that it is based on systematic errors that we construct syllabuses and remedial programmes.
- **Explanation of errors:** the description of errors is a linguistic activity, while the explanation of errors belongs to the field of psycholinguistics. It accounts for why and how errors come about.
- **Evaluation of errors:** The emphasis should be based on three basic categories: comprehensibility, seriousness and naturalness of the grammar and the lexis. Teachers who correct learners' errors must keep in mind that there are two kinds of errors: global and local. Global error is the error which affects overall sentence organisation (Her dog dangerous big), whereas a local error is the error which affects single elements in a sentence (She has a interesting idea). A growing area of interest is in how we evaluate errors. Error Gravity studies explore the question of whether scholars evaluate errors on linguistic grounds, or whether they evaluate them on the content of the message (p. 73).

The “written errors of learners of a second language are unavoidable, as they are indications to teachers on the areas that need focus to improve the learners' writing skills” (Terzioğlu & Bostanci, 2020, p. 1). Error Analysis is, thus, imagined as one of the most critical topics in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) “because it studies second language learners' errors and defines a set of processes for identifying, describing and explaining those errors” (Ellis & Barkhuizen, as cited in Al Zoubi, 2018, p. 151).

### 2.5.1 Difference Between Errors and Mistakes

It has been contended that an error and a mistake are not the same. According to Brown (as cited in Hourani, 2008, p. 5), mistakes refer to "a failure to utilise a known system correctly". Hsu (as cited in Akbary, 2017, p. 6) explains mistakes as referring to "a failure to utilise a known system correctly, whereas errors concern a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner". According to Brown (as cited in Fang & Xue-mei, 2007, p. 11), "a 'mistake' is a performance fault that occurs when a known system is not used correctly. While an 'error' is a noteworthy variation from a native speaker's adult grammar, it reflects the learner's interlanguage ability". As Hourani (2008, p. 5) observes, two concepts need to be understood – that is, "firstly, mistakes do not require special treatment, assuming they are recognised. Secondly, errors here refers to structures only".

Furthermore, Akbary (2017) believes that learners non-systematically make mistakes because of insufficient consideration on using a known framework, and they can self-correct. Conversely, error execution, produced out of students' systematic comprehension of the objective language, can show a student's semantic ability. It can be, thus, be concluded that "error studies, therefore, play a necessary role to demonstrate the L2 learners' learning problems and indicate the level of the learners' L2 proficiency" (Akbary, 2017).

In addition, (Abdi, n.d.) differentiates between errors and mistakes as follows:

- Errors are rule-governed; they are systematic and show the lack of knowledge of learners.
- Mistakes are random deviations – unrelated to any system.
- Mistakes may occur in the writing of native speaker, or during speech, such as slips of tongue, slips of pen or slips of the ear. Mistakes happen because of strong emotion, memory limitations, lack of concentration or tiredness.
- It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between mistakes and errors. However, according to linguistics, mistakes have a rather low frequency, whereas errors have high frequency, and they are systematic.

## 2.5.2 Levels of Error Occurrence

### 2.5.2.1 Lexical Errors

Amin (2014, p. 108) explains that English learners are expected to be able to use the English language – not only in spoken but also in written communication. Writing is one of the language skills that should be mastered. Written language can be analysed by identifying the lexical items that learners apply in the construction of sentences. This means that lexis is one of the important elements that are needed to produce and understand a text well. Lexis is defined by Aguilera and Filologia (2012) as “singular words or sets of words that have a particular significance”. Lexis is also defined by Kolanchery (2014) as “our 'internal database' of words and complete 'ready-made' fixed/semi-fixed/typical combinations of words that we can recall and use quite quickly without having to construct new phrases and sentences word by word from scratch, using our knowledge of grammar” (p. 18). In addition, Llach (as cited in Ander & Yildirim, 2010, p. 5299) submits that “language learning starts up with vocabulary; words are the first linguistic items acquired by the learner (in first and second language acquisition) ... and no language acquisition at all can take place without the acquisition of lexis”.

According to Llach (as cited in Jurianto, 2015, p. 70), “a lexical error is the inappropriate use of lexical items in a certain context”. Therefore, “errors are also positive signs of vocabulary development” (Llach, 2017, p. 63). Llach (as cited in Ander & Yildirim, 2010) also explains that:

...lexical errors not only play a relevant role in the second language vocabulary learning process, but they also are among the most numerous types of errors in learners' performance. It is very important to identify and remedy lexical errors in second language learners' compositions because those errors appear to be one of the main causes of communication problems. (p. 5299)

Lastly, there are three reasons that make lexical errors crucial in Second Language Learning (SLL) as explained by Corder (as cited in Llach, 2017):

- Firstly, they are an important source of information for teachers and researchers of the L2 vocabulary acquisition process since they serve as evidence of the said process. In this sense, lexical errors reveal the underlying processes of L2 vocabulary acquisition – and they contribute to a better understanding of the organisation of the mental lexicon (Ellis, 1994; Meara, 1996).
- Secondly, they are useful for learners to realise the gaps between their lexical knowledge and their communicative needs.
- Finally, lexical errors have pedagogical implications, because they indicate to teachers the problem areas of lexical learning. They also provide information about the strategies or stratagems learners use to overcome these problems, but only when they result in faulty outcomes; lexical errors do not provide hints about felicitous use of vocabulary strategies (p. 64).

Ander and Yildirim (2010) identify seven categories of lexical errors:

1. **Errors of wrong word choice:** This category consists of lexical errors, where a wrong lexical item is used instead of the correct one. By having that wrong item there, the whole sentence does not make any sense.
2. **Errors of literal translation:** The lexical errors under this category are the items that are directly translated into L2 by sticking to the literal L1 meaning.
3. **Errors of omission or incompleteness:** Errors of this category are detected, especially when a lexical item that should be present is omitted, or when a lexical item that should complete is incomplete.
4. **Misspelling:** This category is also known in literature as spelling errors, and it consists of lexical errors that violate the orthographic conventions of English (Llach, 2007).
5. **Errors of redundancy:** Lexical errors in this category are generally recognised when a lexical item is unnecessarily used, repeated or paraphrased.



6. **Errors of collocation:** Lexical errors are categorised under this type of error when a lexical item used in a sentence does not suit or collocate with another part of the sentence; these items sound unnatural or inappropriate.

7. **Errors of word formation:** Lexical errors in this category consist of the items, where the students use the wrong form of a word in their compositions.

### 2.5.2.2 Grammatical Errors

Learning the complexities of grammar through writing has always been a challenge for many learners, particularly for English second language learners. Grammar is defined by Liasari, Sutarsyah and Sudirman (n.d., p. 2) as a “set of rules that determines how each word in a phrase is formed and connected”. The grammar of a language is defined by Trousdale and Gisborne (as cited in Sengeng, 2016, p. 112) as “the symbolic, conventionalised norm of language use that reveals links between forms and meaning”. ‘Grammatical error’, on the other hand, is “a term used in prescriptive grammar to denote an erroneous, unusual or contentious usage, such as a misplaced modifier or an incorrect verb tense” (Miko, 2018, p. 5). It is “an example of erroneous, unusual or contentious usage, such as a misplaced modifier or an incorrect verb tense” (Garner, as cited in Owu-Ewie & Williams, 2017, p. 470).

Grammatical faults, according to Hernandez (as cited in Owu-Ewie & Williams 2017, p. 470), “involve improper structures, such as inappropriate verbal tense, incorrect verbal forms and syntax issues. It is also known as a use error”. According to Sumalinog (2018),

Students make writing errors as they study, which reveal their level of proficiency in the use of English as a medium. Even slight grammatical faults frequently damage the meaning of the dialogue being engaged in. When errors continue to occur, misunderstanding occurs, producing delays in comprehension, which leads to failure on the side of the sender as he attempts to communicate the intended message to the recipient. As a result, the effectiveness and efficiency of the teachers are questioned (p. 69).

It appears that “the consistency of a piece of writing will be influenced by knowledge of proper grammar. Students will write well if they follow the grammar rules. Grammatical errors should be investigated, since they contribute to a better understanding of the language learning process” (Miko, 2018, p. 5).

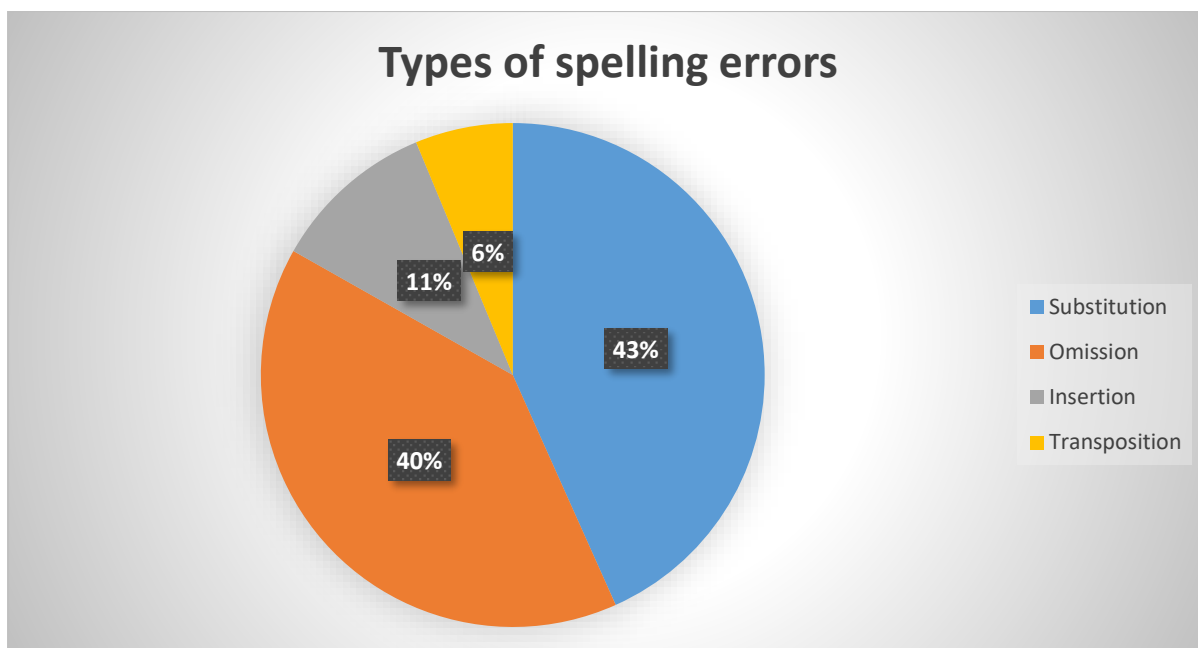
## **2.6 Spelling Errors in Written English in Schools**

Spelling is considered an essential component of written language (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). “Analyses of English spelling difficulties have a long tradition in pedagogical and psycholinguistic literature – but to the best of our knowledge, the task of predicting spelling difficulty has not yet been tackled” (Beinborn, Zesch & Gurevych, 2016, p. 76). Several studies conducted with students learning English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL and EFL) at different levels reveal some causes leading to misspelling.

Many English language learners all over the world have difficulties with English spelling (Alzuoud & Kabilan, 2013). Subhi and Yasin (2015) indicate that English First Language (EFL) learners’ percentage of spelling errors are 41.5% of the words’ population, with 49.5% correct responses to the questions in the listening comprehension test and 52% correct answers on the decoding test.

### **2.6.1 English Spelling Errors from L1 Interference**

Spelling is defined as the act of correctly forming words from individual letters (Hornby, 2000). This means spelling has rules for correctly forming words, i.e., letters must appear in the correct sequence to be meaningful; otherwise, spelling errors will occur (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). Various studies sought to investigate and analyse various causes of English spelling errors. This section discusses the most common types of spelling mistakes and errors observed in students' written work in English. Overall, spelling mistakes can occur because of an omission, substitution, insertion or the misplacement of a letter when writing a specific word (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). Al-Sobhi et al. (2017) identifies four major types of spelling errors: substitution, omission, insertion and transposition as illustrated in Figure 4 below.



**Figure 4: Types of spelling errors.** Source: Al-Sobhi et al. (2017)

According to Al-Sobhi et al. (2017), substitution and omission are the main types of spelling errors observed to be committed by learners in their English written work. This fact has also been established by Altamimi and Ab Rashid (2019), who affirm that spelling errors can be a result of omission, substitution, insertion or the misplacement of a letter when writing a particular word.

Omission errors occur when a learner does not complete a word, whereas substitution errors occur when the learner substitutes one of the letters of the standard spelling of a word with another (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). Omission errors may be caused by the inconsistency of the sound and the letter system in the English language (Critten, Connelly, Dockrell & Walter, 2014). On the other hand, the observed common cause of substitution and omission errors of English spelling is the existence of silent letters in the English language (Sénéchal, Gingras & L'Heureux, 2016). Other errors, such as insertion and transposition, also occur but in a relatively low percentage (Al-Sobhi et al., 2017). In other words, these types of errors are not significant in the spelling of English words.

Another reason for poor reading and writing skills in languages as established by Wikan, Mostert, Danbolt, Nes, Nyathi and Hengari (2007) is that learners from poor and illiterate families have more trouble in developing reading and writing skills than learners who come from more privileged backgrounds. There could be more sources of errors committed by the

learners in English, especially by the Oshindonga speaking learners, which may be attributed to structural differences that exist between the two languages. However, research gaps in this area do exist, and they need to be uncovered and discussed in depth to establish the real reason behind English errors committed by learners when they write in their L1.

## **2.7 Factors Contributing to Misspelling of English Words**

As an English teacher, the researcher observed learners making spelling mistakes. Even learners who are fluent in spoken English can make spelling mistakes when they write down what they say or what others say to them (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). Many English language learners have difficulties with English spelling (Al-zuoud & Kabilan, 2013), attributed to several causes (factors), such as the differences in the orthographic system between English and first language (L1) interference. Moreover, these spelling difficulties cause many spelling errors that negatively affect the writing proficiency of students (Saiegh-Haddad, 2004).

Poor spelling jeopardises academic achievement, employment opportunities, interpersonal relationships and self-esteem (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). Similarly, learning to spell correctly is difficult for most people, but it is essential for everyone, especially with increased competition for good jobs. Even casual readers make assumptions about a person's intelligence and education level, based on spelling.

In addition, one of the leading factors contributing to the misspelling of English words is the state of learning English as a second language. This is because learning a second language is often challenging for learners, as their native language has language rules that guide how they are supposed to pronounce and spell words (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). Clearly, many studies across the world have identified issues facing the learning of English. However, there are relatively few studies conducted about the factors leading to misspelling of English words by learners in the context of Namibia.

## 2.8 Reasons for Writing Errors

### 2.8.1 Inter-lingual transfer

Learners commit serious inter-lingual errors because they depend heavily on their first language. These kinds of error occur when learner's habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent him or her from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language to a certain extent (Corder, 1981). This error can be defined as the deviate form of language, caused by conflicting information of the target language. It results from instances in which a learner tries to transfer words or sentences directly or indirectly from their first language into the second language (Darus & Ching, 2009).

Learners' inborn language contributes to inter-lingual transfer in most cases. Literal translation of ideas and thoughts is often the cause of inter-lingual errors. This implies that a learner translates a first language sentence into the target language. Inter-lingual errors are defined by Schachter and Celce-Maurcia (1997, p. 443) as "those caused by the influence of the learner's mother tongue on the production of the target language in presumably those areas where languages clearly differ". These types of errors occur as a result of language transfer, which might be caused by the learner's mother tongue. As there are two types of transfers, positive and negative, it should be indicated here that this type of error is a result of the negative transfer of certain linguistic structures from L1 (Al-khreshen, 2010). Invariably, "in the early stages of language learning, the native language is the only previous linguistic system an individual can draw upon; thus, transfer is inevitable" (Ellis, as cited in Nghikembua, 2014, p. 19).

Selinker (as cited in Khansir, 2012) uses the term "fossilisation" to refer to the "tendency of many learners to stop developing their inter-language grammar in the direction of the target language". He further identifies five fossilisation processes as follows:

1. **Language Transfer:** sometimes, rules and subsystems of the inter-language may result from transfer from the first language.
2. **Transfer of Training:** some elements of the inter-language may result from specific features of the training process used to teach the second language.

3. ***Strategies of Second Language Learning***: some elements of the inter-language may result from a specific approach to the material to be learned.

4. ***Strategies of Second Language Communication***: some elements of the inter-language may result from specific ways people learn to communicate with native speakers of the target language.

5. ***Overgeneralisation of the Target Language Linguistic Materials***: some elements of the inter-language may be the product of overgeneralisation of the rules and semantic features of the target language (p. 1030).

### **2.8.2 Intra-lingual transfer**

Intra-lingual transfer refers to “the kinds of errors that occur during the learning process of the second language at a stage when learners have not really acquired the knowledge” (Akbari, 2017, p. 8). Despite inter-lingual errors being caused by interference from the learner’s L1, there are still some errors whose origins cannot be found in the structures of the learner’s L1. Al-khresheh (2016) asserts that the errors that do not reflect the structure of their native language or mother tongue are caused by intra-lingual interference from the target language itself. “Intra-lingual errors can also occur because of negative interference or transfer from applying different general learning strategies like those noticeable in L1 acquisition, and they might also occur because of an incomplete process of acquiring the L1” (Richards, 1971, p. 207).

### **2.8.3 Overgeneralisation**

Overgeneralisation “is very common with children, as they acquire irregular morphological and syntactical forms at a later stage” (Hickey, 2017, p. 3). Overgeneralisation is the phenomenon through which one overextends one rule to cover instances to which that rule does not apply. This happens when learners hear a particular language rule and quickly assume other examples will also follow the same rule. This means “the learners create a deviant structure on the basis of other structures in the target language” (Akbari, 2017, p. 8). An example is when a learner has learned that to change a word to past tense, one should add /-ed/ (e.g., brag-bragged) this results in them adding /-ed/ to every word to change it to

past tense (run-\*runned), which is wrong. Overgeneralisation happens when a learner creates a deviant structure, based on his/her experience of other structure in the target language. Littlewood (1984) cites the example of forming plural by adding “s” to even irregular plurals, also generalising the “-ed” past form.

#### **2.8.4 Carelessness**

When learners are not concentrating and paying attention to what they are doing, they do not care about what they are writing. Subsequently, they fail to properly read and understand instructions given to them, and they do not care whether they have used punctuations or not; thus, they end up making serious errors.

