

**A CASE STUDY OF VERB GROUP ERROR ANALYSIS FROM KIMERU
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH IN IMENTI SOUTH SUB-COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This research is my original work and has never been presented for a degree in any other university or institution for any other purpose

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my immediate family; Peninnah, my wife and children, Ruth, Timothy and Victor.

To my father and very supportive siblings. And in loving memory of our mother; Margret Kabea.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ACRONYMS	x
DEFINITION OF TERMS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Background of the Study	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.2 Objectives	5
1.3 Hypotheses	6
1.4 Justification of the study.....	6
1.5 Theoretical Framework.....	6
1.5.1 Models for error analysis.	7
1.5.1.1 Data Collection	7
1.5.1.2 Description of Errors	7
1.5.1.3 Explanation of errors	8
1.6 Literature Review	8
1.7 Methodology	12
1.7.1 The choice of the two day secondary schools.....	13
1.7.2 Data collection.....	14
1.7.3 Data analysis procedure	14
1.8 Scope and Limitation.....	15
CHAPTER TWO	16
2.0 Introduction.....	16
2.1 The English verb group.....	16
2.1.1 The verb	16
2.1.2 Simple verb group	17
2.1.3 Regular verbs.....	18

2.1.4 Irregular verbs	20
2.2 Replacive morph process	20
2.3 Zero morph process	22
2.4.1 Tense	25
2.4.2 Aspect	27
2.4.2.1 Perfective Aspect	27
2.4.2.2 Progressive Aspect.....	28
2.4.3 Person and Number	30
2.4.4 Polarity	31
2.4.5 Modality	33
2.4.6 Voice	34
CHAPTER THREE.....	36
3.0 Research Design and Methodology.....	36
3.1 Sampling	36
3.2 Methods of data collection.....	36
3.2.1 Composition	36
3.2.2 Structured set tests.....	37
3.2.2.1 Irregular and regular verbs	37
3.2.2.2 Tense	38
3.2.2.3 Voice	39
3.2.2.4 Modal auxiliaries	40
3.2.2.5 Polarity	40
3.3 Administration of the test and composition	40
3.4 Method of data analysis	41
3.4.1 Composition	41
3.4.2 The structured set test items	42
CHAPTER FOUR.....	43
DATA ANALYSIS	43
4.0 Introduction.....	43
4.1 Data Analysis	43
4.1.1 Regular and irregular verbs.....	43

4.1.1.1	Irregular verbs	44
4.1.1.2	Regular Verbs	44
4.1.2	Tense	45
4.1.2.1	Simple Present tense	45
4.1.2.2	Present participle	46
4.1.2.3	Simple past	47
4.1.2.4	Past Perfect	48
4.1.2.5	Past participle	48
4.1.3	Voice	48
4.1.5	Polarity	49
4.2	Analysis of Past Tense Errors	50
4.2.1	Simple Past Tense Forms	50
4.2.1.1	Regular Verbs	50
4.2.1.2	Irregular verbs	51
4.2.1.3	Irregular Verbs	53
4.2.2	Perfect tense	56
4.2.2.1	Past Perfect	57
4.3	Past Participle	60
4.4	Error Categories	62
4.4.1	Categorization of Errors	62
4.4.1.1	Interlingual Errors	62
4.4.1.2	Intralingual Errors	63
4.4.1.3	Overgeneralization of Rule	63
4.4.1.4	Incomplete Application of Rules	64
CHAPTER FIVE		65
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS		65
5.0	Introduction	65
5.1	Summary of findings	65
5.1.1	Possible causes of error	65
5.1.1.1	Interlingual causes of errors	65
5.1.1.2	Intralingual errors	66

5.2 Pedagogic implication of the findings	66
5.3 Recommendations for further study	67
REFERENCES.....	68
APPENDIX.....	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1 Results of performance in irregular verbs	44
Table. 4.2: Results of the performance of regular verbs	45
Table 4.3 Results of the performance of simple present tense	46
Fig. 4.4 performance in present participle	46
Table . 4.5 Results of performance in simple past	47
Table .4.6 Results of performance in past perfect tense	48
Table4.7 Results of performance in past participle.....	48
Table 4.8 Results of performance in passive voice.....	49
Table 4.9 Performance in polarity.....	50

ACRONYMS

IL	Interlanguage
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
L1	First Language
TL	Target Language
L2	Second Language

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Error	It results from the learner's lack of proper grammatical knowledge. It is a pointer to some linguistic incompetence, according to Corder in Ellis (1994). Errors can not be self corrected.
Mistake	It is a deviant Linguistic construction that is result from a choice that turns out to be wrong. Mistakes are usually accidental and performance based therefore can be self corrected according to Corder (1974).
Inter-language	It is a term for a dynamic; rule based linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of a second language who has not yet reached the expected proficiency.
S.L.A	Second language acquisition is the process by which a person learns a second language after acquiring the first one.
T.L	This is the new language the learner intends to acquire into competence after acquiring the first language

ABSTRACT

The focus of the study was to analyze the errors in the English Verb group from sentences produced by Kimeru Learners .English in Imenti South Sub County . The area of research was two day Secondary schools; Ntharene Day Secondary school and Nyombayathi Day Secondary Schools. The target Population was drawn from Form three classes because it was assumed to be more exposed to English than their junior counterparts and had a little more time , than the form four, to spare for the research. The main source of data was a set of structured questions carefully selected to feature all areas of verb group such as main verb, tense, and modal auxiliaries. The collected data was described and possible causes of error explained using error analysis methodology. It was found that most errors were intralingual as a result of overgeneralization. A composition was used to supplement to findings from the structural set test. The study formulated the necessary recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The focus of the study is to analyze the errors in the English verb group in the sentences written by students in Form Three in some selected day secondary schools in the Imenti South District. This is a new district carved in from the previous large Meru Central District in Eastern Province. The students in these schools are predominately speakers of Kimeru as their mother tongue.