#### **2.8.5 Modern technology**

Technology has taken over our world. People now use cell phones to communicate, and most people tend to use Short Message Services (SMS) language to communicate. According to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture (MoE) (2005), SMS language is a disadvantage to the development of high levels of proficiency in English because learners become addicted to it to the extent that they start applying it even when they write their formal work.

#### **2.8.6 Translation**

Translation is one of the major causes of errors. This happens because a student translates sentences or idiomatic expressions from their first language into the target language – word for word. This is probably the most common cause of errors. Learners need enough time to think carefully, to rewrite, to select, revise and organise their thoughts and ideas for them to write satisfactorily. As such, they will avoid making a lot of errors and improve in the way they perform. Conducting research on errors in the essays of learners can be the best way to identify, describe and explain why second language learners make them.

### **2.9 Ways of Developing Good Spelling Skills**

Spelling is frequently regarded as a minor issue that can be remedied with spell checkers or clerical assistance. A third factor contributing to the learners’ lack of respect for spelling is that it has been viewed as a visually based, rather than a linguistic-based process (Boras,

1982). According to Miressa and Dumessa (2011), several recommendations have been suggested as ways of improving learners' spelling skills in English. For example, teachers should use a variety of strategies to teach learners based on the types of errors they make. Teachers should also take on the responsibility of teaching and motivating students to learn to spell correctly. They should also continuously encourage students to use correct spelling in writing by deducting marks for incorrect spelling in their assessments. Students, for their part, should pay attention to learning the spelling of words and writing every word correctly to avoid misunderstandings. Furthermore, lessons on spelling rules and practical exercises should be adequately included in the teaching materials in the curriculum of the education system, such as students' textbooks. This will enable the learners to develop their spelling skills. Textbook authors and other reference books should pay close attention to spelling rules and exercises that can help students improve their spelling skills (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011).

#### **2.10 Key strategies to eliminate English L2 errors**

Teaching English to non-English speaking learners can be challenging. Both speech and writing errors in the use of English by non-English speaking learners can be limited. However, there are several strategies that teachers can use to try and eliminate errors in the language usage patterns of the learners. It has been suggested, for example, that teachers should use the teaching materials to improve their lesson presentations. Before teachers use teaching aids, it is important to familiarise themselves with their use and application. This will help them deal with any difficulties that may arise. The teaching materials should be used during the learning activities. In line with this, Walkin (2000, p. 78) states that "teaching materials serve to open up many more channels for the communication of information and create a variety of sensory impressions".

Factors such as home environment, teaching and learning resources, teaching methods, time on task and learners' attitudes towards English as a Second Language have also been observed to influence the results from Grade 12 final examinations in Namibia (Nkandi, 2015). From Grade 1 onward, Namibian learners in most public schools learn English as a second language, and they develop reading skills in that language. The idea is that they should learn to read their home language first, but at the same time develop reading skills in English side by side



with their home language reading skills. The potential and ability for learners to acquire skills in a second language requires their active participation in language activities.

The Namibian Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) describes the characteristic of transitional reading that children should be achieving. They should begin reading orally with increasing fluency and expression; they should identify an increasing number of words by sight and retell and discuss on interpretation of texts. Teaching strategies determine the fluency of the interaction between the teacher and learners with the sole purpose of attaining effective learning. Teachers of English should not treat all learners in the same manner as if they have similar abilities and cultural backgrounds. This is because while one method may be suitable to a particular group of learners, it might not be to others – and as such, may not benefit them at all. It is, therefore, important that teachers should vary sizes of groups on the basis of the learners' needs.

Another strategy that improves reading and writing skills is reading aloud. The value of reading aloud individually, according to Kritzinge (1990, p. 140), helps in these ways: "it gives learners an exercise to pay close attention and reading with concentration, it tells the teacher where the main reading difficulties lie and which reading aspects should be reinforced, and it helps the teacher to identify a weak reader".

According to Grellet (1991), when skimming, we go through the reading text quickly to get the gist of it, to know how the text is organised, or to get an idea of the tone or intention of the writer. Grellet further argues that when scanning, we try to locate specific information – and often, we do not follow linearity of the passage to do so; "we simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for – whether it is a name, date or specific piece of information" (Grellet, 1991, p. 57).

Reading is one of the key strategies to improve English among English L2 students. Teachers should encourage learners to make use of the library to read more. Unfortunately, libraries are found mainly in urban schools, and this accords the learners in such schools to develop a culture of reading. In the rural schools, libraries are simply not there, with the results that learners in such schools lag behind in reading (Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality Report, 2004). Although there are libraries in some schools,

most teachers and principals do not see the value and relevance of school libraries (Rasana, 2002), and this has had a negative impact on developing the required culture.

According to the findings in the SACMEQ Report (2004), home libraries are rare due to the poor economic status of most parents in the rural areas of Namibia as well as a substantial number of illiterate parents. The parents do not have resources to provide extra books for their children. For the learners to access information from books, they must read extensively – and without such reading skills, the learners struggle to make meaning and sense of the information they are provided with.

The internet is one of the tools that can be used by teachers of English to access information they can use in their lessons to improve reading and writing among learners. Hill and Stater (1998) believe the internet enables learners to engage in communication dialogue across the globe with other learners. As a result, second language learners pick up new vocabulary, which contributes towards language proficiency.

In addition, Draws (1913) concludes that the use of word processors in writing instructions results in learners producing longer documents and becoming better in writing. Mellon (1999) cements this observation by suggesting that teachers must select materials that help to carefully meet instructional objectives and integrate them into the learning experience that motivates and excites learners. However, Hennssy, Herison and Wamakote (2010) argue that many teachers are intimidated by technology and comfortable with their established styles of teaching.

### **2.11 Previous Studies**

In Namibia, several studies were carried out to investigate student errors in English as a Second Language, and these were chiefly aimed at providing insights for teachers, researchers and students. For example, in a study, titled 'Consequences of Ideology and Policy in the English Second Language Classroom: The Case of Oshiwambo-speaking Students in Namibia', lipinge (2018) discusses the critical questions regarding the effects of the current Namibian Language in Education Policy (LEP) on the teaching and learning of English as a Second Language (ESL) in northern Namibia, with a special focus on one of the most demanding skills in second language learning: essay writing. Besides this, the study examines the writing

problems of learners and intervention strategies that teachers use to help learners overcome or reduce writing problems.

Hamakali and Mbenzi (2016) conducted a Contrastive Analysis study, which focuses on the difficulties that the native speakers of Oshiwambo encounter in learning to speak English, with particular reference to the Ovakwanyama. Their findings were that an Oshikwanyama learner of English may find it difficult to make or enunciate a sound that does not occur in Oshikwanyama. To get around this, they might try to replace such noises with sounds from Oshikwanyama and the substitution of English sounds for Oshikwanyama sounds renders a speech incomprehensible or changes the meaning of the term entirely (Hamakali & Mbenzi, 2016, p. 53).

Kapolo (2013) investigated and analysed writing errors made by Grade 11 learners in English and deals with the analysis of writing errors that are made by Grade 11 learners in ESL from two selected secondary schools in the Omusati Education Region in Namibia. The study sought to identify and analyse writing errors in 400 essays written in English by 400 Grade 11 learners, whose L1 is Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama. The findings of the study suggest that the fundamental driver of writing errors in ESL is the influence of negative transfer from the first languages.

The enquiry also establishes that the interference of first language were a cause for numerous learners to refer to their first language when they experience difficulties in their second language writing. Furthermore, Mungungu (2010) identified common English language errors made by Oshiwambo, Afrikaans and Silozi L1 speakers. These were identified as being largely those of spelling, tenses, articles and prepositions. The examination has additionally shown that the most elevated number of errors was submitted by the Oshiwambo speakers, followed by the Silozi bunch, and the least number of mistakes was submitted by the Afrikaans speaking people.

Abiatar (2018) conducted an Error Analysis of Grade 12 learners at Canisianum Roman Catholic High School. The study took verbal reports from the learners to help assist in explaining errors. The study firstly observed learners' English essays to establish if it could find any errors. The study found that learners made errors mostly on concord, tense and spelling.

Furthermore, the verbal reports revealed that learners made errors on concepts they understand – concepts that they were able to explain and exemplify correctly. Finally, Nghikembua (2014) also conducted a CA of Oshiwambo and English to investigate the potential origins of some of the errors learners made in their written work. The study also applied the Error Analysis Theory to identify the reasons behind the low performance rates of the Grade 12 Oshiwambo speaking learners of English.

## **2.12 Research Gap**

As far as research has established, minimal in-depth research has been conducted on Namibian native languages. Furthermore, despite very little research having been conducted precisely in relation to contrastive linguistic, no analysis has been done so far between English as a Second Language and Oshindonga first language yet. All the studies mentioned in the literature review are related to this topic in a way or another. This study attempts to tackle the missing gap by studying the differences and similarities that exist between English and Oshindonga and to explain why Oshindonga L1 learners of English L2 face difficulties when they write in English. By so doing, this study could provide insights into the reasons for low performance by Grade 9 learners at the Jan Möhr Secondary School in their English written work. Thus, the identified research gap identified is that no CLA has been done so far between English L2 and Oshindonga L1.

## **2.13 Theoretical Framework**

This study is theoretically couched within the explications of the Contrastive Analysis Theory. Charles Carpenter Fries and other representatives of American Structuralism were the first scholars to introduce contrastive linguistics as a conspicuous subdiscipline inside the field of linguistic sciences in their research, conducted during the 1940s. Because of Fries' in-depth analysis of structural links between the native and target languages, he was able to forecast second language learning difficulties. He explained that "the most effective materials are those that are based on a scientific explanation of the language to be learnt and a comparable description of the learners' native language" (Qasim, 2013, p. 18). Some years later, Robert Lado put Fries' theory of Contrastive Analysis into practice, and set the foundation for the CA theory and technique. The main underlying idea of CA, as propounded by Robert Lado in his

seminal text *Linguistics Across Cultures*, was that “it is possible to identify the areas of difficulty a particular second language will present for native speakers of another language by systematically comparing the two languages and cultures” (Lennon, 2008).

Lado and Fries studied at the University of Michigan together. According to (Jakobson, n.d.) contrastive studies are based on:

Formal correspondence (for contrasting studies of word order, function words, inflections, affixation, suprasegmental features, alliteration and rhymes), semantic equivalence (for contrasting studies of meaning of words, phrases and sentences), and pragmatic/functional equivalence (for contrasting studies of meaning/function of texts, structure of discourse, stylistic properties, quantitative aspects of text) (p. 7).

This ultimately implies that where the two languages and cultures are similar, learning difficulties will not be expected; where they are different, learning difficulties are to be expected. Moreover, the greater the difference, the greater the degree of expected difficulty.

CA is the comparison of the linguistic system of two or more languages, and it is based on the main difficulties in learning a new language that results from the interference from the first language (Tajareh, 2005). Mair (2020) further explains that “The languages compared can be genetically related or unrelated, as well as typologically similar or dissimilar” (p. 1). This theory helps to establish some form of outline on the syntactic, lexical and grammatical errors that learners make in their writing because of their native language. In light of the above explanations, the following diagram (Figure 5) illustrates the procedures of CA:

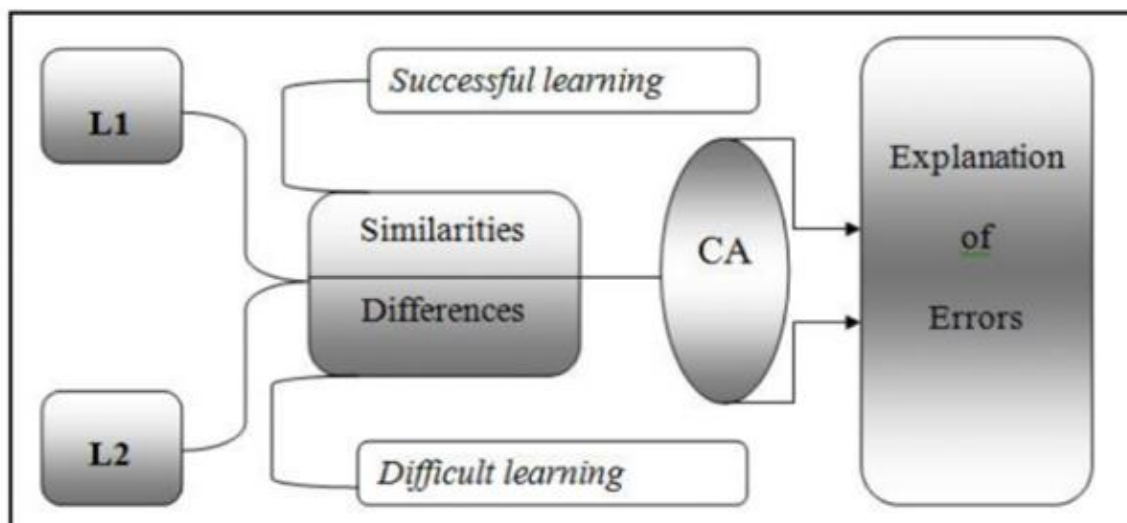


Figure 5: A schematic representation of Contrastive Analysis. Source: (Al-khresheh, 2016, p. 334).

Based on Figure 5 above, CA must be carried out between a minimum of two languages – the L1 and L2 of the learner. Areas of difficulty need to be identified and a comparison carried out between the two languages to find their structural similarities and differences. If there are similarities, transfer will be positive, whereas where there are differences, transfer will be negative (which will result in errors). CA was also be applied to explain why the L2 learners makes errors.

In providing further clarification on CA, Keshavarz (as cited in Jan Volny, 2017) describes five steps of CA.

1. **Selection:** Because a thorough contrastive examination of a pair of languages is not possible, a researcher should only choose some of their traits that he/she thinks cause problems. This is not necessary a prescriptive stage, as these characteristics could be chosen based on a prior examination of actual errors.

2. **Description:** The two languages should be properly described after the relevant features have been picked. It is also crucial that this is a parallel description, i.e., one that is created using the same linguistic model or framework. According to Keshavarz, if a linguist employs the Generative-Transformational Grammar to describe specific characteristics or qualities of L1, the linguistic model must subsequently be applied to L2. However, in some cases,

using alternative models for each of the languages may be necessary. As logical as this may appear, it is nevertheless a theoretical question that linguists argue.

3. **Comparison:** When the two languages are described, similarities and differences are to be found by comparing them. Linguistic aspects of the two languages are examined on three levels: form, meaning and distribution of forms.

4. **Prediction:** Following the completion of the comparison, the researcher can make predictions regarding the challenges the learners may encounter during their second language learning. The analyst should decide whether or not the similarities and differences found via the comparison of the two languages are troublesome for the learners. The hierarchy of difficulty, which is detailed below, is one of the instruments for doing so. It is also here that the typology of errors employed in this project is developed.

5. **Verification:** The researcher confirms whether the predictions made in step 4 were true. In this final stage, we need to ask whether L2 learners commit the types of errors predicted based on the CA of the two languages or sub-systems of those languages. In the case of the strong version, this could imply confirming that the errors predicted previously occur. It is also the point at which the researcher can begin to completely analyse the flaws and draw statistical conclusions. (pp. 14-15)

Furthermore, as Yok (n.d.) explains, the first stage of doing a CA entails describing the two languages, namely L2 and L1. The researcher must first determine whether the languages have already been described. The researcher can employ descriptions of the languages in the study if they exist and are judged to be acceptable and beneficial for their goal. Additional research should be performed and built upon the current descriptions if the descriptions are insufficient or incomplete. The researcher has no choice but to explain the languages from their own knowledge if descriptions do not exist (as in the case of newly discovered or lesser-known languages).

Maledo and Igbomene (2020) believe CA has three basic assumptions. The first is that the main difficulties in learning or using a new language are caused by the interference from the L2. Secondly, that these difficulties can be predicted by CA, which helps L2 learners or users

to perceive or recognise the differences between their first language and the new language they are learning or using. Thirdly, that teaching materials can benefit from CA, which provides insight as to how the effects of first language interference can be reduced.

Charles Carpenter Fries, in his monograph on *Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language* (1945), contends that “the most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner”. Fries programme was comprehensively realised a few years later by Lado (1957) in a comparison of English and Spanish. In the preface, Lado (1957) submits that “we can predict and describe the patterns that will cause difficulty in learning and those that will not cause difficulty by comparing systematically the language and culture to be learned with the native language and culture of the student”. This assumption has come to be known as the “contrastive hypothesis” in its ‘strong’ or ‘predictive’ form (Wardhaugh, 1970). The contrastive programme was extensively put into practice in the 1960s, most notably with the publication of the *Contrastive Structure Series* edited by Ch. Ferguson and published by the University of Chicago Press (Moulton, 1962).

CA is an inductive investigative approach based on the distinctive elements in a language; it was developed to help teachers of a foreign or second language to teach as efficiently as possible. In Lado’s (1957) words, “the teacher who had made a comparison of the second language with the native language of the students will know better what the problems are and can better provide for teaching them”. The CAH was developed out of the behaviourist inclined L2 learning theories and the structuralist linguistics of the 1950s. It borrowed the notions of “transfer” and “interference” from psychology and applied them to L2 learning.

In CA, the difficulties and errors that occur when we learn and use a L2 are caused by the interference of our mother tongue. When a structure of the second language is similar to that of the mother tongue, “positive transfer” takes place, and users are less likely to encounter any serious difficulties in the teaching and learning of L2.

On the other hand, where the two languages differ, “negative transfer” or “interference” occurs. Lado (1957) opines in this regard that “those elements that are similar to the learner’s native language will be simple for him and those elements that are different will be difficult”.



The bigger the differences there are between the two languages, the greater the difficulties. When a CA of L1 and L2 is carried out, the difficulties between the two languages can be discovered and then a prediction made of the difficulties that a learner would likely encounter. Wardhaugh (1970) points out that the CAH exists in a strong and weak form. The strong version is *priori*, whereas the weak version is *posteriori* in its treatment of errors. The strong form claims we can predict L2 errors by identifying the differences between L1 and L2. The strong version of CA, as explained by Sridhar (as cited in Adebayo, 2017), relies on the following assumptions. According to Lee (1968, p. 23):

1. the primary cause of foreign language learning errors is interference from the learner's mother tongue;
2. the greater the difference between the foreign language and the native language, the more difficult it will be to learn;
3. the degree of these differences determines the nature of the learning problem;
4. results from CA are essential for predicting errors that will occur during learning;
5. the differences found when comparing the native and foreign language are equivalent to what the teachers are supposed to teach.

The weak version of the hypothesis has the same point of departure as Error Analysis (EA) – from the errors committed by learners. From a corpus of the target language used by learners, actual errors are first identified i.e., an EA of the learners' language is conducted, and then CA is applied to identify which errors are caused by L1 interference. In other words, the role of CA is explanatory rather than predictive, and the role of L1 in the occurrence of errors is less important. As Tajareh (2015) explains,

The weak version of CAH states that when studying L2, the learner's native language does not so much 'interfere' with their learning, as it provides an 'escape hatch' when the learner is in a bind. In other words, the learner 'pads' from their original language when he doesn't know how to articulate anything in the target language. This approach implies that the learner's greatest challenge will be learning something he doesn't already know (p. 1111)

This theory will extensively help with contrasting between Oshindonga and English, and to demonstrate how the mother tongue influences second language learning. As time went on, various shortcomings of the CA approach became apparent. Firstly, although Lado (1957) sought to identify areas of language learning difficulty, in practice, CA was used to predict errors. This theory will closely examine the patterns in the target language and the native language, as this clearly indicates a direct transfer of elements from the native language to the target language.

Zobl (1980), for instance, established that differences between English and French may not necessarily predict error for English learners of French as well as French learners of English. An example is the position of direct pronoun objects, which are placed before the verb in French (*le chien le mange*) but after the verb in English ("the dog eats it"). English learners of French are more likely to say (*le chien mange le*) than French learners of English are likely to say (the dog it eats). This is possibly because English learners of French hear lots of examples of subject, verb and object (SVO) in French (where the object is not a preposition), whereas French learners of English never hear SOV order in English, so they are less tempted to follow the word order of their native language.

In conclusion, the CA Theory is a systematic study of a pair of languages with a view to identifying their structural differences and similarities. CA also has had various other designations such as "comparative linguistics", "contrastive grammar" and "differential description". No matter what terminology is used, it is basically "the juxtaposing of accounts of two languages and the extraction of certain observation of difficulty" (Hamp, 1968, p. 139).

## **2.14 Summary**

This chapter reviewed literature, identifying factors that influence learners' errors in writing essays in English. Even though literature was not from the Namibian or African context, it provided guidance in terms of approaches and strategies for the study. As such, the chapter gave form and shape to the methodology and data presentation/analysis. The chapter explored the CLA that the study was centred on. The next chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the study.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

Cresswell (2007) defines research methodology as a structured set of guidelines or activities that assist in the generation of valid and reliable research results. This chapter discusses the research design as well as the population of this study. Additionally, the chapter also explains the sampling methods that were used to select the sample for this study and how the data collection was conducted. Penultimately, the chapter will explain how the data was presented and analysed and the research ethics that were considered in this study.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

Burns and Grove (2003, p. 195) define a research design as “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings”. Ndume (2020, p. 30) explains that “The main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decision should be in order to maximise the quality of the findings”.

The current study is descriptive in nature, and this entails the process of investigating a problem that has not been studied or thoroughly investigated in the past. The researchers chose the qualitative design because it gave participants a certain degree of freedom and permit spontaneity rather than forcing them to select from a set of pre-determined responses of which no one might be appropriate or accurate to describe the participant’s thoughts, feelings, attitude, or behaviour and try to create the right atmosphere to enable people to express themselves. The qualitative design also often involves smaller number of participants.

#### **3.3 Research Paradigm**

A paradigm is “an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools” (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013, p. 253). Guba and Lincoln (as cited in Hafidi, 2019, p. 54) also submit that “a paradigm may be viewed

as a set of basic beliefs that deal with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines for its holder". Frans (2016) posits, thus, that:

The paradigm functions as a point of view that gives the research a rationale and subjects the analyst to specific data collecting, perception, and comprehension procedures. As a result, paradigms are critical to the study design because they influence both the concept of the research question and the method by which the issue will be investigated. (p. 74)

An interpretivism approach was used in this study. Interpretivists note that the social world should be studied in the natural world, through the eyes of the participants, without the intervention of the researcher (Dammak, n.d., p. 5). Merriam (as cited in Mbangula, 2010, p. 20) proposes that "where research has an understanding of social phenomenon as a primary focus, the interpretive orientation is particularly appropriate". According to Rehman and Alharthi (2016), an interpretive analyst utilises strategies that produce qualitative data, and though mathematical information could be included, they are not depended upon. Newman, (as cited in Mbangula, 2010, p. 40) also suggests that "a key characteristic of interpretive research is explaining how people arrive at their understanding of the world. This, the researcher does through "direct observation of the setting in which the study is done"". This study is an interpretivist study because makes use of the qualitative data collection methods to collect information from the learner's written English essays and this was the information that assisted the researcher understanding and answering the established research questions appropriately.

### **3.4 Research Approach**

The researcher used qualitative research approach. This helped the study to follow the research plan which made it possible to gather the needed data to meet the objectives of the study. "Qualitative research is inductive in nature, and the researcher generally explores meanings and insights in a given situation" (Mohajan, 2018, p. 1). The qualitative research differs from the quantitative research in a sense that a quantitative study investigates whether there is a relationship between and amongst variables, while qualitative studies seek thorough understanding of a situation or a state of being (Kapolo, 2013).

The study used qualitative methods to interact extensively and intimately with participants during the study. This was done through the use of time-intensive data collection methods such as interviews (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009). In addition, qualitative research considers historical or culturally significant phenomena, values participants' perspectives on their worlds, and often relies on the words of individuals as its primary data (Shaumana, 2019).

Qualitative research methods involve data collection of personal experiences, introspection, stories about life, interviews, observations, interactions, and visual texts which are significant to people's life. Qualitative research focuses on the interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). "Qualitative research is used when little is known about a topic or phenomenon and when one wants to discover or learn more about it" (Antwi & Hamza, 2015, p. 220).

This study adopted the qualitative design because it allows researcher to get a complete idea of the topic being studied. Qualitative is a design which seeks in-depth understanding of a situation or a state of being (Gay et al., 2009). Qualitative research allows the researcher to collect several different forms of data, examine them and come up with various angles to provide explanations and extend the understanding of the topic under study. Qualitative research donates to theory, educational practice, and policymaking (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). Qualitative research can be interpreted, and it is a method which applies inductive reasoning (Gall & Borg, 2007). In general, qualitative research is the type of research which aims for systematic descriptions of individuals and systems and is concerned with subtleties of meaning and processes. However, a qualitative design has its own weaknesses, Marriam (as cited in Mbangula, 2010, p. 42) is that it has the potential to "oversimplify or exaggerate a situation and qualitative case studies are too limited by the sensitivity and integrity of the investigator. Lastly, according to Thanh and Le Thanh (as cited in Haifidi, 2019, p. 55) "qualitative research methods predominantly use the interpretivism paradigm because they often give rich reports that are necessary for interpretivists to fully understand contexts of their participants".

### **3.5 Research Setting**

This research was conducted at Jan Möhr Secondary School, a school located in Aries Street, Dorado Park in the Capital City of Namibia, Windhoek. The school was established on 2 March 1962 and was known as Windhoek West High School then. The school's name was later changed to Jan Möhr Secondary School, named after Mr JD Möhr, who was the then director of education. The motto of the school is 'Altyd My Beste.' It means 'Always My Best'. The school is one of the oldest schools in Namibia.

### **3.6 Study Population**

Wiid and Diggines (as cited in Uushona, 2019, p. 50) define population as "the total group of people or entities (social artefacts) from whom information is required". In addition, Shen and Ary (as cited in Ndume, 2020, p. 30) define population as "the abstract idea of a group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and from which the results from a sample can be generalised". As such, the population is the larger group with one or more characteristic in common from which a sample is obtained (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012). The population of the study was all Grade 9 English L2 learners who are Oshindonga L1 speakers at Jan Möhr Secondary School. The researcher gathered that there is a total of 242 Grade 9 learners, who make up seven classes (Grade 9 A-G) at the school – all of whom are English learners. However, among these 242 learners, 60 of them are Oshindonga L1 speakers. The population of the study was therefore 60 as all English L2 learners who are speakers of Oshindonga L1.

### **3.7 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size**

According to Polit and Hungler (as cited in Ndume, 2020, p. 31), sampling is the "the process of picking a subset of the population to represent the whole". The sample of the study was selected from the population (60 Grade 9 English L1 learners who are speakers of Oshindonga L1). Purposive sampling was used to select Oshindonga speaking male and female learners from each Grade 9 class (Grades 9A-G). Gay, et al. (as cited in Kapolo, 2013, p. 27) defines purposive sampling as "the process of selecting a sample that is believed to be representative of a given population". Purposive sampling means "the research participants are selected based on some characteristics which ensure that from them the researcher can get the data

needed for that particular study” (Maree, as cited in Haifidi, 2019, p. 61). This study referred to Krejcie and Morgan’s (1970) 'Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population' to determine the sample size for the given population of 60 learners. The sample size for this study is 52.

### **3.8 Research Instruments**

Research instruments are the tools used by the researcher to collect data. For this study, the researcher used three research instruments to collect the suitable data. These instruments were able to collect data that answers the research questions of this study. The researcher chose these instruments because they are the suitable tools for the study. The instruments are as follows.

#### ***(a) Marking grid for teachers***

This is the guide that the teachers use to mark English as Second Language continuous writing.

#### ***(b) Prescribed marking guide for teachers***

This is the guide that the teachers use to mark English as a Second Language continuous writing. It, therefore, gives guidance to the teacher on what to look at when marking an essay and how to allocate the marks. This tool was suitable for identifying errors in the written work of learners.

#### ***(c) End of term 1 English essays written by Grade 9s of 2021***

This research’s intention was to conduct a Contrastive Analysis of the essays written in English by Oshindonga speaking in Grade 9 at Jan Möhr Secondary School. End of term 1 examination essays (not all of them) were examined. The reason for using end of term English examination papers is because the researcher has been an English teacher for the past 5 years, and in this period of teaching she has observed that learners seem to put more effort in their schoolwork during examination times because they want to pass in order for them to be able to move forward to the next grade.



### 3.9 Data Analysis

Data analysis is all about making sense out of the collected information (Cresswell, 2014). Data analysis is the “process of examining all the materials that have been collected, to make sense of them, and help to address the research question” (O’Toole and Beckett, as cited in Haifidi, 2019, p. 70). The basic steps in the analytic process consists of identifying issues, determining the availability of suitable data, deciding on which methods are appropriate for answering the questions of interest, applying the methods, and then evaluating, summarising, and communicating the results.

Shaumana (2019, p. 30) explains that “data can be whatever you deem necessary to address your research question. There are no types of data which are naturally better than the others, though some may be preferred, but not available, and therefore other data have to be used”. So, as was mentioned earlier, this study utilised the qualitative research approach. In qualitative data analysis, the researcher is concerned with capturing the richness of data and describing unique complexities of the data (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). The essays were examined in terms of the influences of the first language (Oshindonga). The Contrastive Analysis method was used to study the selected essays. The researcher used Contrastive Analysis method in this study because it is used to analyse differences and similarities between native and target languages.

A contrastive methodology was explicitly formulated after the Second World War, when the importance of Second Language Learning was recognised in the US, and when research on immigrant bilingualism emerged (Weinreich, 1953). This aim of the research was to undertake a Contrastive Analysis of the essays written in English by Oshindonga speaking Grade 9 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School with the objective of identifying and evaluating the different types of lexical errors found in the essays, comparing the sentence construction of the two languages, and analysing the grammatical differences between the two languages. End of term 1 examination essays (not all of them) were studied. The reason for using end of term examination papers is because learners seem to put more effort in their schoolwork at this time because they want to pass and move forward to the next grade.

### **3.11 Pilot Study**

A pilot study is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (as cited in Mule (n.d., p. 38) as “a small-scale trial-run of all the aspects planned for use in the main research”. The pilot study was also conducted at Jan Möhr Secondary School. The instruments piloted were the marking grid and marking guide for English Second Language teachers. This was to ensure that once it was time for the researcher to conduct the final research, they totally understood how to interpret the two documents before examining the learners’ essays. On the day that the researcher conducted the pilot study, she also handed a rim of 100 sheets of paper to the teacher so that she (the teacher) could use them to make the copies of the essays that were handed to the researcher on the day of the actual collection of the learners’ essays. The piloting also included first seeking permission from the principal of the school before continuing to collect the essays from the Grade 9 English teacher, meeting with; talking to; and collecting the essays from the teacher, adhering to Covid 19 regulations while visiting the school, until the final practice before leaving the school premises. This was to ensure that once the researcher returned to the school to collect the essays, the process would go as smoothly and as fast as possible to avoid unnecessary physically contact with the involved people for due to the COVID 19 pandemic regulations and its attendant restrictions on human contact.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

“Ethics are norms for conduct that distinguish between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour” (Resnik, 2015). The researcher thrived to adhere to the right ethical procedures to gain entry to conduct research at Jan Möhr Secondary School. This was done through the acquisition of formal authorisation from the school Principal. The Grade 9 English teachers and their learners were also informed about the aims of this study prior to the collection of the data (essays). The researcher showed the learners respect, and their names were kept confidential as no names were written on the essays that were collected for the purpose of the study and discrimination was always avoided. Ethical clearance was sought and acquired from the Namibia University of Science and Technology Ethics Committee. All sources used in the research were also properly cited, both in text and reference list, in line with the requirements for conducting research at NUST.

### **3.13 Summary**

This chapter discussed the research methods that were used to collect data in the study. Justifications for the choice of the methods were also given. The chapter also explains the ethical considerations related to the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the major findings as observed from the collected essays written in English by Grade 9 Oshindonga first language learners. The goal of the research was to establish a taxonomy of the lexical errors (word choice, word formation and spelling) that were committed by the learners in the essays and through the lenses of the Contrastive Analysis Theory. The analysis compares the writing/pronunciation systems, punctuation, and noun formation processes of English and Oshindonga. Lastly, the chapter provides the observed possible causes of the errors made by the learners in their essays based on the findings of the research.

#### **4.2 Types of Errors**

After critically examining the data from the collected essays, the following errors were identified:

##### **4.2.1 Errors of Wrong Word Choice**

The words in this group were correctly spelt, however, the problem was how they were utilised – the contexts in which they were used, were wrong. This resulted in some terms in the essays having a different meaning than they were intended in the context of the essay. This was observed to occur frequently when words with the same sound, but different spellings and meanings were used by the learners. Examples of such instances and the mix-up of the following pairs of words were observed in the essays: "sea" and "see," "meat" and "meet," and "councillor" and "counsellor," to name a few. The learners also made mistakes with prepositions, such as using "at" instead of "on".

One of the most common mistakes in word choice is the use of a wrong word that sounds like the intended word but has a different meaning. Word choice errors in academic writing by a second-language learner can have a serious impact on the student's overall academic success, often resulting in misinterpretation or incomprehensibility (David, 1994). The examples below demonstrate that learners were unable to use words correctly in sentences when writing their essays.

### **Error 1**

When I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I excepted it to be was not the way it was.

In the sentence above the learner used the verb “except”. However, they were supposed to use the verb “expect”, which is a verb used to refer to something likely to happen.

In this regard, the sentence should be:

When I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I expected it to be was not the way it was.

In Oshindonga, this sentence would read:

Sho nda yi kOkapuka lodge kaka li ngaashi nda li nda tengeneka ka kale.

### **Error 2**

It started of as a good day that could of been a great memory but it was ruined by my cousin.

In this case, the preposition “of” instead of the adverb “off” was used. The learner continued to use the same preposition “of” instead of the verb “have”. Therefore, the correct sentence was:

It started as a good day that could have been a great memory, but it was ruined by my cousin.

In Oshindonga, the sentence would read:

Esiku olya tamekele ewanawa, Iya li li na okukala esiku lyokudhimbulukwa, ashike olya yonwa kumumwamemegona.

### **Error 3**

I took a 30 minutes quite walk through the woods of Walvis Bay.

Here the learner used the adverb “quite” which is used to describe something that is little or a lot but not completely instead of the right word which is “quiet” which is an adjective used to describe something or someone that makes little noise. The correct sentence should read:

I took a 30 minute quiet walk through the woods of Walvis Bay.

In Oshindonga, the sentence would be:

Onda ka endeke moluhwa lwaWalvis Bay meyimweneneno uule wominute omilongo ndatu.

#### **Error 4**

You have to use stairs if the electricity is of.

In the above sentence, the learner “of” is a preposition which shows the relationship that a thing has to another; hence it cannot be used in the sentence above. The word “off” should rather be used (“off”, in this case, is the opposite of “on”).

The correct sentence should be:

You must use the stairs if the electricity is off.

In Oshindonga, the sentence would be:

Owu na okulongitha ootalapa ngele olusheno olwa gwa ko.

#### **Error 5**

When I just sat, I fell on the cold concrete floor.

Another word that is used by learners in the wrong place is “just”. This word is used to express that something has recently happened. Therefore, the above sentence can be corrected as follows:

When I sat, I fell on the cold concrete floor.

In Oshindonga, the sentence would be:

Sho nda kuutumba onda gwile pofulula ontalala.

### Error 6

When analysing grammatical errors, one of the key things to consider is the root causes of the errors committed. In some cases, the error could be what is termed as omission of words or omission of letters. Let us look at the sentence below:

The are many parks in Namibia.

It is obvious from the example above that the learner forgot or rather omitted the second part of the word “there”, which is an adverb used to show place, and wrote “the”, which is a definite article, in the wrong place instead. Omission errors occur when the writer does not complete a word or something is left out (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019).

The learners meant to say: There are many parks in Namibia.

In Oshindonga, this sentence should read:

MoNamibia omu na omahala ogendji giinamwenyo.

More word choice errors as identified in the learners’ workbooks are illustrated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Word choice errors**

Wrong word choice	Correct word choice
We <u>spoke</u> stories and went to bed.	English: We <b>told</b> stories and went to bed. Oshindonga: Otwa hokolola omahokololo e tatu ka lala.
The park is <u>even</u> safe.	English: The Park <b>is</b> safe. Oshindonga: Ehala lyokuthuwila olya gamenwa.
She bought <u>for</u> me a new PlayStation 5.	She bought <b>me</b> a new PlayStation 5. Oshindonga: Okwa landele ndje oPlayStation 5 ompe.
There are tents and hotels <u>were</u> you can sleep.	English: There are tents and hotels <b>where</b> you can sleep. Oshindonga: Opu na ootenda noohotela mu to vulu okulala.

My dad started to honk, <u>which</u> everyone behind <u>were</u> doing.	English: My dad started to honk <u>like</u> everyone behind <u>was</u> doing.  Oshindonga: Tate okwa tameke okuhika ombenda ngaashi ayehe mboka ya li konima yetu ya li taya ningi.
We <u>was</u> staying <u>at</u> the farm.	English: We <u>were</u> staying <u>on</u> the farm.  Oshindonga: Okwa li hatu zi mofaalama.
I used to take the cows and goats to <u>go</u> drink water.	English: I used to take the cows and goats to drink water.  Oshindonga: Okwa li handi fala oongombe niikombo yi ka nwe omeya.