1.0 Background of the Study

Kimeru is a language spoken by the Ameru who live in Meru and Tharaka-Nthi counties on the Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. Kimeru language is not homogenous. It has various variations in dialects. There is some discrepancy between what the native speakers recognize as the main Kimeru dialects and what scholars state to be the dialects of the Kimeru language (Gacunku 2005).

Fadiman J. A. (1973) states that the oral tradition of Meru indicates that at the beginning of 18th century, the Meru were enslaved and lived on the other side of great stretch of water in a place called Mboa. They were enslaved by people known as Nguo Ntune (red clothes). They fled the enslavement in 1700AD (Fadiman 1973). The place where they were enslaved was said to be an island in the Lamu, archipelagos along the Kenyan coast. During this time, the pre-Meru was known as the Ngaa.

After the escape from their masters, they sojourned and settled at Tharaka where they encroached upon other people, the pre-Tharaka, who had similar culture. They inter married and increased in numbers. The increase in population necessitated dispersal. It was due to this dispersal that various dialects of Kimeru were formed.

It was during the period that the Ngaa lost the common identity and the name: Ngaa. The resultant groups were Igembe who settled to the north of Nyambene ranges, the Tigania

who occupied the southern slopes of Nyambene, the Imenti who moved in the west of Mt. Kenya forest, and the Mwimbi who moved southwards toward the area occupied by the Chuka as cited by Nkubitu (1993).

Chuka formed a buffer state between the Meru and Embu as Loughton (1944) states. Ndwigwa (2008) treats Gichuka as distinct languages in his syntactic examination of empty categories of Gichuka language. Having lost the Ngaa identity, during the dispersal, the name and identity is said to have been re-established through the shared experiences brought about by the colonial administration (Marete 1981). It is important to delve into the history of Ameru because there has been no clear distinction of the Kimeru dialect. While Marete (1981) says that the native speakers of Kimeru recognize five regional dialects : Ki-imenti, Kitharaka, Gitigania, Gichuka and Kimwimbi. Wa Mberia (1979, 1981) argues that Kitharaka is an independent language from Kimeru but only shares some similarity both lexically and structurally. As Gacunku (2005) states, the question as to which are proper dialects of Kimeru may not be easy to answer, given the many conflicting views. We will not join into the controversy, but assume Kitharaka and Gichuka as distinct languages. In so doing, we shall focus on Ki-imenti variety; in believe that the results reflect the situation in other dialects.

English is taught and learnt in Kenya as a second language. The term second language acquisition refers to the process of learning another language after the native language has been learnt. Sometimes, as in the case of Kenya learners, the term Second Language Learning refers to the learning of a third language. The most important aspect of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is the learning of non native language after acquiring the native language. In most rural settings in Kenya learners of English will mostly acquire their mother tongue, for example, Kimeru, Dholuo or Kikamba, and then followed by Kiswahili, (as cited by Mwaniki (2001). In urban areas, learners also acquire the use of Sheng as a language of communication. According to Abdulaziz and Onside (1997) Sheng has emerged in Nairobi as a means of intra-group of communication. Sheng derived form abbreviations Swahili and English, is a patios which is mainly used by the youth especially in urban area. However, investigations have revealed that sheng also

sources its lexicon from other Kenyan languages including Kikuyu, Dholuo, Kamba, Kisii, Luyha (Ogechi 2005, Kobia and Keng'ei, 2007). So by the time a learner is acquiring English as a second language there are other linguistic factors and backgrounds that may influence and affect the learning and production of the errors of English verb group in the sentences, which are the focus of this study.

English enjoys a privilege position in Kenya. This is deliberate. The supremacy of English in the Kenyan educational system was entrenched following the Gachathi Report of 1976. It recommended that English becomes the language of instruction from the fourth grade in primary school to the university.

“English will be used as the language of instruction in all institutions of learning from standard four onwards” (Gachathi Report 1976). As a result, English is a medium of instruction. It is one of the factors that determine a student performance in the school. Although the Gachathi report also declared Kiswahili an important subject, it received inferior status when compared to English in the school curriculum (Chimerah 1998).

The increasing demand for education and scientific knowledge is seen as an important reason for the emergence and expansion of English language in Kenya. Mazrui and Mazrui (1996) state that even in colonial days, the colonized people had realized the English was a sure ticket to white collar employment and wealth.

Moreover, English language has been identified with the national interests and globalization process in general. Being an international language, English links Kenyan speakers to the global market.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A lot of time and resources have been invested to learning and teaching of English as a second language in Kenya. Despite these efforts, such as in Gachathi Report (1976) and

Revision of syllabus by K.I.E (2005), made to improve the quality of English learning and teaching, pre-research observations have revealed that many students cannot construct grammatically correct sentences.

There is a constant complains by educationists over the falling standards of English in all levels of learning Kenya National Examinations Council (2009) in their report of the KCSE (2008) report, noted that candidates sitting for KCSE depict a very poor mastery of English. Their competence is low as they are unable to follow instructions and therefore, end up giving irrelevant responses. They also show carelessness in such basics as punctuations, spelling and sentence construction.