The learners made these types of errors repetitively because they were only considering the sound of the words instead of their spellings and meanings. For example, a learner used of instead of off. (Carson, 2001, and Kutz, Gordon & Zamel, 1993, as cited in Mungungu, 2010, p.61) explain that “learners tend to over-generalise the rules for stylistic features when acquiring new discourse structures”. Oshindonga learners of English may find it difficult to grasp the spelling and pronunciation rules of English due to the differences that exist between the forms of the two languages. In addition to that, Learners had trouble in understanding the context in which they had used the mentioned words, for example, writing sentences like ‘We spoke stories and went to bed’ instead of ‘We told stories and went to bed’.

#### 4.1.1 Word Formation Errors

Word formation processes are primarily used to generate new words from the following lexical categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Words from grammatical categories, such as prepositions and conjunctions can also be complex, but this is due to the diachronic process of univerbation, which transforms word sequences into words. Despite this, the English preposition is an example of univerbation (Booij, 2018).

In traditional grammar, words are the basic units of analysis. Many English words must change form when used as verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or nouns. Within the learners’ essays, several word formation errors were identified and analysed as follows (see Table 4.2).



**Table 2: Word Formation Errors**

Incorrect formation	Correct formation
I <b>look</b> up only to find hundreds of cars in front of us.	English: I <u>looked</u> up only to find hundreds of cars in front of us. Oshindonga: Onda tala pombanda nonda li nda mono iihauto ethele ya thikama komeho getu.
We arrived at the hotel and <b>spended</b> half of our holiday there.	English: We arrived at the hotel and <u>spent</u> half of our holiday there. Oshindonga: Otwa thiki pohotela notwa kala po oshipambu shimwe shefudho lyetu.
Taxi <b>drives</b> do not follow road regulations.	English: Taxi <u>drivers</u> do not follow road regulations. Oshindonga: Aahingi yuulefa ihaya landula oompango dhomopate.
The <b>nation</b> aquarium in Swakopmund opens a window to the wonders of marine life.	English: The <u>national</u> aquarium in Swakopmund opens a window to the wonders of marine life. Oshindonga: Ehala lyiinamweno yomomeya li li moSwakopmund ohali ulike ethano lyiikumitha yomefuta.
My <b>leg's</b> were <b>paining</b> .	English: My <u>legs</u> were in pain. Oshindonga: Omagulu gandje oga li taga ehama.
I like the park because <b>it's</b> has beautiful flowers.	English: I like the park because <u>it has</u> beautiful flowers. Oshindonga: Ondi hole ehala lyokuthuwilwa shaashi oli na oongala oombwanawa.
My friend and I were <b>sing</b> .	English: My friend and I were <u>singing</u> . Oshindonga: Ngame nakuume kandje otwa li tatu imbi.
We bought <b>alot</b> of things.	English: We bought <u>a lot</u> of things. Oshindonga: Otwa landa iinima oyindji.

The causes of errors in word formations can vary with different users. However, one of the main causes is multiple uses of different English words but different meanings. Sometimes, learners simply do not understand the difference between the two words. For example, in

some cases, learners fail to distinguish between the word “legs” and “leg’s”. These errors are most common among English L2 learners. Such learners struggle with choosing appropriate words. Choosing the right words is difficult because decisions are often based on L1 knowledge which is often partially or completely contradictory to the L2 (Kao & Reynolds, 2020).

### 4.2.3 Spelling Errors

Spelling is defined as the act of forming words correctly from individual letters (Hornby, 2000). This means that spelling has rules for correctly forming words, such as letters having to appear in the correct order to be meaningful; otherwise, spelling errors will occur (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011).

A total of 62 spelling errors (which is the highest number of errors detected in the essays) were identified in the essays that were examined. Some of them are presented in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 2: Spelling errors**

Wrong spelling	Correct spelling
Truly	English: truly Oshindonga: moshili
Covered	English: covered Oshindonga: sha siikilwa
Putting	English: putting Oshindonga: okutula mo
Wast	English: worst Oshindonga: hwangu
Shout	English: short Oshindonga: oshifupi
Colloges	English: colleagues Oshindonga: aaniilonga pamwe nangame
Gam	English: jam Oshindonga: ondjema
Happen	English: happen Oshindonga: sha holoka
Hime	English: him Oshindonga: ye
Continuesly	English: continuously Oshindonga: pwaa na ezimbuko

As indicated in the table above, the learners have committed lexical errors, specifically misspelling errors and errors of literal translation. According to Llach (2007) misspelling errors are spelling errors, and it consists of lexical errors which violate the orthographic conventions of English. Examples of misspelling errors indicated in the table above are “*Continuesly, hime and colloges*” and this indicates that the learners lack the lexical knowledge that will allow them to correctly spell those words. Errors of literal translations were also noted such as “*gam, shout and wast*”. Ander and Yildirim (2010) defined errors of literal translations as the lexical errors that are directly translated into L2 by sticking to the literal L1 meaning. The problem with spelling results from the observation that the learners lack the ability to fit phonemes (sounds) and graphemes together (letters). The learners spelt words based on how they sounded and couldn't tell the difference between words that had similar sounds but different meanings and spellings (homophones). Fleisch, Pather, and Motilal (2017) observed that the most common error patterns committed by learners involved the incorrect use of the vowel grapheme, such as “bed” being spelt “bad”. Therefore, for most learners, it is much easier to learn how to speak than to spell words in English. Thus, Shaumana, (2019) argues that such types of errors are an inconsistency in the English language where most ESL learners have problems in the acquisition of English morphology.

More examples of spelling errors found in the essays were:

Wrong spelling	Correct spelling
liresistable	Irresistible
Cchobra	Cobra
Ccurten	Curtain
Ssnickers	sneakers
Ddropping	Dropping
Aactivates	Activities
Wweast	Waist
Rrebons	Ribbons
Sise	Since
smealt	Smelled
Ffreshley	Freshly

Rrythem	Rhythm
Ddrees	Dress
Ccontinuesly	Continuously
Ccastels	Castles
Dderset	Desert
Cchatlet	Chalet
Ffancey	Fancy
Eehose	Choice
Eexpect	Expect

A learner who does not know how to spell English words properly, makes spelling errors, which can lead to communication breakdowns. Academic achievement, employment opportunities, interpersonal relationships, and self-esteem can all be jeopardised by poor spelling (Miressa & Dumessa, 2011). Similarly, most people find it difficult to learn to spell correctly, but it is essential for everyone, especially with increased competition for good jobs, to learn to spell correctly and properly. This is so because based on spelling, even casual readers make assumptions about a person's intelligence and education level. The errors in the above table can be deduced to be committed due to the interference of the learner's mother tongue. For instance, errors such as "*iresistable, chobra and dropping*" are caused by the interference of the learner's mother tongue and the overgeneralization of the L2 rule when forming words. Hence, shaumana (2019) states that the interference of mother tongue and fractional learning in the target language, failure to differentiate between spoken and written language as well as not proofreading and carelessness are some of the other factors.

### 4.3 Descriptions of English and Oshindonga Structures

#### 4.3.1 Oshiwambo

Namibia is home to a variety of ethnic groups, including the Aawambo. "The Owambo people form 48.9% of the population, making them the largest group in Namibia" (Namibia Statistics Agency [NSA], 2014, as cited in Nghikembua, 2020, p. 22). According to (Maho, 1998, as cited in Uushona, 2019, p.58), "the Aawambo are Namibia's largest ethnic group. They speak a group of dialects or languages known together as Oshiwambo". *Oshiwambo* is a native name that refers to all the Aawambo people's languages. The language belongs in the Bantu language family. "Oshindonga, Oshikwanyama, Oshingandjera, Oshikwambi, Oshikwaluudhi,

Oshikolonkadhi, Oshimbandja, Oshimbalantu, Oshivale, Oshikafima, and Oshindombondola are the eleven dialects of the Oshiwambo language” (Hasheela (1998), Shifidi (2014) and Mbenzi (2014) as cited in Shikesho, 2019, p.5). Out of the 11 dialects, Oshindonga, Oshikwambi and Oshikwanyama are the Oshiwambo dialects which exist in written forms making them the only three Oshiwambo dialects that are standardized. On the other hand, Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama are the only Oshiwambo dialects that have orthographies that are officially recognised and are taught as subjects in Namibian schools. According to Zimmerman and Hasheela (1998):

All Oshiwambo dialects are closely related and interintelligible. However, both Oshindonga and Oshikwanyama are recognised as national languages in their own right, and this fact could give rise to the question of whether two Oshiwambo languages are justified instead of only one (p.1).

#### **4.3.2 English**

English is quickly establishing itself as a global language. The United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, and Australia all speak it as their first language. Many millions of Europeans, Africans, Chinese, Indians, Japanese, and South Americans speak and read it as a second language. In Namibia, English is a second language. English is a second language in the sense that despite the users having and speaking their own native languages, they are required to use English in official and public life due to the country's multilingual nature as well as the Language Policy.

#### **4.3.3 The Writing/Pronunciation Systems of English and Oshindonga**

Each language is made up of a phonetic inventory – a count of possible sounds that occur in the particular language. Rasheed (n.d., p. 30) explains that “there are a finite number of speech sounds in any language. Vowels and consonants are the two major categories in which all speech sounds, including English sounds, are classified”. Zimmerman and Hasheela (1998, as cited in Nghikembua, 2019) further explains that:

The English phonology and orthography differ from that of Oshiwambo; therefore, learners experience difficulties in writing English though even native speakers do. The Oshiwambo

language has a transparent phonetic pronunciation, in that the letter or combination of letters always represents the same speech sound. (p. 65)

This section will only focus on comparing the vowel sound systems of the two languages (English and Oshindonga). “A vowel system is essentially a way of dividing the vowel space into distinct vowel phonemes” (Muhammad, 2017, p. 14) (The phonology of English vowels: An introduction, n.d) explains that:

Vowels differ from consonants in two keyways: they are articulated without any obstruction in the mouth cavity, i.e., the articulators do not form a complete or partial closure or a restricted path in the way of exhaled air. Vowels, on the other hand, differ from consonants in their behaviour: while consonants often occur in syllable peripheral positions (near the edges of the syllable), vowels comprise the syllable's core and appear in the syllable's center. (para. 2)

Also “The position of the tongue in the mouth, whether it is at the front or rear, and whether or not the lips are rounded are used to classify vowels” (Szczegielniak, n.d.).

#### **4.3.3.1 Oshindonga Vowels**

“The Oshiwambo vowel system is based on a straightforward 'height-by-frontness' contrast mechanism. There are five vowels, but there can be ten if a succession of similar vowels is used to make long vowels” (Fivaz, 1986, as cited in Uushona, 2019, p. 59). These five vowels are either short or long. Short vowels, according to Zimmerman and Hasheela (1998, p. 4) are represented by a single letter, and they are as follows: /a, e, i, o, u/. They are described by Hasheela, Amakali and Namuandi, as cited in Uushona (2019, p. 59) as follows:

The vowel [i] is the front high vowel, as in *ila* (come)

[u] is the back high vowel, as in *pukulula* (correct)

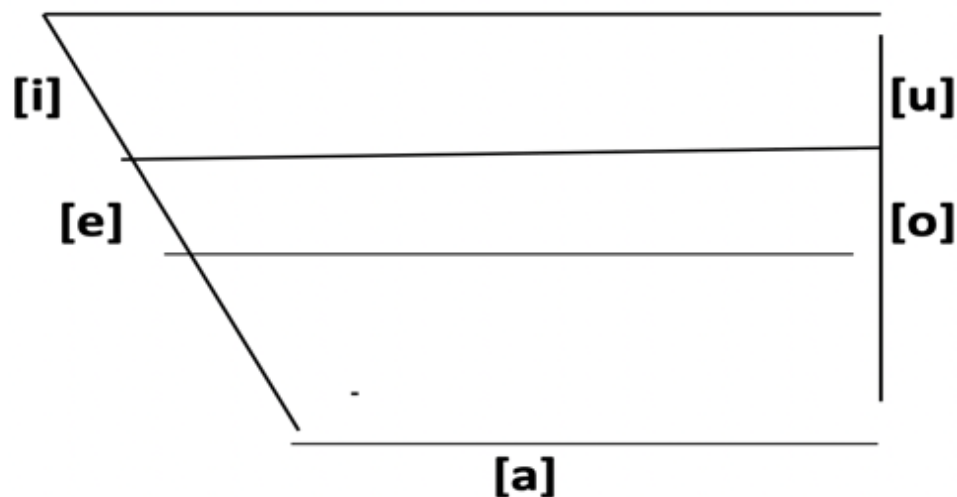
[a] is the mid low vowel, as in *manga* (tie)

[o] is the back low vowel, as in *gongala* (gather)

[e] is the front low vowel, as in *teta* (cut)

On the other hand, “long vowels are presented by doubling the short vowel concerned” (Zimmerman & Hasheela, 1998, p. 4). They are described by Hasheela, Amakali and Namuandi, as cited in Uushona (2019, p. 60) as follows:

- [ii] *iita* ‘war’
- [aa] *aanona* ‘children’
- [uu] *tuula* ‘tear’,
- [oo] *oongmbe* ‘cows’, and
- [ee] *eeno* ‘yes’”.



**Figure 6:** Vowel sounds of Oshiwambo (Fivaz, as cited in Uushona, 2019, p. 59)

HEIGHT	FRONTNESS		
	Front	Mid	Back
High	i		u
Low	e	a	o

**Figure 7:** Oshindonga vowels and their places of articulation

The figure above is adopted from Fivaz (1986, p. 8) and it shows the different pronunciation of Oshindonga vowels and their places of articulations. Uushona (2019, p. 60) explains that “there is no distinction between the short and long vowels in terms of where they are articulated. Long vowels are articulated longer than short vowels, which is the only difference”. In Oshindonga, the vowels that are different from each other may not follow each other in a word, e.g., [o] may not follow [i] in a word, instead, as Zimmerman and Hasheela (1998) explain that:

It is a consistent rule in all bantu languages that the vowel ‘i’, when followed by another vowel (except ‘i’), becomes the semi vowel ‘y’; and when ‘u’ is followed by another vowel (except ‘u’), it becomes ‘w’ e.g., i + a = *ya*, i + e = *ye*, i + o = *yo*, i + u = *yu*, u + a = *wa*, u + e = *we*, u + i = *wi*, and u + o = *wo*. The verb ‘ti’ (say, present tense indicative) + -a becomes *tya* in its written form. The combination ‘ty’ is like the digraph ‘tj’ and pronounced almost as the ‘ch’ in the English word ‘child’. (pp. 5-6)

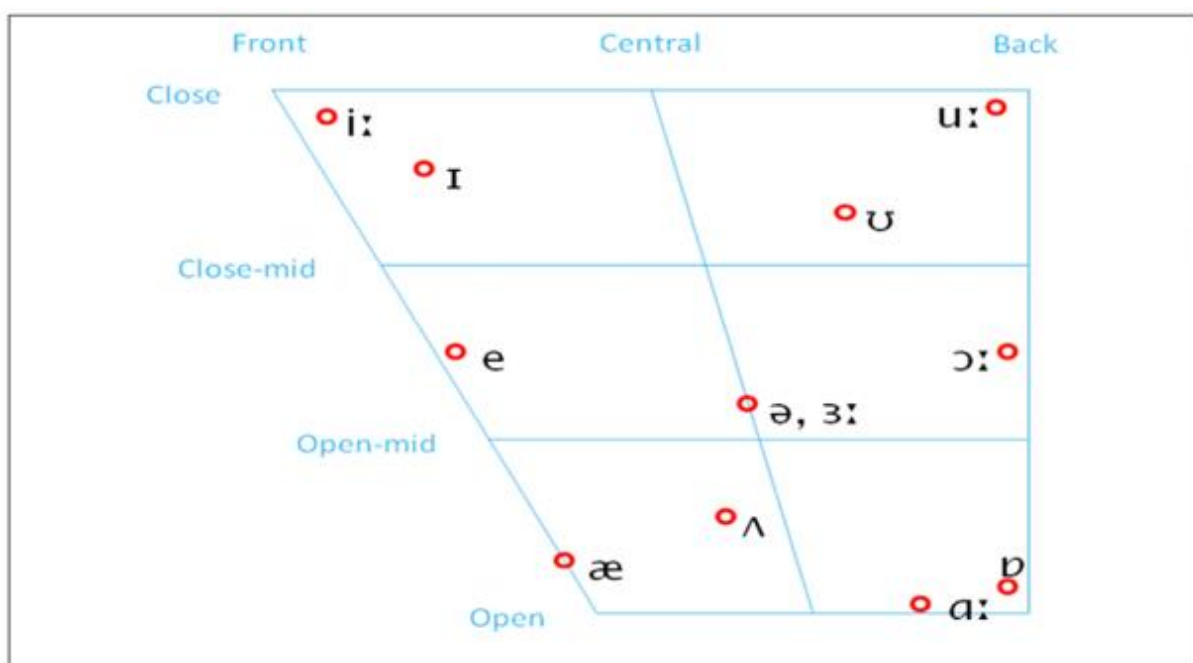
On the other hand, according to Zimmerman and Hasheela (1998, p.4) “the Oshiwambo language has no diphthongs. When two different vowels stand next to each other, each vowel retains its exact phonetic value”. This means that words in Oshiwambo are written exactly how they are pronounced, e.g., the word ‘okambishi’ is pronounced o/ka/mbi/shi. In addition, according to Nghikembua (2020, p. 23) this indicates that “graphemes and their corresponding phonemes have a direct connection. As a result, the letters ‘a,’ ‘e,’ and ‘o’ are always pronounced the same manner. The following words will, therefore, be read exactly as they appear: ‘ame’/amε/ (I, me), ‘meme’ /mεmε/ (mother), and ‘okaana’ /oka:na/ (baby)”. Thus, Oshindonga language learners will commit spelling errors when they transfer the rules of their first language for instance when it comes to diphthongs which do not exist in Oshindonga hence the learners will direct translate when spelling words in English.

#### **4.3.3.2 English Vowels**

The English language has 20 (twenty) basic vowel sounds. These are composed of two major classes: Monophthongs and Diphthongs. Of the 20 (twenty) English vowels, there are 12 (twelve) monophthongs and 8 (eight) diphthongs. The monophthongs are further comprised of two major subdivisions: 7 (seven) short vowels and 5 (five) long vowels. Monophthongs and diphthongs are the two forms of vowel sounds in English. We have 12 pure vowels



(monophthongs) in British English, separated into 5 long vowels and 7 short vowels. “Long vowels are referred to be “free” since they can appear in a variety of phonetic settings. Short vowels, on the other hand, are defined as being checked since they must be preceded by a consonant and cannot occur in stressed position at the end of a word” (Labov, Ash, and Boberg, as cited in Alqarni, 2018, p. 1). We also have diphthongs and triphthongs, which are gliding vowels (a combination of two short vowels that produce one sound) in the English language. According to Wood (2019) “Standard Southern British English has 19 distinct vowel phonemes”. The duration of English vowel sounds varies greatly depending on their context (such as the sort of sound that comes after them) and whether they are stressed.



**Figure 8:** The vowels of English. *Source: Roach (2009).*

The [ʊ] sound, for example, is spelt /oo/ in /wood/ but /ou/ in /would/; yet the vowel sound is the same in both words: /loud/ and /wood/ rhyme, indicating that the vowel sounds (as well as the final consonants) are same in these two words.

### **(a) Short Vowels**

There are seven short vowels in English (Roach, 2009). “The ‘short’ vowel sounds cannot occur at the end of a syllable in English. They must be followed by a consonant. In linguistics, short

vowels are also called ‘checked’ vowels” (Demirezen, 2020, p. 292). In addition, Katamba (1989) observes that:

When a syllable ends in a vowel and then a consonant, the vowel is frequently short. When there are several consonants, the vowel is usually short. This is important because it helps you to keep the same vowel sound when making a verb past tense by adding ‘ed’. We typically duplicate an ending consonant to keep a short vowel short. For example, ‘stopped’ is the past tense of ‘stop’. The silent ‘e’ rule (which also applies when the letter ‘d’ is employed) would otherwise result in a long ‘o’ sounding like soap or hope.

The 7 (seven) short vowels of English as captured on the IPA chart are:

/ɪ/-pit,  
/e/-pet,  
/æ/-pat,  
/ʌ/-cut,  
/ʊ/-put,  
/ɒ/-dog,  
/ə/-about.

Further examples that contain the 7 (seven) short vowels are given below:

/ɪ/ – fit /fɪt/, pick /pɪk/, difficult /'dɪ.fɪ.kəlt/  
/e/ – pet /pet/, sent /sent/, attention /ə'ten.ʃən/  
/æ/ – pat /pæt/, flat /flæt/, family /'fæ.mə.li/  
/ʌ/ – cut /kʌt/ jump /dʒʌmp/, cover /'kʌ.vər/  
/ʊ/ – put /pʊt/, book /bʊk/, cushion /'kʊ.ʃən/  
/ɒ/ – pot /pɒt/, dog /dɒg/, hospital /'hɒs.pɪ.təl/  
/ə/ – about /ə'baʊt/, system /'sɪs.təm/

### **(b) Long Vowels**

According to Demirezen (2020, p. 291) “a long vowel is a single vowel sound which gets lengthened during its articulation”. “They're called 'long' because we hold them for longer than short noises, but they're not the same sound” (Katamba, 1989). “These vowels are determined by two contextual factors, namely whether or not the vowel is stressed and the

influencing sound which follows it” (Taqi, Algharabally, and Akbar 2018.p. 3). As explained above, the monophthongs of the English language also contain 5 (five) long vowels. The 5 (five) long vowels of English as represented on the IPA chart are:

/i:/-week,  
/ɑ:/-hard,  
/ɔ:/-fork,  
/ɜ:/-heard,  
/u:/-boot.

Further examples that contain the 7 (seven) short vowels are given below:

/i:/ week /wi:k/, feet /fi:t/, media /'mi:.di.jə/  
/ɑ:/ hard /hɑ:d/, park /pɑ:k/, article /ɑ:.ti.kəl/  
/ɔ:/ fork /fɔ:k/, walk /wɔ:k/, August /ɔ: 'gʌst/  
/ʌst heard /hɜ:d/, word /wɜ:d/, surface /'sɜ:.fɪs/  
/u:/ boot /bu:t/, group /gru:p/, beautiful /'bjʊ:.ti.fəl/

### **(c) Diphthongs**

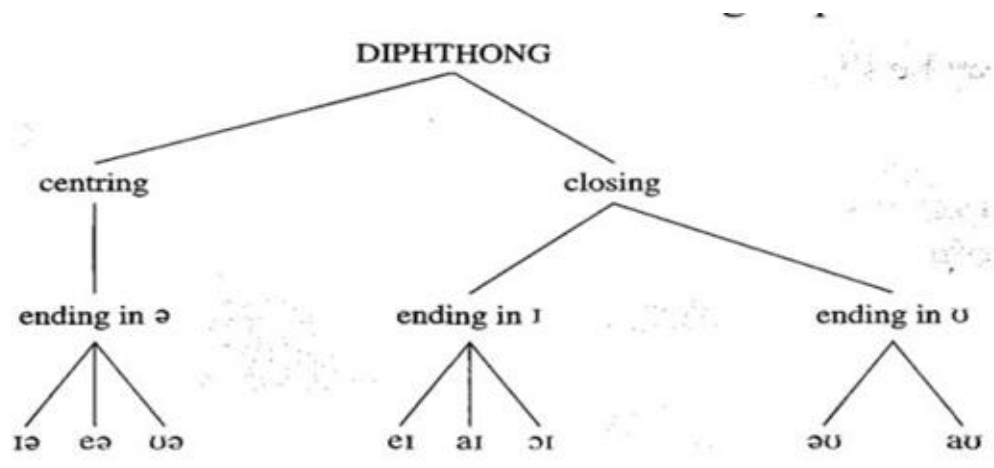
“For many authors, a diphthong is merely the combination of a vowel plus a glide /j/ or /w/” (Roach, 2009). “English diphthongs are sounds that consist of two vowels that glide from one another” (Roach, 2009, as cited in Haziq, 2013, para. 3). In English, diphthongs are defined as “‘vowels’ that are really a sequence of two vowels” (Kirchner, n.d.). For example, in the word “tide” the vowel sound begins like [a] but smoothly changes into the [i] sound. “The initial component of most diphthongs is substantially longer and stronger than the second component. Gliding refers to the process of traveling from one vowel sound to the next, hence gliding vowel is another word for diphthong” (Demirezen, 2020, p. 292). A diphthong is further defined by Galina (n.d.) as:

A vowel sound that is divided into two segments. The first section is the nucleus, which is the most powerful component; the second part is short and feeble (the glide). The initial component of a diphthong is always stressed: [au], [ou]. One syllable is formed by a diphthong.

Therefore, “in terms of length, diphthongs resemble long vowels” (Demirezen, 2020, p. 292). There are two categories of diphthongs (centring and closing diphthongs). They are explained by Haziq (2013, para. 3) as follows:

...centring diphthongs are diphthongs that glide towards /ə/ (schwa). They are called centring diphthongs because their movements are towards the middle part in the vowel chart. The closing diphthongs are diphthongs that end with a glide towards a closer vowel”. Examples of centring diphthongs are /ɪə əə ʊə/, while closing diphthongs are: /eɪ əʊ aɪ ʌʊ ɔɪ/. Furthermore, according to (Rasheed, n.d., pp. 50-51) Diphthong’s categories may also be described as: a) Fronting Diphthongs are the diphthongs with a front glide, e.g., /eɪ/, /aɪ/ and /ɔɪ/. b) Retracting Diphthongs are the diphthongs with a back glide, e.g., /aʊ/ and /əʊ/ or /ou/”.

There are 8 diphthongs in English as indicated in Figure 9 below:



**Figure 9:** Diphthongs. Source: Roach (2009).

Kirchner (n.d.) explains that:

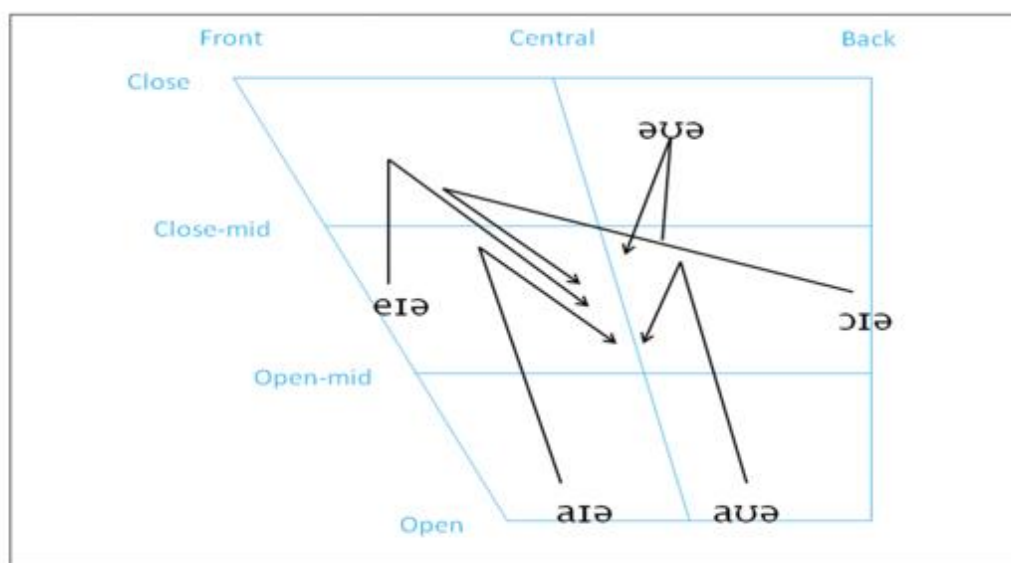
The sound in /hide/ or /eye/ is the most prevalent diphthong. It starts with [A] and progresses nicely until [I]. You may hear the one vowel transform into the other if you speak eye slowly. Because a diphthong's sounds shift from beginning to end, it's written in IPA with two vowel symbols. (p. 5)

Katamba (1989) also observes that:

The tense front vowel [e] is diphthongized. If you listen carefully, you will notice that the vowel of *bate* is actually pronounced [eɪ]. The tense back vowel [o] is also diphthongized: if you listen carefully, you will notice that the vowel of *boat* is actually pronounced [oʊ]. So, the front tense vowel is diphthongized by the addition of a front vowel and the back tense vowel is diphthongized by the addition of a back vowel. We can express this pattern as a rule: Mid and high tense vowels are diphthongized by the addition of a high lax vowel that matches the original vowel in frontness or backness. (p. 105)

#### (d) Triphthongs

“Triphthongs are vowels that consist of three vowels, and they glide from one to another, rapidly produced without any interruption” (Roach, 2009, as cited in Haziq, 2013, para. 5). Kheider (2017, p. 4) also defines a triphthongs as “a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption. It is made up of two vowels sounds, a closing diphthong plus a schwa”. Figure 10 below demonstrates the 5 triphthongs (/aɪə, aʊə, eɪə, ɔɪə, əʊə/) of English:



**Figure 10:** Five triphthongs. Source: Roach (2009).

“All five triphthongs are: [eɪə] as in ‘player’, [aɪə] ‘five’, [ɔɪə] ‘lawyer’, [əʊə] ‘grower’ and [aʊə] ‘towel’” Taqi, Algharabally, and Akbar (2018.p. 3). In conclusion, according to (Muhammad, 2017):

The precise shape and volume of the oral cavity distinguishes vowels from each other auditory, and the tongue is the main organ involved in adjusting the shape and volume.

Vowels are formed by giving an outward air stream and vibrating vocal cords, and what distinguishes vowels from each other auditorily is the precise shape and volume of the oral cavity, and the main organ involved in adjusting the shape and volume is the tongue. (p. 12)

It can be inferred that Oshindonga speakers may commit spelling errors due to the lack of diphthongs and triphthongs in their mother tongue. Thus, the learners will spell the words according to how they pronounce them, and this is caused by the transfer of their first language rules. Learners commit serious inter-lingual errors because they depend heavily on their first language. These kinds of error occur when the learner's habits (patterns, systems, or rules) interfere or prevent him or her, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1981).

#### **4.3.4 Punctuation of English and Oshindonga**

Punctuation has been defined as "the use of standard signs and marks in writing to separate words into sentences, clauses and phrases in order to clarify meaning" (Rizki, 2018, p. 2). Punctuation is considered crucial in writing because "it allows the reader to understand the content of the message without having to look at the writer's face. You must punctuate well to write well, but you must also write well to punctuate well" (Ahyuni, 2017, p. 14). In Oshindonga, punctuation marks are the same as those in English. This means that they are used in the same way in both languages. To mention a few commonly used punctuation marks: The full stop is used at the end of a sentence that is not a command or a question. The full stop is also used with abbreviations. A comma is used to separate items in a list, it is also used before a coordinating conjunction to join two or more clauses or phrases amongst others. The apostrophe is used to show possession in nouns and to show that some letters have been left out. The capital letter is used to begin a new sentence, it is used as the first letter of a proper noun, acronyms are written in capital letters, etc. Yet learners still make punctuation errors in their written work because they fail to use punctuation marks correctly. They either punctuate their sentences wrongly, or they do not punctuate them at all. The following sentences were identified from the essays that were studied:

I really liked that doll, because, It had a blue flower patterned dress on.

In this sentence, a coma and a capital letter were used wrongly, and a hyphen was missing. The comma that the learner has used before and after the word 'because' should not be present in the sentence. This is because the word 'because' is a subordinating conjunction that joins the main clause to the subordinating clause. The capital letter 'I' used with the word 'it' should be uncapitalised as a capital letter may not be used in the middle of the sentence with words that are not proper nouns or acronyms. The correct sentence should read as follows:

I really liked that doll because it had a blue flower-patterned dress on.

The second punctuation error was identified in the following sentence:

My leg's were in pain.

In this sentence, the learner wrongly used an apostrophe and resultantly failed to produce the plural for the word 'leg'. The apostrophe in 'leg's' as used by this learner shows possession and not plurality. Here the learner might have overgeneralised the possessive apostrophe to show the plural form of the noun 'legs'. The correct sentence is:

My legs were in pain.

Another error of punctuation occurred in the sentence below:

My favourite place is in the car, my fathers car

In the above sentence, the learner has left out an apostrophe which is supposed to be used with the word 'fathers' to show that the car belongs to the father. The sentence also lacked a fullstop. The correct sentence is:

My favourite place is in the car, my father's car.

Other punctuation errors that this study identified were found in the following sentences:

Incorrect: In the future when I grow up I might buy the same car for my children.

Correct: In the future, when I grow up, I might buy the same car for my children.

Incorrect: it is getting renovated next year and it will be the best.

Correct: It is getting renovated next year, and it will be the best.

Incorrect: Grove mall is a clean place so if it is your first time there always read the rule's before entering.

Correct: Grove Mall is a clean place, so, if it is your first time there, always read the rules before entering.

Incorrect: I was in grade 2.

Correct: I was in Grade 2.

Punctuation errors are not caused by the difference between the two language because the punctuation rules of the two languages are similar. Thus, the errors in punctuation are caused by intra-lingual transfer of errors. Intra-lingual transfer refers to “the kinds of errors that occur during the learning process of the second language at a stage when the learners have not really acquired the knowledge” (Akbar, 2017, p. 8). Al-khresheh (2016) asserts that the errors that do not reflect the structure of their native language or mother tongue are caused by intra-lingual interference from the target language itself. Intra-lingual errors can also occur because of negative interference or transfer from applying different general learning strategies like those noticeable in L1 acquisition and they might also occur because of an incomplete process of acquiring the L1.

#### **4.3.5 Noun formation of English and Oshindonga**

Word form is explained by Novryanty (2018, p. 15) as the “phonological or orthographic sound or appearance of a word that can be used to describe or identify something; the inflected forms of a word can be represented by a stem and a list of inflections to be attached”. According to Trask, as cited in Ratih and Gusdian (2018, p. 24) “a word formation process is a way through which new words are constructed from existing materials”. Yule, as cited in Rahayu (2014) also defines the word formation process as “a way of forming and creating new words from the use of old words”. Nouns are naming words. And “the core semantic properties of nouns are similar in all languages” (The SAGE Encyclopedia of Communication Sciences and Disorders, n.d.).

Nouns are imagined as “the starting point for writing, and stories are developed around them” (Schnelbach & Wyatt, 2021). “Noun-formation is not an exception to the word-formation process; it follows the same morphological rules” (AbdulMahmoud, 2010, p. 614). Hashim (n.d., p. 9) explains that “the creation of nouns from other categories is referred to as nominalisation”. For one to identify a noun, they should be familiar with its features. A determiner stands before a noun, a noun comes before a verb (when it functions as a subject), it comes after a transitive verb (when it functions as an object), and it comes after a preposition (when it functions as an adverb of place) in a sentence. The subjects and objects



of actions and thoughts are nouns and pronouns. Nothing happens until these two components of speech are present.

#### 4.3.5.1 Oshindonga

Oshindonga, like English, has 7 nouns classes (proper, common, collective, concrete, abstract, countable, and uncountable nouns). There are numerous different classes of nouns in Oshindonga, which are determined by the noun's prefix. This is established from the observation that "What differentiates the noun classes from each other is the form of the noun class prefix as well as the noun's pattern of agreement" (Shikesho, 2019, p. 74). Table 4.4 below illustrates noun prefixes, and it shows how each class makes plurals in a unique method.

Gender	Class	Prefix	Main Significance
I	1	o-m-/o-mw-	Human
	2	a-a	
Ia	1a	Ø	Kin, names, personification
	2a	o-o-	
II	3	o-m-/o-mw	Natural phenomena, trees, body parts
	4	o-mi-/o-mw-	
III	5	e-Ø-	Liquids, natural phenomena, fruit, augmentatives, abstracts
	6	o-ma-	
IV	7	o-shi-	Characteristic ways of speaking, behaving, artefacts, diminutives
	8	i-i-	
V	9	o-N-	Animals, fruit, miscellaneous
	10	o-oN-	
VI	11	o-lu/o-lw-	Long, thin things, diminutives
	6	o-ma- + lu-	
VII	12	o-ka-	Diminutives, miscellaneous
	14	u-u-	
VIII	14	u-u-	Abstracts
	6	o-ma- (+ 14)	
IX	15	o-ku-	Body parts, seasons
	6	o-ma- (+15)	

**Figure 11:** Oshindonga noun gender-number markers. Source: Fivaz (1986, p. 32)

As can be observed in figure 11 above, noun class 1 is made up entirely of nouns that refer to persons for example 'omuntu'-person. Nouns that refer to people but do not begin with 'omu', such as 'Tate'- my father, 'Meme'- my mother, and 'Kuku'- old person as well as people's names, belong to Noun Class 1a. Noun class 2 is made up of nouns that begin with the pre-prefix 'aa' as in 'aantu'-people. A noun belongs to noun class 5 if it cannot belong to

any other class for example 'ekunde' - bean. Some nouns have one pre-prefix and others have more than one pre-prefix. In addition, Uushona (2019) also explains that:

The constituents of a noun in Oshiwambo are pre-prefix, prefix, stem, root, and suffix. As illustrated in the table below [Table 4.4], it is evident that in some cases a noun may not have a prefix as in the case of 'etemba' (cart). This is because it is in a zero-prefix class (class 5). This means that it is in a class without a prefix. There are also some nouns that have neither a pre-prefix nor a prefix, as in 'tate' (father). 'Tate' belongs to noun class 1a, which is also a zero-prefix class. (p. 75)

The explanation above is illustrated in the Table 4 below.