The two schools, Ntharene and Nyombayathi day secondary schools are situated deep into the rural side of Imenti South District. The students from these schools hardly have any other exposure to English expect the classroom learning situation. The surrounding community is homogenously monolingual whose language is Kimeru so the students have a difficult task in learning the language as the external exposure does not supplement the class work.

Students within the Kimeru speech community also find the English syntax difficult and make grammatical errors. A major reason could be because Kimeru language is structurally different from English. Syntactically, English is a synthetic language while Kimeru is agglutinating; therefore the English language structure presents a problem to most Kimeru learners of English. The study seeks to investigate the erroneous constructions made by the Kimeru learners of English in their interlanguage. It contrasts the synonymous constructions in the learners' sentences and the target language; comparing the erroneous structure and the reconstructed structure (Corder 1973).

Studies have been done on Kimeru language on various areas. For example Marete (1981) researched on grammatical agreement in Kimeru syntax, Nkubitu (1993) studied the syntax of WH- word in Kimeru, and Mwebia (2006) looked at a lexical pragmatic analysis of the sense relations in Kimeru. This study takes a different course. It will focus

on the errors in the English verb group in the sentences written by the Kimeru Learners of English. Many learners make erroneous constructions when dealing with the verb group which is an obligatory and a central feature of the sentence.

For example,

1. (a) I caught the ball.

2. (a) Peter didn't came yesterday.

3 (a) I heard very hungry.

4(a) The fire entered the sitting room from the kitchen.

In sentences (1a) and (2a), the errors may be due to the fact that *catch* and *come* are irregular verbs and the learner seemed to over generalize the rules. The correct sentences would be;

1(a) I caught the ball.

2(b) Peter did not come yesterday.

However, in sentences 3(a) and 4(a), the verbs *heard* and *entered* reflect Kimeru structures and therefore they are in structures of language transfer or interlingual errors.

The correct sentences would be:

3(a) I felt very hungry

4 (b) The fire spread in the sitting room from the kitchen

The study will address questions such as:

- (i) What are the English verb group errors in the Kimeru Learners of English interlanguage?
- (ii) What are the possible causes of those errors?

1.2 Objectives

The aim of this study is to look into the errors of the verb group in the sentence as produced by Kimeru Learners of English and investigate the nature of deviations and their cause. The study hopes to:

1. Identify the erroneous English verb group construction in the interlanguage of Kimeru Learners of English.
2. To discuss the nature of the errors
3. To identify the possible causes of the errors of the English verb group in the sentences of Kimeru Learners of English.

1.3 Hypotheses

1. That interlanguage of Kimeru learners of English has errors of verb group.
2. The nature of errors made are intralingual and interlingual
3. That some of possible causes of the errors could be language transfer and over generalization

1.4 Justification of the study

The study is focused on an investigation of errors of the verb group in the Interlingual of Kimeru learners of English. It seeks to study the complex features of the verb group which include the main verb, polarity, person, voice, aspect, modality and tense. Most of these features although found in Kimeru, they are expressed in different ways, relative to English.

The findings are expected to add substance into the existing body of knowledge on the second language learning. The results will hopefully assist the teachers and learners of English to iron out stigma emanating from mother tongue influence in their English presentation. This would give the Kimeru learners of English confidence as they endeavour to express themselves in English. The findings will also lead to effective implementation of teaching and learning of English with specific attention to the verb group, which is central in the English sentence structure.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

The study will be based on the Error Analysis Theory. Error analysis is a type of linguistic analysis that focuses on error learners make. It consists of a comparison

between the errors made in the target language (T.L) and the T.L itself. Error analysis (hereafter EA) is the examination of those errors committed by students in both spoken and written medium. Corder (1967), who has contributed enormously to E.A writes “The study of error is part of the investigation of the process of Ige learning. In this respect it resembles methodologically the study of the acquisition of the mother tongue. It provides us with a picture of the linguistic development of a learner and many give us indications as to the learning process. For E.A operates from the premise that the learner’s errors are not only inevitable in the learning process, but they are necessary in the process.

1.5.1 Models for error analysis.

Corder (1967) identified a model for E.A which included three stages:

- (i) Data collection recognition of idiosyncrasy.
- (ii) Description of errors. (Accounting for idiosyncratic dialect).
- (iii) Explanation of error (the ultimate object of E.A)

1.5.1.1 Data Collection

A correct identification of error depends on the analysis correct interpretation of the learner’s intended meaning within the context. The research must be able to recognize the learner’s idiosyncrasy.

In this study the learners were given a comparison and some structured set test carefully selected to feature most of the areas in the verb group. From the students responses errors while identified. These identified errors served as the working date for this study.

1.5.1.2 Description of Errors

After the identification of errors the errors are described and categorized. This description will help show the learner how much he has deviated from the target language expectation.

Errors are categorized for a more systematic and logical analysis. In this study the various features of the verb group were classified as main verb, tense aspect, modality voice and polarity.

The description of error is essentially a comparative process. The erroneous structure made by the learners were compared with the correct forms from the T.L. this helped to bring out the deviation.

1.5.1.3 Explanation of errors

This is the ultimate object of errors analysis. The analyst tries to establish the causes of error already described. Since we don't have direct access to the learner's mind, the explanation has an element of speculation.

In the study, errors were analyzed in terms of interlingual and intralingual. Interlingual error results from the learner's first language interfering with the production of the target language.

Intralingual errors are those which can be traced from the nature of the target language (T.L) itself.