**Table 4:** Constituents of a noun

Noun	Pre- prefix	Prefix	Stem	Root	Suffix	English
oshikombo	o-	-shi-	-kombo	-komb-	-o	goat
etemba	e	∅	-temba	-temb-	-a	cart
okanona	o-	-ka-	-nona	-non-	-a	child
Tate	∅	∅	Tate	Tat-	-e	father

*Source: Mbenzi (as cited in Uushona, 2019).*

In addition, a pronoun is a word that stands in the place of a noun, in other words, a word that replaces a noun in a sentence. The 1<sup>st</sup> person 'ngame' (I), 'tse' (we), 2<sup>nd</sup> person 'ngoye' (you), 'ne' (you), and 3<sup>rd</sup> person pronouns 'ye' (he or she), 'sho' (it), 'yo' (they) are the types of pronouns that exist in Oshindonga. In Oshindonga, "there is no distinction between the personal pronouns he and she. Whether the individual being addressed is a female or a male, they are both referred to as 'ye'" (Shikesho, 2019, p. 78). It is possible for a noun and a pronoun to exist in one sentence, for example in the following sentence in Oshindonga: 'Ye Maria okwa yi peni?' (Where did Maria go?). This is because pronouns, as words that replace a noun in a sentence, are not a feature of Oshindonga. Oshindonga regards concords of words which agree with nouns as pronouns. Indeed, according to Shikesho (2019):

The many classes of nouns that Oshindonga pronouns belong to influence their meaning. The word 'ohauto' (vehicle) can be replaced with the pronoun 'yo', 'okakopi' (cup) with

the pronoun 'ko', and 'oshikombo' (goat) with the pronoun 'sho'. As a result, personal pronouns in Oshindonga function according to their noun classes, a situation that differs from English. (p. 78)

Viljoen et al. (1992, as cited in Mbenzi 2016, p. 313) further explains that "It is generally well known that many Oshindonga words shift their meaning according to their context". Mbenzi, (2008, as cited in Uushona, 2019, p. 78) further explains, regarding noun formation, that "Oshindonga employs prefixation, insertion, reduplication, suffixation, nativisation and compounding in noun formation".

#### **4.3.5.2 Oshindonga Noun Formation Processes**

##### ***(a) Prefixation***

Adejumo and Osunbade (2014, p. 50) define prefixation as "the process of adding a prefix to a free morpheme. A prefix thus is a bound morpheme that comes at the beginning of a word/free morpheme. It is the act of placing a bound morpheme at the beginning of a word". All nouns in Oshindonga consist of a prefix (which indicates whether the noun is singular or plural) and a stem. The prefixes change while the stems stay the same. Nouns in Oshiwambo also contain an Initial Vowel (IV).

The concept of the initial vowel has been observed in many Bantu languages, especially those within the Nguni cluster. As Sabao (2009, p. 30) observes,

The initial vowel (pre-prefix vowel) is diachronically attested for within the Bantu family languages, evidence of which still presents itself in such languages as Ndebele /*umuntu*/ 'person', Zulu /*umuntu*/ 'person', Sotho /*abatho*/ 'people' and Xhosa /*abantu*/. We can, based on this evidence in these languages, argue that based on the languages' shared genetic descendancy, we can hypothetically attest for this initial vowel even in the other Bantu languages where it does not appear in the surface forms.

Furthermore, the prefixes 'pu' (at), 'ku' (to), and 'mu' (in) are always used together with other prefixes, e.g., 'pu' + 'egumbo' = 'pegumbo' (at home). They indicate location.

Examples:

'ku' + 'egumbo' = 'kegumbo' (to the house).

'mu' + 'egumbo' = 'megumbo' (in the house).

It is also important here to note that "the '-u' in 'omu-' in an Oshindonga noun is never pronounced" (Viljoen, Amakali & Namuandi, 1984).

### ***(b) Insertion (Epenthesis)***

During this noun formation process, the stem of another part of speech (verb or adjective) or a morpheme is inserted into a noun to form another noun with a different meaning from the basic one. With regards to Oshindonga, four types of insertion are discussed below:

#### ***(i) Insertion of the morpheme '-kwa'***

The morpheme '-kwa' can be inserted into a noun to form another noun, for example: 'aak**w**ampungu' (ancestors), 'omuk**w**aniilwa' (king).

#### ***(ii) Insertion of a verb stem***

In the word 'omuy**alekw**antu' (fiancé), the initial noun is 'omuntu' (person). The verb stem '**yalekwa**' (get engaged) is inserted to change the noun 'omuntu' into another noun 'omuyalekwantu'. Another example would be 'omul**ongw**antu' (learner). In this noun, the initial noun is 'omuntu' (person), the verb '**longwa**' is inserted to form the noun 'omulongwantu'. In addition, "nouns which are abstract that begin with [e] may be formed from verbs. For example: e + vala = 'evalo' (birth); oku + vala = 'okuvala' (to bear/bring to birth); e + gamena = 'egameno' (protection); oku + gamena = 'okugamena' (to guard)" (Shikesho, 2019, p. 75).

#### ***(iii) Insertion of an adjective stem***

In the word 'omug**oy**antu'=mentally ill person, the adjective **goya** 'stupid' is inserted into the word 'omuntu'=person to form a new noun 'omugoyantu'.

#### ***(iv) Insertion of the morpheme '-na'***

When the morpheme '-na' is inserted into a noun word in Oshindonga, a different noun is formed, e.g., the morpheme '-na' can be inserted in the noun 'osikola' (school) to form another noun (with a different meaning) 'omun**a**sikola' (school learner). Other examples would be: 'oondunge'

(smartness) + ‘-na’ = ‘omunandunge’ (smart one), ‘iilonga’ (work) + -na = ‘omuniilonga’ (worker/employee). The new derived nouns refer to persons. All nouns that refer to persons fall under Noun Class 1. And all nouns in this class commence in noun prefix /omu-/

### ***(c) Reduplication***

According to Crystal (1991), reduplication is defined as “a term in morphology for a process of repetition whereby the form of a prefix/suffix reflects certain phonological characteristics of the root” (Crystal, as cited in Uushona, 2019, p.79). In Oshindonga, the reduplication of nouns occurs when two noun bases are doubled, for example: ‘omuntu’ (person) + ‘omuntu’ = ‘omuntuuntuu’ (real person), ‘ohema’ (dress) + ‘ohema’ = ‘ohemahema’ (real dress), ‘egumbo’ (house) + ‘egumbo’ = ‘egumbogumbo’ (real house).

### ***(d) Suffixation***

Suffixation is defined by Adejumo and Osunbade (2014, p. 50) as “the placing of a bound morpheme (suffix) at the end of a word”. In Oshindonga, the suffix ‘-elela’ can be inflected to the end of nouns to show their genuine feature, e.g., ‘omumati’ (boy) + ‘-elela’ = ‘omumatyeelela’, ‘omufuthi’ (thief) + ‘-elela’ = ‘omufutheeleelela’.

### ***(e) Nativisation***

Nativisation is defined in Zivenge (2009) as cited in Uushona (2019, p. 11) as "how mother tongue speakers treat loanwords such that the target language speech system accepts them phonologically and morphologically". Sabao, Nauyoma and Zivenge (2020, p. 61) describe this process as rephonogisation or morphophonological nativisation, submitting that “Rephonologisation or morphophonological nativisation are processes that result from the need to integrate and (re)shape lexically borrowed words to conform to the phonological needs of the borrowing language”. Examples of rephonogisation or morphophonological nativisation in Oshindonga are ‘ohamala’ (hammer), ‘ondoongi’ (donkey), ‘okili’ (Christmas), ‘oladiyo’ (radio), ‘opolisi’ (police), among others.

### ***(f) Compounding***

According to O’Grady and Guzman, as cited in Kasuma (2017, p. 11), compounding refers to the “process of creating a larger word by combining some lexical categories”. According to Yule, as cited in Savira and Fitrawati (2019, p. 71), compounding is the “joining of two separate

words to produce a single form”. In Oshindonga, two nouns can be combined to form one, e.g., ‘omuyakuli’ (helper) + ‘pangi’ (nurse) = ‘omuyakulipangi’, another example is: ‘oshilando’ + ‘pangelo’ (capital city).

#### 4.3.5.3 English

In the English language, “nouns have grammatical morphemes such as plural markers, gender markers, and prepositions which mark the role of indirect object” (Miller, 2011, p. 8). Farikah (n.d., p. 106) explain that “most English words have the same form but various uses (parts of speech), which leaves learners perplexed as to how to use them in writing or speaking”. Common, proper, concrete, abstract, collective, and compound are the different types of nouns in English. “We call ‘I, you, we, they, etc.’ personal pronouns. Personal pronouns exist in the 1<sup>st</sup> person (I, we), 2nd person (you), and 3rd person (he, she, it, one, they)” (Grammar: Possessives, n.d., p. 1). These persons can be divided into the nominative and the objective forms. A pronoun is word that replaces a noun in a sentence. “An English word can be changed into a noun through two ways by adding affixes to the root. These two ways are inflectional affixes and derivational affixes” (Farikah, n.d., pp. 103-105). Derivational and inflectional morphemes are both called affixes. The table below shows the differences between Inflectional and derivational affixes.

Inflectional Affixes	Derivational Affixes
All are suffixes	May be either suffixes or prefixes
Have a wide range of application. E.g. most English nouns can be made plural, with {PLU}	May have a wide or narrow range
All native to English (since Old English was spoken around 500-1000 AD)	Many were adopted from Latin, Greek, or other languages. (Though others, especially the suffixes, are native, including {ful}, {like}, {ly}, and {AG})

**Figure 12:** Inflection and Derivation in English. *Source: Morphology (2001)*

#### **(a) Inflectional affixes**

In English, inflectional morphemes are all suffixes. Inflections are used to highlight features of a word's grammatical function rather than to create new words in a language. Inflectional morphemes, according to Yule, as cited in Ismail Al Abbasi (2016, p. 144), are “a group of bound morphemes that are employed to indicate features of a word's grammatical function

rather than to form new words in the language”. Amalina (2018, p. 20) also define inflection as “a word creation process in which items are added to a word's base form to express grammatical meaning, ensuring that the word in the sentence is correct both grammatically and meaningfully”. In other words, inflections are the ones that determine whether a word is correct or wrong.

There are only eight inflectional suffixes in English:

Base	Suffix	Function
wait	-s	third person sg present
wait	-ed	past tense
wait	-ing	progressive
eat	-en	past participle
chair	-s	plural
chair	-'s	possessive
fast	-er	comparative adjective or adverb
fast	-est	superlative adjective or adverb

Given these explanations, “it means that inflectional suffixes are used to indicate whether a word is plural or singular, whether it is past or present tense, whether it is comparative or possessive, and so on” (Atika, 2018, p. 19). “Inflectional morphemes, such as plural markers, possessive markers, tense markers, comparative and superlative markers, are not employed to create new words in the English language, but rather to highlight a feature of a word's grammatical function” (Fauzi, 2018). For example, ‘girl’ and ‘girls’ are both nouns. Plural and possessive inflectional morphemes are used with nouns.

#### *i. Plural markers*

In English, nouns can be inflected to show number, but they cannot be inflected to show gender or case. “Some nouns are used only in the singular e.g., freedom, progress, machinery, steel, and milk, or only in the plural e.g., spectacles, goods, billiards” (Amalina, 2018, p. 27).

Many English nouns follow the regular pattern when making plurals. According to Schnelbach and Wyatt (2021) a plural noun is formed in the following ways:

Add **s** to a noun, and unless the other rules apply, add **es** to nouns ending in **ch, s, sch, sh, x**, or **z**, if a noun ends in **f** or **fe**, change the **f** to a **v** and use **es** for the plural. (Exceptions exist, as usual), if a noun ends with a consonant or the vowel **u** and **y**, change the **y** to **i** and add **es**, and add **es** to nouns ending with a consonant and **o**. (Exceptions do exist, yet again).

“Occasionally we must make a slight alteration to the spelling of the word to accommodate this inflection (for example, when the noun ends in a ‘-y’ and it is preceded by a consonant, we change ‘y’ to ‘i’ add ‘-es’)” (Amalina, 2018, pp. 27-28). In addition, there are a few irregular nouns in English e.g., ‘person-people’. Some nouns do not change their forms whether they are in the singular or plural forms e.g., ‘moose-moose’, ‘water-water’. Other nouns alter their vowels when changed from singular to plural e.g., ‘foot-feet’, ‘goose-geese’, ‘mouse-mice’, and some nouns use the -en ending to show plurality e.g., ‘child-children’, while some nouns plural forms are borrowed from other languages across the world e.g., ‘virus-viruses’, ‘fetus, fetuses’, ‘alga-algae’, ‘larva-larvae’.

## *ii. Possessive markers*

Muhammad (2016, p. 145) explains that “the possessive /-’s/ indicates that a word is a noun. This inflectional ending is defined as a suffix appended to specific nouns to denote possession or ownership, according to traditional definitions of possessive /-’s/”. “To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and /-s/ (’s) e.g., ‘car = car’s’. To form the possessive of a plural noun ending in /-s/, add only an apostrophe (’) e.g., ‘dogs = dogs’’. The possessive -s is pronounced differently in different nouns e.g., [s] in “the ant’s eye”, [z] in “the dog’s paw”, and [ɪz] in “I am George’s wife”. Furthermore, the “inflectional possessive /-s/ can not be used with all nouns to imply possession. People, time, and animals are all examples of nouns that can take the inflectional possessive /s/. Inanimate nouns do not typically accept the inflectional possessive /-s/, though some do” (Muhammad, 2016, p. 145).

A number of inflectional errors was committed by the learners and the reasons for these inflectional errors might be attributed to the overgeneralization of English rules. For instance,



a learner wrote *“All peoples are going to the soccer match”*. The learner misapplied the language rule of pluralising regular nouns in English by adding the morpheme /s/ to the nouns. The error occurred as a result of addition of a morpheme and overgeneralization of rules of plural in nouns thus the learner commits an error in plural inflection. There were also errors identified where learners had done errors in using wrong possessive forms. For instance, *“Smith children are hungry”*. In this error the learner completely avoid using the apostrophe (omission error).

## 4.4 Comparison Between English and Oshindonga Lexical Structures

### 4.4.1 Writing/Pronunciations Systems

Table 5 below makes a comparison between the writing/pronunciation systems of English and Oshindonga.

**Table 5:** English and Oshindonga writing/pronunciation systems.

English	Oshindonga
English vowels can be grouped into short vowels, long vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs.	Oshindonga vowels can be grouped into short vowels and long vowels.
There are 20 vowels in English, these include 12 pure vowels (5 long and 7 short vowels) and 8 diphthongs.	Oshindonga only has 10 vowels. There are 5 short vowels and 5 long vowels. There are no diphthongs or triphthongs in Oshindonga. This means that words in Oshiwambo are pronounced exactly how they are spelt. And the following sounds that exist in English do not exist in Oshindonga: the schwa /ə/, /æ/, and /ɑ/.
There is a clear difference between English short and long vowels. The duration of English vowel sounds varies greatly depending on their context (such as the sort of sound that comes after them) and whether they are stressed	Oshindonga does not differentiate between short and long vowels. Oshindonga reduplicates short vowels by doubling them in a word to make its pronunciation longer. And this is the only difference between short and long vowels.

#### 4.4.2 Noun formation

Table 6 below illustrates the comparison between noun and formation processes in English and Oshindonga

**Table 6: Noun and pronoun formation processes in English and Oshindonga.**

English	Oshindonga
English nouns can begin with either a vowel or a consonant sound.	In Oshindonga, a noun can begin with either a vowel or a consonant sound.
To show plurality, the morpheme 'es' or (s) is suffixed to a noun.	Oshindonga doubles the initial vowel of a noun to create plurals.
English nouns can be formed through inflection and derivation.	Oshindonga also uses inflection and derivation to form nouns.
Plural markers are suffixes.	Plural markers are prefixes.
English has two numbers: Singular and Plural.	Oshindonga has two numbers: singular and plural.

#### 4.5 Hierarchy of Difficulty

Stockwell and Bowen (1965) introduce the concept referred to as the Hierarchy of Difficulty, which is based on the Contrastive Analysis Theory and made popular by Lado (1957). This hierarchy was designed to assist with explaining why challenges arise when learning a second language. Ellis, as cited in Kung (2013) explains that:

A hierarchy of difficulty identifies a variety of differences between two languages and then assigns a degree of difficulty to each difference. There are six levels in the hierarchy of

difficulty that can be assigned to the differences. The higher the level assigned to an item, the more difficult it will be for the learner to acquire that item. (p. 14)

#### **4.5.1 Level 0**

**Transfer**- This level presents no difficulty because “it involves using an item from the first language in the second language. This could be a sound, a word or a grammatical structure” (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). Both languages employ punctuation in the same manner, for example, in English, a sentence that is in the form of a question uses a question mark punctuation at the end as in ‘Where are you going?’. This is the same as in Oshindonga ‘Otoyí peni?’. The two languages also use the same basic vowels (a, e, i, o, u), although there are more vowels in English. Both English and Oshindonga use inflection and derivation to form nouns.

#### **4.5.2 Level 1**

**Coalescence** - “Occurs when multiple meanings that are similar and expressed by different grammatical structures in the first language can be conveyed by a single grammatical structure in the second language” (Kung, 2013, p. 15). In other words, it “involves two items in the L1 becoming one item in the L2” (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). Examples of this difficulty can be found in the following words: “but” in English becomes ‘nde’/ ‘ashike’ in Oshindonga. In this regard, two meanings in Oshindonga can be subsumed in one English word.

#### **4.5.3 Level 2**

**Underdifferentiation** - “Involves items of the L1 which are absent in the L2” (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). So, the “equivalent sound or item of mother tongue of the learner is not possessed by the target language and the learner can articulate but does not find such item in the language he learns” (Ullah, 2011, p. 31). For example, in Oshindonga, nouns are grouped into classes and these classes depend on what the prefix of that certain noun is. This is not the case with English (noun classes do not exist in English). Another difficulty in this category would be that personal pronouns in Oshindonga are dependent on their noun classes, this is not the case in English since noun classes do not exist. Also, in Oshindonga, a pronoun and a noun can exist in one sentence and the sentence would read correctly, but the English language grammar does not allow for a noun and a pronoun to occur in one sentence.

#### 4.5.4 Level 3

**Reinterpretation** - “An item that exists in the L1 is given a new shape or distribution in the L2” (Hall, 2007, p. 25). This means that “an item in the L1 is used differently in the L2” (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). For example, in Oshindonga, vowels do not differ based on the phonetic environment. Sounds are pronounced exactly how they appear when written down, e.g., ‘okaleke’ is pronounced in the same way as it is spelled o/ka/le/ke, but this is not the case with English. For example, the phoneme /ɑ/ is represented by the letter ‘o’ as in “onion”, it does not sound like ‘a’ in “ant”.

#### 4.5.5 Level 4

**Overdifferentiation** – This occurs when “a learner faces an entirely new item in target language which his articulators have no experience of practice. The reason for such newness is the complete absence of such sound in the learner’s mother tongue” (Ullah, 2011, p. 32). This means that “new items which do not occur in the L1 may be required in the L2” (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). For example, there are no diphthongs in Oshindonga, this means that there are some English vowels that do not exist in Oshindonga, these are the schwa /ə/, / æ/, and /ɒ/. These English sounds can confuse learners as they might apply the Oshindonga rule to English and spell words the same way they sound. Another item that might be of difficulty is that Oshindonga does not use ‘es’ or ‘s’ morpheme to show plurality in nouns, it doubles the initial vowel to create plurals. Furthermore, two vowel sounds that are different from each other may not stand next to each other in a word, e.g., ‘oikombo’ (goat) is wrong spelling, it should be ‘oshikombo’ (goat). Lastly, this study did not observe any difference between personal pronouns (‘he’ or ‘she’) in Oshindonga. ‘He’ or ‘she’ in Oshindonga is ‘ye’ regardless of whether it refers to a male or female.

#### 4.5.6 Level 5

**Split** - “In the target language, one item in the native language becomes two things. The student must learn to recognise and understand this distinction that does not exist in his first language. Coalescence is the opposite of split” (Ghazaryan, 2011, p. 19). Sometimes a single item in L1 becomes two or more items in the L2 (Graeme, 2013, p. 54). For example, in Oshindonga the following items become two in English ‘Oshitaafula’ becomes table/desk in English, ‘esipili’=windscreen/mirror, ‘ekende’=window/glass/bottle, ‘ondjato’ can be

handbag/backpack/pocket. Also, personal pronouns 'he' or 'she' in English become 'ye' in Oshindonga and 'aantu' becomes human beings/people in English.

#### 4.6 Verification

After studying the essays, spelling errors such as 'tripe' for 'trip', 'hime' for 'him' and 'hade' for 'had' were identified from the learners' essays. Uushona (2019, p. 69) explains that "Oshiwambo syllables end in vowels". For example, the word *etete* 'soft porridge' (e/te/te) is made up of three syllables which all end in vowels. The researcher can then conclude that learners made such spelling mistakes, in which they added a vowel sound at the end of some words in their essays, because they have transferred the rules of Oshiwambo into English. Because words in Oshindonga are spelled the same way they are pronounced, Learners transferred this Oshiwambo rule into English and misspelled words such as 'curten-curtain', 'rythem-rhythm', 'castel-castle', 'gam-jam', 'ruind-ruined', 'waffels-waffles', 'facinated-fascinated', and 'wer-were'.

In addition, it was clear that the learners have acquired the morphological rule of inflection in English but failed to use it correctly. Errors of wrong word formation that were identified are as follows: "We arrived at the hotel and spended half of our holiday there." First, there is no such a word as 'spended' in English. The correct form of this word would be 'spent'. 'Spent' is a transitive verb and it is an irregular verb, this means that it does not take the -ed suffix to change it to the past tense. Another error was identified in the following sentence: "Taxi drives don't follow road regulations". 'drive' is a third person present verb that means to operate a vehicle in English. This word is wrongly formed as the correct word is supposed to be the plural noun 'drivers', which refers a person who drives a vehicle. In Oshindonga the word 'drivers' means '*aahingi*' and the sentence will read "Aahingi yuulefa ihaya iyutha koompango dhomondjila". In this sentence, the learner failed to distinguish between the verb 'drive' and the noun 'drivers'.

In the example, "My friends and I were sing". The word 'sing' was wrongly used in this sentence because 'sing' is a verb which is in the present tense. The auxiliary verb that is preceding the word 'sing' is in the past tense, hence, the correct form of the verb sing is 'sang'. In Oshindonga, the sentence will read "Ngame nookuume kandje otwa imbile". The learner meant to write "My friends and I sang". Again, in the following sentence "When I went to

Okapuka Lodge, the way I excepted it to be was not the way it was” the learner used the preposition “expect”. However, the learner was supposed to use the word “expect”, which is a verb used to refer to something that is likely to happen. These types of errors happen because of ignorance or sometimes the learner simply does not know the difference between the two words.

Learners still make punctuation errors in their written work because they fail to use punctuation marks correctly. They either punctuate their sentences wrongly, or they do not punctuate them at all. The following sentence was identified from the essays that were studied: ‘I really liked that doll, because, It had a blue flower patterned dress on’. In this sentence, a comma and a capital letter were used wrongly, and a hyphen was missing. The correct sentence should read as follows: ‘I really liked that doll, because it had a blue flower-patterned dress on’. Another punctuation error was identified in the following sentence: ‘My leg’s were painig’, in this sentence, the learner wrongly used an apostrophe to show the plural form of the word ‘leg-legs’. The apostrophe in ‘leg’s’ as used by this learner shows possession and not plurality. Here the learner might have overgeneralized the possessive apostrophe to show the plural form of the noun ‘legs’.

#### **4.7 Possible Sources of Errors in Learners’ Written Work**

The researcher agrees with several scholars who have proposed the following sources of errors made by language learners: According to Richards, as cited in Sermsook, Liamnimitr and Pochakorn (2017), there are two major sources of errors: inter-lingual errors and intralingual errors. The first refers to errors that occur when learners incorrectly apply the rules of their first language when producing sentences in the target language. This type of error is associated with what is termed as L2 acquisition which is the process by which a person learns a new language that is not their L1. The second type of error occurs during the language learning process. Limited knowledge of English grammar, vocabulary and overgeneralisation are also part of the sources of errors that this study identified.

##### **4.7.1 Interlanguage Transfer**

Inter-lingual transfer occurs when a student “lacks sufficient understanding of the L2 and has difficulty finding the appropriate form and feeling a lack of knowledge of the L2, he / she turns to his native language and transfers the forms of his L1 into the L2” (Ghazaryan, 2011,

p. 31). Learners committed inter-lingual errors in their essays when they wrote sentences such as 'she bought for me a new PlayStation 5' instead of 'she bought me a PlayStaion 5'. 'When I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I excepted it to be was not the way it was' instead of 'when I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I expected it to be was not the way it was'.

#### **4.7.2 Intralingual Transference**

Odlin, Jaszczolt and Taylor, as cited in Ghazaryan (2011, p. 32) explain that "intralingual transfer occurs in more advanced stages of L2 learning when the learner has already mastered enough of the language and starts making generalisations". According to this study, learners overgeneralised L2 rules, for example, a learner used the word "spended" instead of "spent" because they have acquired that the rule to change a word into the past tense is to add "-ed". They also committed faulty categorisation when they wrote sentences such as 'I like the park because it's has beautiful flowers (it).

#### **4.7.3 Limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary**

The data from the essays affirm that Grade 9 Oshindonga first language learners' knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary should be improved. This is because learners sometimes could not use the correct forms of words as they made errors such as 'the nation aquarium in Swakopmund opens a window to the wonders of marine life' instead of 'the national aquarium in Swakopmund opens a window to the wonders of marine life'. They also used words wrongly in sentences such as 'there are tents and hotels were you can sleep' when they meant to write 'there are tents and hotels where you can sleep'. They also had difficulty spelling words correctly, e.g., wast (worst), continuesly (continuously), cuerten (curtain) amongst others.

#### **4.8 Discussions**

There is a widespread belief that learning English is difficult. Hence, it is believed that it is much easier for most learners to learn how to speak English than it is to learn how to spell words in English. Hence, the purpose of this study was to carry out a contrastive linguistic analysis of the essays of Oshindonga speaking Grade 9 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School to examine the similarities and differences that exist between the two languages that might cause difficulty for learners when they write in English. The study first identified word choice

errors, word formation errors, and spelling errors committed by Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners in their essays written in English L2. Secondly the study attempted to compare the structures of English and Oshindonga by studying the writing/pronunciation systems; punctuation; and noun formation of the two languages. Lastly, it attempted to determine the possible causes of the errors made by the learners in their essays based on the findings.

Errors in word choice in academic writing by a second-language learner can have a serious impact on the student's overall academic success, frequently resulting in misinterpretation or incomprehensibility (David, 1994). How to use words appropriately in essays is important but difficult for learners to learn because most learners choose words to use in writings based on their L1 knowledge, which may be partially or completely contradictory to the L2 knowledge.

This study identified multiple word choice errors in the essays by the Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners. Some of the serious errors in terms of word choice included the following:

Incorrect: You have to use stairs if the electricity is of.

Correct: You have to use stairs if the electricity is off.

Incorrect: People that want to steal get caught.

Correct: People who steal get caught.

Word formation processes are primarily used to generate new words from the following lexical categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. There is a wide range of word-formation errors that learners commit in writing English essays.

According to the reviewed literature, errors in word formation can result from a multiplicity of causes depending on the user. However, one of the primary causes is the use of multiple English words with different meanings. Sometimes students simply do not understand the distinction between the two words. For example, the study identified that in some cases, students are unable to distinguish between the words "legs" and "leg's". These mistakes are most common among English L2 students. Such students have a difficulty selecting appropriate words. Choosing the right words is difficult because decisions are frequently based on L1 knowledge, which is frequently, partially or completely contradictory to L2 knowledge (Kao & Reynolds, 2020).



Spelling errors come in many different forms. Mainly, spelling mistakes can occur because of an omission, substitution, or insertion, or the misplacement of a letter when writing a specific word (Altamimi & Ab Rashid, 2019). According to Nahari and Alfadda (2016), spelling is an important language component and an essential literacy skill that can have a significant impact on the learners' future education and occupational status.

The study identified more spelling errors as compared to errors of the choice and word formation. Although the spelling errors were not grouped into the three main types (omission, substitution, or insertion), it was clear that the majority of the Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners have difficulties with the spelling of English L2 words.

This study notes that, because of the disparities among Oshindonga and English, the learners are undoubtedly bound to face challenges when writing English words. During the writing process, an Oshindonga learner of English can also additionally face problems with an item that doesn't exist in Oshindonga. They can attempt to replace those items with ones from Oshindonga to get around such a challenge. The substitute of English items with Oshindonga components renders written work illegible or altogether changes the meaning of the work. The interference of the mother tongue forced many learners to revert to their L1 when they experienced challenges in their second language writing. This negates Cummins' hypothesis of Second Language Acquisition (2007) which expresses that learners utilise their first language information to successfully procure the subsequent language. Inter-lingual transfer, Intra-lingual transfer, and limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, are the possible sources of errors in learners written work that this study identified based on the findings.

#### **4.8.1 Inter-lingual transfer**

Inter-lingual transfer occurs when a student "lacks sufficient understanding of the L2 and has difficulty finding the appropriate form and feeling a lack of knowledge of the L2, he / she turns to his native language and transfers the forms of his L1 into the L2" (Ghazaryan, 2011, p. 31). Learners committed inter-lingual errors in their essays when they wrote sentences such as 'she bought for me a new PlayStation 5' instead of 'she bought me a PlayStaion 5'. 'When I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I excepted it to be was not the way it was' instead of 'when I went to Okapuka Lodge, the way I expected it to be was not the way it was'.

#### **4.8.2 Intra-lingual transfer**

Odlin, Jaszczolt and Taylor, as cited in Ghazaryan (2011, p. 32) explain that “intralingual transfer occurs in more advanced stages of L2 learning when the learner has already mastered enough of the language and starts making generalisations”. According to this study, learners overgeneralised L2 rules, for example, a learner used the word “spended” instead of “spent” because they have acquired that the rule to change a word into the past tense is to add “-ed”. They also committed faulty categorisation when they wrote sentences such as ‘I like the park because it’s has beautiful flowers (it).

#### **4.8.3 Limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary**

The data from the essays affirm that Grade 9 Oshindonga first language learners’ knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary should be improved.

The researcher, therefore, agrees that first language is crucial during the learning process of a second language, but L2 learners also need to be exposed to L2 at an early stage as this will help the learners to learn L2 effectively.

Hamakali and Mbenzi (2016) conducted a Contrastive Analysis study that focused on the challenges that native speakers of Oshiwambo face when learning English, with a focus on the Ovakwanyama. Because of the contrasts between Oshikwanyama and English, they determined that Ovakwanyama speakers are likely to have trouble articulating English sounds. An Oshikwanyama learner of English may find it difficult to make or enunciate a sound that does not occur in Oshikwanyama. This study supports these findings by showing that in the case where a certain vowel sound exists in English but does not exist in Oshindonga, the Oshindonga L1 speaker will have a hard time using such a sound in English correctly. For example, there are no diphthongs in Oshindonga. Each vowel preserves its identical phonetic value when two separate vowels are placed next to each other.

This means that in Oshiwambo, words are written precisely as they are spoken, for example, the word 'etete' is pronounced e/te/te. This is, however, not the case with English which contains diphthongs. Because of differences of this nature between English and Oshindonga, Grade 9 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School made various spelling mistakes such as spelling words like ‘curtain’ as ‘curten’ and ‘sneakers’ as ‘snickers’.

Although Nghikembua (2014) concluded that English L2 learners make mistakes due to first language interference, overgeneralisation, ignorance of rule restriction and carelessness, context of learning and lack of knowledge of English grammar, this study, findings proposes that the mistakes identified in the essays that were analysed were caused by Inter-lingual transfer, intra-lingual transfer, and limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary. This study specifically compared the vowel structure, pronunciation, and noun formation of English and Oshindonga to determine how they influence the way Oshindonga L1 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School write essays in English L2.

This study only focused on establishing how the differences in writing/pronunciation systems, punctuation, and noun formation of English and Oshindonga from essays written by Grade 9 learners of Jan Möhr Secondary School could be a potential cause for difficulty during the writing process for these learners. This means that the results only apply to the mentioned school and Grade and not to any other Grades or Schools across the country. So, future research should be conducted on the same topic for different Grades, schools, and mother tongues across the country.

#### **4.9 Chapter Summary**

The results of the data analysis and interpretation were reported in this chapter. The initial data analysed and presented in this chapter was obtained through an examination of the English essays of Grade 9 Oshindonga L1 learners at Jan Möhr Secondary School. A special focus was placed on a discussion of the significance of the major findings of the study within the context of answering the research findings. The findings indicate that learners have difficulty in writing English words correctly resulting from inter-lingual interference transfer, intralingual inference transfer, and limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary, carelessness. Spelling in English was the major difficulty that the learners encountered the most in writing essays. The study also establishes that there are vast differences between the two languages (English and Oshindonga) which is the reason why learners made a lot of errors in their written work. The next chapter (Chapter 5) will discuss and summarise the entire research and also suggest recommendations, particularly for future studies, in line with the findings of the research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

This final chapter of the study concludes the research. The chapter is divided into two sections, namely: the conclusion and recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations presented in this chapter are based on the results of the study as established through the data presentation and analysis. The conclusion section summarises the findings of the study, while the recommendations section provides suggestions for possible action and proposed future research to improve the situation culminating from the observations and deductions made from the data. The recommendations also offer suggestions for possible future studies.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

English is the official language of Namibia. It is the medium of instruction from Grade 4 to tertiary education. It is, likewise, the most significant language that offers access to the global network and overall data innovation just as data systems. Errors in language learning results from a variety of processes, topical among them, borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, extending these patterns to the target language and expressing meanings using already-known vocabulary and grammar. Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher concludes that the learners evince different types of errors in their essays written in English as a result of four sources of errors: inter-lingual interference, intralingual interference, and limited knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary.

From these observations made by the study, restricted knowledge of the target language might be the significant source of errors. This is so because, when learners have limited knowledge of the rules of English grammar, they tend to depend on their first languages, and this can result in errors that can cause written miscommunication. As part of the process of

L2 learning, negative transfer potentially hampers learning and interferes with the mastery and surface realisation of correct forms of English as a Second Language as errors are unfortunately transferred.

Because of the errors that the learners made in their essays, they unfortunately obtained poor marks which then affected their overall performance. The errors that were identified from the learner's essays are ample proof that learners were particularly affected by their L1 during the process of learning English as a Second Language. It additionally demonstrates that L1 assumes a significant role in the production of the errors that learners make when they write in English as a Second Language. This is because, as have been observed, they tend to translate words or phrases verbatim and structurally from their L1 into the L2. Hence, the negative influence of L1 on L2 should not be undervalued. Swann (1992) emphasises that "younger children need experience of a wide range of reading and writing activities in order to perform well at a later stage in their school career".

As observed earlier, in chapter one, it is envisaged that the current study will contribute to the development of teaching and learning methodologies for English as a Second Language in a way that build on and attempt to rectify the identified reasons behind the poor performance of learners in English. It was important to conduct this study because its findings have the potential to empower both learners and teachers by helping them understand the differences and similarities between English and Oshindonga, in the process, inspire teachers and learners respectively to be more committed towards improving the current ESL situation. The findings will also potentially assist teachers to reflect on their teaching materials and techniques and possibly help them develop more effective language learning materials based on the learning problems experienced by learners as established by the research.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Learners tend to transfer the native language systems into that of the second language. When a learner's knowledge of one of their languages affects another, this is referred to as language transfer. Transfers can be both positive and negative, and they can occur in both directions (Kusuran, 2016). Positive transfer occurs when common features exist between the L1 and L2, whereas negative transfer occurs when language-specific knowledge in the L2 is required

but has not been acquired by the learner, which may result in knowledge of spellings in the first language being incorrectly applied to spellings in the second language, resulting in errors.