In this case, regular and irregular aspects of the English past tense form intralingual errors are of various types. Organization of rules, whereby the learner uses the already learnt rules without any exception, thereby resulting to erroneous construction as evidenced in the case of irregular past tense formation. Other intralingual errors may be due to incomplete application of rules if the T.L.

As Corder (1981) observe, the teacher should be able not only to detect and describes errors linguistically but also to understand the psychological reasons for their (errors) occurrence.

1.6 Literature Review

This study is informed by the previous work done on the second language acquisition. Studies have been done and the need to improve the quality of the second Language learning has been emphasized. Corder (1967, 1981), Fisiak (1987), Krashen (1978, 1981, and 1982) and others have offered suggestions meant to solve problems in the second

language learning. Research in English as Second Language (ESL) was first tied to English language teaching (ELT) under the authority of British Council which set up a school of applied linguistics at the University of Edinburgh according to Howatt (1988). Later centre for applied linguistics spread to other parts of Britain, USA and other areas in which English language was spoken.

Investigating a learner's interlanguage has contributed to a wide issues in linguistics and theories in language acquisition. Interlanguage is an offshoot of contrastive analysis (CA) and error analysis (E A). The proponents of CA Sajaara (1978), Corder (1967, 1981) Lado (1994) and Selinker (1972) assumed that it is possible to compare and contrast the system of one language with the system of another language in order to predict the difficulties in second language learning. They saw the notion of interference that could account for negative transfer of items, rules and subsystems from the first language to the second language.

In their studies Richard (1974), Ellis (1985) Corder 1967, Dulay and Burt (1972) disputed the claims of contrastive analysis. They claimed that the predictive power of CA was unrealistic and impractical. According to Corder (1972) contrastive analysis (CA) was not compatible with generalistic view of language learning which postulates hypothesis testing. Dulay and Burt (1977) claimed that Contrastive Analysis was based on behaviorists conditioning principle which was no longer acceptable because its explanations are not plausible. Contrastive Analysis fell out of favour as many second Language errors could not be predicted or explained by it; therefore it was rejected.

Error analysis has been used by many researchers over years. Error analysis is said to be a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures by linguistics. Errors are assumed to reflect in a systematic way the level of competence achieved by a learner; they are contrasted with mistakes which are performance limitations a learner would be able to correct, according to Crystal (1987). Ervin Trip (1974) and Schumann (1974) by studying the first language acquisition and

second language learning have shown that the SLA, like first language, follow similar universal route, influenced by age, context, of learning, first language background and sex. The same processes are also considered like over generalization production, strategies of the second language learning – simplification among others.

Transformation linguistics favoured cognitive approach and they provided psycholinguistic explanation to the process of language transfer and cause of errors in the SLA as it emphasizes the hypothesis formation as well as experimentation while providing important feedback to the learner.

In their studies, Corder (1978) Taylor (1975) and Wode (1976) supported the orientation learners' errors as seen in terms of target language formulation and should be viewed as a violation of rules.

Corder (1969) came up with a term 'idiosyncratic dialect' or transitional dialect while Selinker (1969) proposed as interlanguage.

Learner errors should be considered to be a natural phenomenon when learning first or second language before grammatical rules are internalized. The concept of interference would be viewed as learner's strategy. According to Meiser (1981) the spontaneous speech of second language learner has its grammar and should be treated as a separate language identified elsewhere as idiosyncratic.

Corder's suggestions are supported by Nemser (1971) but he uses the term "approximately system" to describe the learner transitional competence. It is a cohesive linguistic system and it follows systematic stages in its development. Selinker (1972) proposed five psychological processes which are central to the second language learning as cited earlier. These processes are said to exist in latent psycholinguistic structure and interlanguage utterances are associated with one or more of them.

The study on errors and interlanguage are relevant in this study as they lay firm foundations for the study on the cause of errors made in utterances. Richard (1971) asserts that there are other causes of errors apart from interference. Nickel (1973) shows that interlingual and intralingual errors depend on pedagogical and psychological factors as well as upon the type and age of the learner. Nickel suggests that the classification that distinguishes between interlingual and intralingual errors are interdependent on other factors which are closely related. Therefore the first language is a source that the learner relies on less and less as his competence in L2 increases.

Apart from language transfer, there are other possible factors that are responsible for errors made by a second language learner such as the extent of exposure to TL through media, teachers, peers, textbooks and the home environment among others.

The role of a classroom teacher as discussed by Mbori (1992) as do pedagogical techniques, experimental factors, peer group are very important on in the learning of second language. The teacher is portrayed as encouraging the learners directly, monitors his work and adds a few phrases word or sentences.

Another tool in activating the possible motivation of the learner to learn a language in attitude development as personal experience with the attitudinal object e.g the relationships between the learner and the teachers parental influences, group determinants media etc. some of these attitudinal influences may act against each other or operate parallel to each other.

Mwaniki (2001) looked in the syntactic structure of interlanguage of the Kikuyu learners of English as a second language. He attempts to find out what characteristics of first language of the Kikuyu learner of English could be attributed to the first language and therefore explainable by expansion of first language and target language and which ones are attributed to other factors. Clerghon Merit and Abagi (1988) noted that proficiency in English may spill over and affect the performance in science.

This study looks into the errors of the English verb group in the sentences of Kimeru Learners of English. The learners are from two days secondary schools situated in Imenti south district. The district has predominantly Kimeru linguistic background, and therefore some errors are peculiarly ethnic based.