However, it was not the aim of this study to examine the influence of the native language systems into the second language, English L2 in this context. The study, nevertheless, establishes that this is a crosscutting issue in the learning of English amongst Oshindonga L1 speaking learners that needs urgent attention from a research perspective as well as from the education management (improvement of curriculum) perspective.

Therefore, this study makes the following recommendations:

- The data from the essays affirm that Grade 9 Oshindonga first language learners' knowledge of English grammar and vocabulary should be improved. The data also confirmed that the grammar and vocabulary knowledge of English was lacking to make a decent piece of writing. From the researcher's perspective, to effectively help ESL learners compose better essays in English, complete grammar and vocabulary information on the target language is totally required since a writer with the lack of that information will in general make more mistakes when writing in the target language.
- English L2 teaching methods should be improved in such a way that they are planned to address the issues that ESL learners. The objective of these methods should be to guarantee that ESL learners are well provided with the strategies and skills that are important to keep fostering their ESL capabilities and to prevail when it comes to content areas.
- English as a L2 teachers should emphasise the comparison between L1 and L2 so that learners are aware of the differences in the structures of the two languages.
- English L2 teachers should strive to enhance learners' vocabulary because most spelling errors are attributed to poor vocabulary/lack of exposure to the words and/or expressions. This situation limits learners' abilities to fully express themselves in their assessment tasks.
- The English L2 syllabus requires improvements to address the gaps that lead to native language transfer issues. This can be done by improving the aims of the English L2 syllabus to allow English L2 learners to apply their improving language skills to rich

academic content in all topics rather than learning the fundamentals of English in isolation.

- English L2 teachers should develop strategies to motivate their pupils, as inspiration is critical for students to invest more energy in their learning. Furthermore, creating a good learning environment plays an important role in the teaching-learning process; students should be excited to come to class. Teachers should also be aware of the areas in which their students have difficulties, notably around writing. Teachers must be always well-prepared to pass on critical information to students. Teachers should seek assistance from professionals within their field after that. They should have the necessary skills to supervise students and help them understand the proper linguistic norms so that they may generate quality work.
- Finally, the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture should provide teachers with training that will equip them the necessary skills to be able to address grammatical and linguistic issues that learners face. Most issues require advanced grammar to address, which is seemingly not offered during teacher training but perhaps at master's level, where focus is mainly on linguistics.

If the above recommendations are followed, we will potentially be able to reduce writing errors and improve ESL writing instruction one step at a time.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Marking grid

APPENDIX 4: ENGLISH SECOND LANGUAGE MARKING GRID FOR LONGER PIECES (COMPOSITIONS) – EXAMINATION

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>LANGUAGE USAGE</b>	Sentences show a variety of appropriate structures. A wide range of vocabulary used appropriately and accurately. Almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Creative use of idioms. Register (style) is totally relevant to the task.	Sentences are quite well structured. A range of vocabulary appropriately and accurately used. Few spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Suitable use of idioms. Register (style) is relevant to the task.	Sentences are satisfactorily structured. Adequate use of vocabulary. Some spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes. Idioms fairly used. Register (style) is partially relevant to the task.	Sentences are poorly structured. Vocabulary is limited and may be inappropriate. Serious spelling, punctuation and grammatical mistakes impede understanding. Errors of idioms cause confusion. Register (style) is inconsistent.	Virtually no control of the language. Frequent and more serious errors may force the reader to infer/decide meaning. Register (style) is inappropriate to the task.
<b>CONTENT AND FORMAT (LAYOUT)</b>					
1 Essay is completely relevant to the topic: contains all the elements. Detailed well-structured paragraphs: one main idea per paragraph is evident with appropriate supporting ideas; exceptional use of transitions, clear topic sentences, smooth connections between paragraphs arranged in convincing order. Fluent, coherent development of topic.	23-25	20-22	17-19	14-16	11-13
2 Essay is fairly relevant to the topic: contains most of the elements. Well-structured paragraphs with some detail and development: one idea per paragraph with mostly clear topic sentences and some appropriate supporting ideas; good use of transitions, relatively smooth connections between paragraphs.	20-22	17-19	14-16	11-13	8-10
3 Essay is partially relevant to the topic: contains some elements. Paragraphs are evident, but not focused on one main idea. Topic sentences are not well constructed.	17-19	14-16	11-13	8-10	5-7
4 Essay is not particularly relevant to the topic: contains few elements. No paragraphs. Ideas are evident but not developed. Content is limited.	14-16	11-13	8-10	5-7	2-4
5 Little understanding of the topic. Random, simple ideas.	11-13	8-10	5-7	2-4	1

**NB: IF A TASK IS COMPLETELY IRRELEVANT OR OFF TOPIC, AWARD 1 MARK IRRESPECTIVE OF THE LANGUAGE.**

#### Glossary:

- *impede* – interfere with
- *infer*
- *layout/format* – the way the information is presented or arranged e.g. where the address and salutation for a letter should be put; how well the writing and pictures on a poster have been placed
- *sense of audience/register* – being aware of who you are writing to and using an appropriate level of formality or informality
- *task achievement* – to complete the task required; to successfully communicate a message.











Example: CS 3 = 8/9/10  
LS 4 = 25

## Appendix 2: Marking of set work

### MARKING OF SETWORK

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

### SYMBOLS FOR MARKING

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

## Appendix 3: Ethics approval



### FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (F-REC)

#### DECISION: ETHICS APPROVAL

Ref: S013/2021

Student / Staff no.: 219141126

Issue Date: 25 August 2021

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#### RESEARCH TOPIC

**Title:** A Contrastive Linguistic Analysing of the Essays of Oshindonga Speaking Grade Nine Learners of Jan Mohr Secondary School

**Researcher:** Klaudia Nghinanhongo  
**Tel:** +264 811 48 82 23  
**E-mail:** [claudiandinelago@gmail.com](mailto:claudiandinelago@gmail.com)

**Supervisor:** Professor Haileleul Zeleke Woldemariam  
**E-mail:** [hwoldemariam@nust.na](mailto:hwoldemariam@nust.na)

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Dear Ms Nghinanhongo,

The Faculty of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) of the Namibia University of Science and Technology reviewed your application for the above-mentioned research. The research as set out in the application has been approved.

We would like to point out that you, as principal investigator, are obliged to:

- maintain the ethical integrity of your research,
- adhere to the Research policy and ethical guidelines of NUST, and
- remain within the scope of your research proposal and supporting evidence as submitted to the F-REC.

Should any aspect of your research change from the information as presented to the F-REC, which could have an effect on the possibility of harm to any research subject, you are under the obligation to report it immediately to F-REC as applicable in writing.


We wish you success with your research, and trust that it will make a positive contribution to the quest for knowledge at NUST.

Sincerely,



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**Dr Godfrey Tubaundule**  
Acting Associate Dean: Research and Innovation  
Tel: +264 61 207-2932 / 2325  
E-mail: [gtubaundule@nust.na](mailto:gtubaundule@nust.na)



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**Dr Pilisano Masake**  
Acting Dean: FoHS  
Tel: +264 61 207-2063 / 2325  
E-mail: [pmasake@nust.na](mailto:pmasake@nust.na)

#### Appendix 4: Permission letter – school

### JAN MÖHR SECONDARY SCHOOL

PO BOX 162  
WINDHOEK



TEL: 061 237542  
FAX: 061 302543

12 July 2021

Enquiries: Mr L. Hashiti  
Principal

To: Ms. Klaudia Nghinanhongo  
P.O. Box 1314  
Ondangwa

Dear Ms. Nghinanhongo

#### **Request for permission to conduct a Research at Jan Mohr Secondary School.**

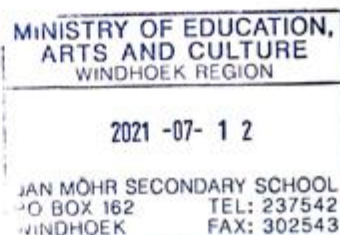
Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct an academic research titled: A contrastive linguistic analysis of the essays of grade 9 Oshindonga speaking learners of Jan Mohr secondary school.

Kindly be informed that teaching time should not be disrupted.

I trust this confirmation will suffice

Yours sincerely

Mr . L. Hashiti  
**PRINCIPAL**



## APPENDIX 5: Learners' essays

My favourite place

(3)

My favourite place is at the zoo park:



There are a lot of animals, buffaloes, kudu, lion, and more animals. It was very nice going to the zoo park. I even saw animals that I've never seen in my life. They are even tents or hotels where you can sleep. We slept in a tent and it was very scary. I did not sleep during the night. It was very nice though. I want to tell all my friends to come and visit the zoo park one day. I am sure they will enjoy it. They are even safari cars where you climb in when you are going to see the animals. You will feel like you will be afraid when you are next to the animals. You feel like they will eat you and our tower guard was very rude. That's the only thing I did not like about the trip. And one thing about the zoo park it is very cheap.

It is getting renovated next year and it will be the best and next year a lot of people will like it.

### The most embarrassing moment of my life

I have a very bad memory that I never forget about, because that day was the most embarrassing day of my life.

It was a Thursday morning and I had to go to school. It was very cold so I decided to wear my school trousers together with a jersey. When I arrived at school the teacher was not at class so we had to wait for her outside. My legs were ~~ting~~ so I decided to sit on a chair that was next to the door. when I just sat, I fell hardly on cold concrete floor. It hurt really bad but the worse part was that everyone saw what happened and they started laughing, including my friends. I felt so embarrassed and ashamed.

For the next lesson the people, my classmates were still making fun of me. They even gave me a name, which was "Stoop" - because I fell on the stoop. I asked them to stop but that just made things worse. They even started to make their own versions of their story. I got so fed up and told them to stop otherwise I would report them and they stopped.

That day I felt so embarrassed. And it was even traumatizing. I felt so ashamed and I even cried. I declared that day the most embarrassing day of my life.



My favourite Place

My favourite Place is ~~his~~ <sup>Groove</sup> Mall. (3)

When it's time to go to ~~Groove~~ <sup>Groove</sup> Mall, there is  
I feel very happy. There ~~in~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~shops~~ <sup>shops</sup> and ~~restaurants~~ <sup>restaurants</sup> there. That's why  
every shop, when you are hungry, you  
go to the restaurant to ~~shop~~ <sup>have lunch</sup>.  
I like ~~Groove~~ <sup>Groove</sup> unlike other places. If you are  
lost there's always a map. If you are lazy  
and you don't want to use stairs there are elevators.  
But there's always ~~advantages~~ <sup>advantages</sup> and ~~disadvantages~~ <sup>disadvantages</sup>  
of elevators ~~things~~ <sup>things</sup> made by humans but here we  
are talking about elevators and is by force you  
have to use stairs if electricity is off and  
elevators are not working. In ~~the~~ <sup>Groove</sup> Mall there are  
too many guards so people ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> want to  
steal get caught and they must be punished.

→ ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~Groove~~ <sup>Groove</sup> mall is a clean place so if you go  
it's your first time there always  
read the rules be ~~entering~~ <sup>entering</sup>. When other shops  
are full of customers the ~~split~~ <sup>split</sup> up and go to  
other shops so they come back later. ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~Groove~~ <sup>Groove</sup>  
Mall is the best because it has almost every  
thing it needs to be there.

## My Favourite Place

7

Wambo Beach was my spiritual home in my youth. It is a rocky beach in the town of Walvis Bay, which can be reached by a long downhill drive from the town of Swakopmund. Or, as I have always done, I took a 30-minute stroll from my house to the peaceful waters of a ~~quite~~ walk through woods of Walvis Bay. It used to be a place populated by native Americans, but now it is mainly occupied by Namibian people.

It's going to be hard to forget about the Wambo Beach. It is now intertwined with my poetry, adolescence, spiritual life, family life and romantic memories. So, every time I visit Wambo Beach, all of these elements are in my mind and soul. There are other locations that stir my imagination and send me nostalgic rushes, but Wambo Beach is at the top of my list.

~~200 words~~

~~Abigail Nangala~~

This is my descriptive essay about my favourite place.

## A childhood memory

5

I really miss my childhood, It was full of excitement, wasted our energy and came very dirty and clothes full of dust, even after taking a bath. 5

We would play lots and lots of fun activities in streets and also make balls out of papers and plastics. I would ~~also~~ invite my friends for my birthday party and they invited me <sup>to their</sup> also, Asking my mom to always have a jumping castle filled with water. I would always wear red clothes ~~at~~ every ~~time~~ <sup>festive</sup> occasion. My childhood festive seasons were the best. Spending time with family and friends at the village, we sat around the fire, dancing and eating ~~lot~~ <sup>lots</sup> of meat and lots of drinks. Waking up early in the morning and playing with pigs, rabbits and chickens. The best part was taking the chicks away from the mother (hen), then it will case me all over the house.

3

I really miss my childhood, I enjoyed it.

## A favourite Place

7

My favourite ~~Best~~ Place is ~~Dersab~~<sup>SP</sup> whisper it is a chalet in Sossusvlei, Sesriem, Namibia.

The ~~chalet~~<sup>SP</sup> is built like a lovely home that consists of a open plan lounge, a royal dining area with it's well stocked ~~bar~~<sup>bar</sup> and a fully-equipped ~~kitchen~~<sup>SP</sup> kitchenette including a luxurious comforting bedroom and en suite bathroom with a spectacular ~~view~~<sup>SP</sup>. On the outside there is a terrace with a wine fountain and a cool refreshing personal pluge ~~wetty~~ pool.

The ~~dersab~~<sup>SP</sup> is called whisper because of the sweet nothings in your ear peace and harmony it's quite costly but ~~what~~<sup>worth</sup> it's. The accommodation is top notch you get to go mountain biking, elephant riding, bird watching while the staff clean your room, there's unlimited wifi connection, swimming, ~~board~~<sup>SP</sup> games. And the very exciting game/animal watching while doing that you get to shoot birds and after that you can get go sit under a veranda while drinking spanking refreshing ice cold wine and eat the ~~most~~ mouth-watering food.

The reason I love this place is because it's very classy and ~~amazing~~<sup>nature</sup> nature.

(Word count 155)



The most embarrassing moment of my Life

4

Life is full of embarrassing moments which leave you ~~feeling~~ lonely in confusion and ~~stems~~. It was 10 am. Sunday morning whereby I was washing my school uniform.

So ~~while~~ I was washing my uniform, I found a 10 dollar note in my school shirt pocket. I was so delighted and I decided to go get a fresh hair cut in the afternoon. I went to sit outside the house as soon as I finished washing hoping to kill time since it was still early and the barber shops were still closed.

I excitedly watched cars as they passed by our house, until I got tired and decided to go back in the house to take a nap. But when I woke up it was already 7:30 pm, and I still had to cut my hair. I ran to the barber shop where I usually get my hair cut and unfortunately found it closed. There was another barber shop right back behind, so I decided to go there. at least, since it was the only one opened at the time.

I gave my money to the barber guy and he started cutting my hair. He started ~~from~~ the cutting from the sides and at the back of my head. He got his machine and blade ready so that he can give me a proper hair line, but he pushed my hairline back back in the middle of the the head instead. I was so pissed off since the hairline looked ugly and made me look like I have a big forehead. I was everyone's joke again the next day at school, and from that day I knew I would never go to that barber shop and that day would be remembered as the most embarrassing moment of my life.

## A favourite place

4

My favourite place is being at my aunt's place in Oyamuse, Seven de laan, hichener street. The reason why it's my favourite place is because the house is beautiful and big.

In the house there are six bedrooms, one kitchen, two sitting rooms there is a <sup>Sentence construction</sup> main room. Outside the house there are four <sup>Sentence construction</sup> rooms to rent with two toilets and two bedrooms. There is also a garage to <sup>for the</sup> park cars and a garden. The house is painted purple outside and inside it's painted pink and white. It is a double ~~storey~~ house, it also has a library and a store room in the kitchen. The main place that I love being is the library and ~~it is in the library~~ there is a store room where we keep some books and in the store room there is also a computer and a printer ~~where~~ you can read and ~~and~~ print your things, it's quite a peaceful place. In the library there is ~~is~~ ~~comrades~~, you won't be able to steal anything. I was so flabbergasted when I saw the library for the first time.

I really love being in the library because ~~because~~ it's really a nice place to stay. I wish I could stay with my aunt instead of my place.

Usually when you ask people what their favorite place is, they talk about a distant place - maybe a beach or a beautiful mountain. But my favorite place is not far away at all. My favorite place is in <sup>a</sup> car, my father's car.

My favorite place is to be in my father's red Isuzu bakkie. When I was ~~little~~ <sup>very</sup> little, my father's car was the biggest car I ~~ever~~ <sup>had</sup> seen in my life. My dad used to help me climb into the car because I was ~~very~~ <sup>so</sup> short. I remember when I was a little, my sister and I would run to the car whenever ~~ever~~ my dad came home, we would talk ~~story~~ stories <sup>and</sup> how our day went. Sometimes we would forget ~~where~~ we were in the car.

Till this day, I still go in my dad's car ~~because~~ because of the memories and how I felt in my dad's car. This days I ~~stay~~ <sup>sit</sup> in the car to do my home-work, listen to music and sometimes just for fun. In the future when I grow up I might buy the same car for my children.

## Essay : Sitting in Traffic

8<sup>W</sup>  
C

Today was Saturday which is my family's day to go out. We spent the day at the Mall, the day was great and we even watched the sun <sup>set</sup> ~~go~~ into the landscape. The sky started to get darker and ~~blacker~~, so it was probably a good idea to head home.

On the highway, our car stopped all of a sudden. I look up only to find hundreds of cars in front of us, the largest and longest traffic jam I have <sup>ever</sup> seen. In the car, I sat in the middle with my two sisters by my sides. Ahead of us are flashing light signs and cars as far as my eyes can see. My dad started to honk, which everyone behind were doing. After an hour we all started to get hungry, luckily we had <sup>leftover</sup> ~~some~~ food with us so we were okay. Finally the traffic became slowly but surely disappearing. It was late at night so my sisters fell asleep ~~asleep~~.

I started having random thoughts like: when will I have a girlfriend? "We are probably going to stay here forever". These thoughts made sleepy so I decide to doze off. I woke up when I felt the car moving freely, and I was so happy to get out of that traffic jam. We finally arrived home and went straight to bed. It was a very long night.