1.7 Methodology

The study is classified as a case study of the errors in the English verb group in the written sentence of Kimeru Learners of English. It uses two Day secondary schools: Ntharene Day secondary and Nyombayathi Day Secondary School. The data was collected from form three classes of the stated schools. Each class had an average of 35 learners making the total population of the learners under the study to be 70.

The choice of the Form Three class for elicitation of data was because it has been exposed to English learning for several years. Going by the Kenyan language policy, form three class has learnt English from standard four in primary school, the students learnt English as a subject and other subjects were taught in English (Gachathi Report 1976).

With three years in secondary school, the assumption is that the learners at this level, they are fairly competent in English. The errors made at this point should be viewed as persistent and resistant and therefore need a serious study. At Form Three level, it is a good point to assess if the specific objectives set out by the national English syllabus are being achieved. These objectives are:

- a. By the end of the four-year course the learner should be able to construct and use correct sentence structures.
- b. To express himself more clearly and precisely
- c. To develop greater flexibility in sentence construction (KIE 2006)

1.7.1 The choice of the two day secondary schools

The reason for the selection of the two day schools in Imenti South District was to allow the study to deal with a population whose background is relatively homogenous. The district is located in upper eastern province which is predominately Kimeru speaking area, and the researcher is a Meru from the district.

In this study, linguistic homogeneity is important in terms of distinguishing between the intralingual from interlingual errors made by learners. The two schools selected from the target area were chosen on basis of form one enrolment. In Kenya, the secondary schools are divided into two broad categories: the public and private schools. The private schools have been put up by individuals or non-governmental organizations, sometimes they are ran as a family business.

The public schools are owned and ran by the government of Kenya. They are divided categorized into national, county, and sub-county schools. Form one enrolment in public schools is determined by the performance of K.C.P.E. The national schools admit students with high performance marks, followed by county schools, and lastly the sub-county schools which admit students with the lowest entry requirements.

The sub-county schools could be boarding or day schools. The schools with boarding facilities could source their students from the farthest corner of the district, for they can host them in school. This is unlike Day Secondary Schools whose students are sourced from within the school's walking distance. Ntharene and Nyombayathi are such schools. Their students are predominately speakers of Kimeru. The reason for the choice of the schools was to ensure that the study dealt with average performing students, who also commuted to schools from the villages and their linguistic background is typically Kimeru.

1.7.2 Data collection

Two methods were used in data collection. The basic data was collected by administration of a series of grammatical test which had sections focusing on the forms of different features of the verb group.

- a) A composition was also administered. It was meant to provide a contextualized uses of the items features of the verb group by the students without being prompted. It allowed the student to use language freely, and if they made errors similar to those observed in the test, it would confirm the area of the verb group in which the learners have many problems.
- b) The complex English verb group has many features. These include, tense, modality, polarity, aspect voice, the main verb and person. A battery of tests focusing on those features was administered to the learners.

1.7.3 Data analysis procedure

At the end of the field work, all the scripts were collected for analysis. The analysis was done in terms of the seventy students as one group.

Using an already prepared marking scheme, the tests were marked, with items being marked either right or wrong. The numbers of correct and wrong responses for each item of the verb group were counted. The mean percentage score for all the seventy students in each of the verb group features was calculated. This was done by first converting each student's mark for each verb group feature into a percentage score, then adding up all the students' marks and dividing the total by seventy. This would facilitate comparison of performance across the verb group feature in order to determine the order of difficulty in the verb group features. Each item in the verb group feature had a table drawn. Analysis of the errors in terms of the rules which had been broken was then done.

The compositions were read carefully and the errors of the verb group were identified. The sentences which contained the errors were identified and recorded. The identification of errors was determined by the deviations from the target language norms determined by comparing what the learners said and what they ought to have produced. The students'

sentences were considered within their context in order to determine the error. In the words of Corder and Allen (1974) plausible reconstruction of what the students intended to say in order to arrive at plausible interpretation of the same was used.

The errors collected from the composition were used to confirm the fact that students made similar errors in their use as observed in the structured tests.

1.8 Scope and Limitation

The target group of learners from which the research data was elicited was from two day secondary schools in Imenti South District. They are predominantly speakers of Kimeru language. The selected schools were Ntharene day secondary School and Nyombayathi Day Secondary school. Form Three classes of the selected schools were used to get the data; each class had an average of thirty five learners.

The topic of the study was an investigation of the syntactic structure of the interlanguage and Kimeru Learners of English. This was narrowed down to the erroneous treatment of the English verb group of the sentence. This was necessary due to the limited time within which the research was conducted and the financial constraints. The study also limited itself to the errors produced by the learners only, with the assumptions that the classroom teacher of English language was a perfect model.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the English verb group; the features of interest to our study. The verb group is a complex of auxiliaries and the lexical verb used in a sentence/ the features of interest to this study are the main verb (finite and lexical verb), tense, aspect, person and number, voice, polarity and modality.

2.1 The English verb group

2.1.1 The verb

English words are described in categories or parts of speech. Categories can be divided into two main classes: lexical and functions. The lexical categories include noun, verb, adjective, adverb and preposition. They are called so because they carry lexical meaning. They are also content words since they have synonyms and antonyms. Syntactically, lexical categories are the lead of phrases.

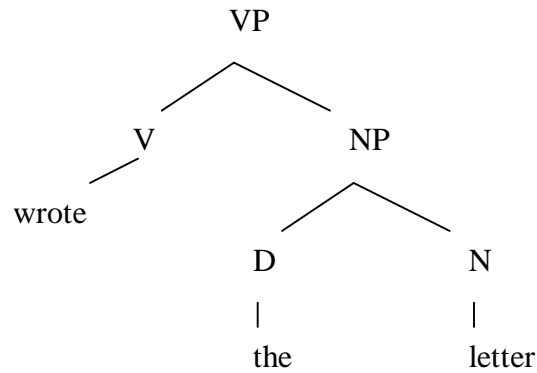
The other category is the functional or grammatical category. These include determiner, auxiliary, coordinator, and complementizer. These categories are called functional or grammatical since they do not contribute much to the meaning of a sentence, but determine the syntax of it.

The verb is the focus of our study. It is a central and obligatory constituent of the English sentence. Since students must use it in their common sentences, they end up making many errors. The verb group has many features. These features tend to confuse the learners and errors result in the process of their sentence construction.

There is a difference between a verb phrase and the verb group.

The verb group is the complex of auxiliaries and the lexical verb in a sentence, while the verb phrase is the main verb and its complementation (Gelderen 2010). A verb phrase is built around a verb and the latter can be in present or past.

John wrote the letter



Some VPs include other obligatory material, that is words or phrases that cannot easily be left out such as NP in sentence (1) above. These obligatory parts are called complementaries. Therefore the verb phrase has complementation as opposed to the verb group.

1. John wrote the letter.

NP

In sentence (1) above, the following are the parts.

The NP (the letter) is complementing the main verb wrote. The VP can also include optional material that explains when, why and how the action or state that the verb describes took place. While many students make errors in the VP, verb phrase, our study is focused on the treatment of the verb group by the students. The English verb group can either be simple or complex.

2.1.2 Simple verb group

A simple verb group is made up of only the main verb. Verbs do not always define acts, for example, in

- (i) The cup is red and blue.
- (ii) The car seemed nice (to me.)

The verb be in sentence (1) above represented the 3rd person form is does not express an action. He we need to add state to the semantic definition of verb, as well as emotion to account for sentence such as (2) in the use of the verb seem.

A simple verb group is marked for tense e.g.

- a) These are ripe bananas
 |
 Main verb
- b) The lion lives in a cage.
 |
 Main verb
- c) Mutuma gave a pencil to Kiogora.
 |
 Main verb

There are two types of simple verb group. These are regular and irregular past tense and past participle forms.

2.1.3 Regular verbs

Most English verbs have five forms; the base, the –s form, the past (-ve – ed), the present participial (V+ -ing) and the past participle (V + -n).

Regular lexical verbs have the same [-ed] inflection for both past tense and past participle e.g

Base	Past	Past participle
Call	called	called
Decide	decided	decided
Kick	kicked	kicked

If learners tried to inflect to form past tense or past participle in any other way, they would result with erroneous constructions.

e.g.

Base	Past	Past Participle
call	callt	callen
decide	decidet	deciden
weigh	weight	weighten

The morphological process of the application of the [ed] morpheme to a regular verb base to form the past tense and the past participle is phonologically conditioned. (Gelderen 2010). The past tense forming morpheme [-ed] though similarly spelt in all regular verbs differs with different verb bases depending on the last sound in the verb base. The past participle (V+ -en) form is also similar spelt in regular verbs. The regular past tense (-ed) morpheme and regular past participle (-en) morpheme in regular verbs has 3 phonemic variants.

- a) If the regular verb base ends in a /d/ or /t/ sound e.g mend and wait. The past tense forming morpheme [-ed] and past participle forming morpheme [-en] are pronounced as /id/. Therefore we have /mendid/ and /waitid/ respectively
- b) If the regular verb base ends in a voiced sound, except /d/, the past tense morpheme [ed] and past participle morpheme [-en] are pronounced as /d/ e.g
 pray - prayed (pried)
 muddle – muddled / mould
- c) When the regular verb base ends in a voiceless sound except /t/, the past tense forming morpheme [-ed] and the past tense participle forming morpheme [-en] are pronounced s /t/ e.g
 Like - liked / laikt/
 Ask - asked / a:skt)

A regular verb is any verb whose conjugation follows the typical pattern. These verbs did not seem to present a big problem to the learners.

2.1.4 Irregular verbs

Unlike the regular verbs, irregular verbs present many problems to the students.

Verbs such as 'drink', 'hit', and 'have' are irregular, since some of their parts are not made according to the typical pattern e.g

'drink - drunk', and not 'drinked' hit (a past tense and past participle and not 'hited') and has and had (not 'haves' and 'haved')

When forming the two different forms, past tense and past participle, it is important to identify the three morphological processes involved.

2.2 Replacive morph process

In morphology, a word element that substitutes for another element within a stem e.g the 'e' in men (the plural form of man) is considered a replacive (Richards et al 1974). This morphological process includes modification of the irregular base. There are a number of morphological processes that take place when the {-ed} and {-en} morphemes are added to an irregular verb base.

1. The first category involves a replacing of the final sound of the base verb form /d/ with /t/.

e.g

bend /bend/ - bent - bent /bent/

send /send/ - sent - sent /sent/

build /bild/ - built - built /bilt/

2. In the second process, the final consonant sound of the base verb is retained but the vowel is the base verb is changed and /t/ is added

Base	past	past participle
Keep /ki:p/	kept	kept /kept)
Creep /kri:p/	crept	crept /krept/
Dream /dri:m/	dreamt	dreamt /dremt/
Sweep /swi:p/	swept	swept /swept/

3. In the 3rd processes there is the modification of the base verb vowels and replacement of the final vowels or consonant with /t/

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
buy /bai/	bought	bought /bɔ:t/
seek /si:k/	sought	sought /sɔ:t/
bring /brɪŋ/	brought	brought /brɔ:t/

4. When the past tense /-ed/ morpheme or the past participle [-ed] morpheme is added to the irregular base, there is modification of the base verb vowel and an addition of /d/ if it was absent

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
sell /sel/	sold	sold /səuld/
hear /hiə/	heard	heard /hɜ:d/
hold /həʊld/	held	held /held/

5. When the past tense [-ed] morpheme is added to the irregular verb base, there is only a base verb vowel modification form /I/ - /a/ unlike the four categories discussed above, where past tense and past participle are formed by add (V + ed) and V + -en) respectively in this category the past participle forms are marked by the vowel change /e/ - /ʌ/

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
begin /bɪɡɪn/	began /bɪɡæn/	begun /bɪɡʌn/
sing /sɪŋ/	sang /sæŋ/	sung /sʌŋ/
Swim /swɪm/	swam /swæm/	swum /swʌm/

6. In the sixth morphological process, when the past tense forming [-ed] morpheme is added to the irregular verb base there is change of the base verb vowel to /əu/. When the past participle forming [-en] morpheme is added there is addition of /ən/

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
choose /tʃu:z/	chose /tʃəuz/	chosen /tʃeuzən/
break /breɪk/	broke /brəʊk/	broken /brəʊkən/

7. When the past tense forming [-ed] morpheme is added to the irregular verb base, there is unpredictable change of the base verb vowel. On addition of the past participle forming [-en] morpheme there is addition of /n/ again with the unpredictable vowel change

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
drive /dra:v/	drove /drəʊv/	driven /drɪvθn/
give /gɪv/	gave /geɪv/	given /gɪvən/
write /raɪt/	wrote /rəʊt/	written /rɪtn/

The above categories may be sources of errors by the students if not handled with care. The above seven categories do not explain all the pt tense and pt participle morphological processes of irregular verbs in English some cases are quite unique e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
beat /bi:t/	beat /bi:t/	beaten /bi:tn/

2.3 Zero morph process

When the past tense [-ed] morpheme and past participle [-n] morpheme are added to irregular and base verb, no structural change is observed e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
hit	hit	hit
cut	cut	cut
shut	shut	shut
put	put	put

Errors result when students used some inflection, either by adding [-ed] or [-en] morpheme

e.g

Base	Past	Past Participle
hit	hitted	hitten
put	putted	putted
cut	cuted	cutten
shut	shutted	shutten

c) Suppletive morph process

“Bad” – “Worse” is a case of suppletion ‘worse’ is semantically related to bad in exactly the same way as

Larger → is related to large

But there are no morphological relationships between the two words. That is there is no phonetic similarity between them. (Hurford 2007).

In suppletive morph process, some irregular verbs undergo a unique morphological process difference from the ones discussed. These are the primary auxiliary verb ‘be’ and the lexical verb ‘go’. be + past tense [-ed]

Morpheme results in two forms ‘was and were’

‘was’ is for first person and 3rd person singular, were is for all plurals and 2nd person singular

Be + past participle (-ed] become been

Since Be + past tense (ed) also involves number, this becomes a problem in the students sentence construction.

*1 You was to wash your clothes, over the weekend .

* 2 we was praying when he knocked.

*3. John were the best boy in a metal class.

*4.He had being digging the whole day.

Go + past tense [-ed] morpheme becomes 'went'. This verb is unique because the past tense morphological process changes the base verb completely to a new word. There is no obvious morphological relationship between go – and – went.

In most cases, students appeared to guess these words when used in the sentence. It was a source of variable /errors in their construction.

2.4 The complex verb group

The main verb and one or more of the auxiliaries make up the complex verb group.

A verb phrase can, in principle, have four auxiliary verbs and one lexical verb. This complex of auxiliaries and the lexical verb is known as the verb group (VGP). If an auxiliary is not present and the sentence is negative or a question, a 'dummy' auxiliary do is needed. e.g

(i) They like bananas (positive)

(ii) They do not like bananas (negative with a 'dummy do')

When a verb is complex it can have the following maximal constitution: person and number, polarity, modality, voice, modality, aspect and the main verb. In simple verb group, where the main verb is the only verb, tense is carried therein, and by the first auxiliary verb in a complex verb group. A complex verb group therefore constitutes a lexical verb and its accompanying auxiliaries.

Lexical verbs are those that belong to a large general vocabulary of the language. They carry meaning and often words with similar (synonym) or opposite meaning (antonym)

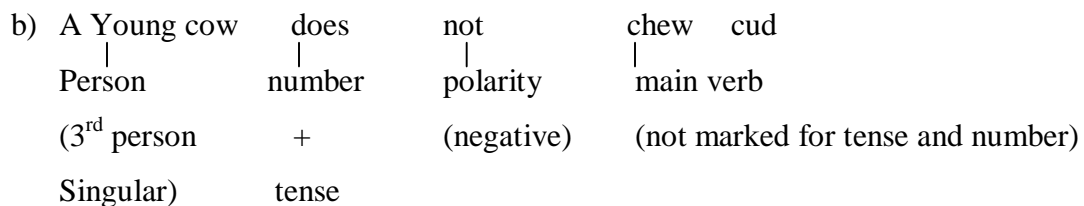
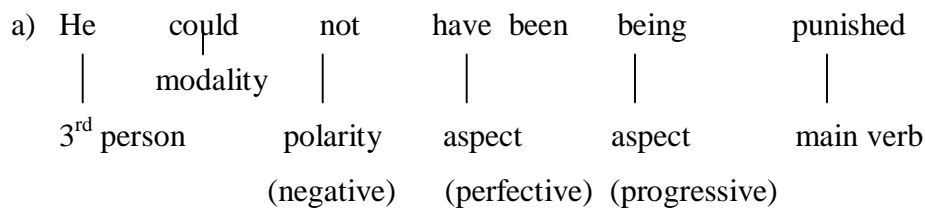
e.g sleep, come, go, eat, fat etc. These lexical verbs always appear last in the complex verb group.

Auxiliary verbs are very restricted set of verbs. This function is to modify the lexical verb functioning as head of their verb group. Auxiliaries can be divided into primary and model auxiliaries.

Primary auxiliaries include: be, have and do.

Examples of model auxiliaries are: can, could, may, might, shall, should, will, would, ought to, dare, used to.

The English verb group can have one or more auxiliaries e.g



The study realized that students made quite a number of errors in with the tense. Therefore a brief exposition of tense and other constituents of the verb group was necessary.

2.4.1Tense

Tense is an obligatory element in the verb group, and the Kenya Institute of Education (2005) reports that, “verbs cause the greatest problems to the students especially where tenses are concerned.”

In grammar, tense is a category that locates a situation in time to indicate when a situation takes place. Tense is the grammaticalisation of time reference, often using three basic categories of 'before now', that is the past, 'now' that is the present, and 'after now' that is the future. (Smith 1997)

Finite verbs in English are inflected to. A finite verb group is one that has a subject and contains a tensed verb, while a non-finite verb group is one that has no subject and is not marked for tense. Only one verb in a complex finite verb group can carry the tense and it is always the first verb in the group. If there are no auxiliary verbs, in a simple verb group, then it is the lexical or main verb which marks tense. Otherwise the first auxiliary verb in the group does so. This is illustrated in the following examples:

(a) They milked cows in the morning.

(past)

(b) they did not walk home yesterday.

(c) Gatwiri dances.

(present)

(d) Does she dances?

(present)

When the auxiliary verb carries the tense, the lexical verb is not marked for tense, otherwise an error results as this will be double marking of tense. For example

* He did not walked home.

* Does she dances?

Tenses do not always correspond to time. For example:

(a) Kinoti leaves tomorrow

(b) She has gone to fetch water.

In the above sentences the tense is in the present simple and present perfect respectively, but the notion of leaving in (a) is in the future, and the notion of going to town in (b) is in the past. This is an area that leads students to making such errors as:

1 * Kinoti leave tomorrow.

2 * She has gone to fetch water yesterday

These sentences are wrong, since in (i) 'John' as the subject of the sentence is in the category of third person singular and, therefore, there is no subject-verb agreement with the verb, 'leave'. In sentence (2) the present perfect 'has gone' does not refer to a definite time in the past, therefore the use of 'yesterday' renders the sentence erroneous.

2.4.2 Aspect

By way of defining aspect Quirk et al (1985:188) say that, "the term 'aspect' refers to a grammatical category which reflects the way in which the verb action is regarded or experienced with reference to time."

English has two aspectual constructions, namely the perfective and progressive. The form and use of each of these were tested in this study.

2.4.2.1 Perfective Aspect

The perfect aspect denotes the verb action as complete. The linguistic formula for past perfective form is:

have + past participle (V + -en)
= have + v n

The perfective aspect in a verb group is, therefore, conveyed by the primary auxiliary verb 'have' and the main verb in the past participle form.

If “have” is the first auxiliary verb in a complex verb group, therefore, it has to be marked for number and tense.

For example:

- (a) She has won the race.
- (b) They have won the race
- (c) Leah had left by morning.
- (d) she could not have left by morning..

Failure to observe this will lead to errors;

- (a) * She have won the race.
- (b) * They has won the race
- (c) * Leah could not had left by then.
- (d) * They could has left in the morning.

2.4.2.2 Progressive Aspect

The progressive aspect denotes the verb action as incomplete or in progress. The progressive aspect is conveyed by the form of the primary auxiliary verb ‘be’ and the progressive participle.

i.e Be + V____ing. For example:

Marti is working.

be + V + -ing.

It is otherwise called the durative or continuous aspect.

Just as the perfect auxiliary verb ‘have’ determines the form of the following verb, that is, V-en, so does the progressive auxiliary ‘be’ require, the following verb to adopt the ‘-ing’ form.

For example:

- | | | | | |
|-------|---------|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| (i) | was | walking | (past progressive) | |
| | be | + V + ing | | |
| (ii) | is | cooking | (Present progressive) | |
| | be | + V + ing | | |
| (iii) | would | be swimming | (past modal progressive) | |
| | Modal | be V + ing | | |
| (iv) | have | been | smoking | (present perfect progressive) |
| | Perfect | + be + V + ing | | |

Various errors might result from the progressive aspect form, be + V—ing, and its use. In verb group (i) and (ii) above ‘be’ is the first verb in the group and therefore it carries tense and number. Failure to mark this results in error. For example:

- (i) * I be walking along the beach.
- (ii) * Mary are cooking.

In verb group (iv) the auxiliary verb ‘be’ follows the perfective ‘have’ and so it should appear in its past participle form ‘been’. Using any other form of the verb ‘be’ would result in error. For example

- * have being cooking.
- * have is cooking.

2.4.3 Person and Number

In a complex verb group the form of the verb carrying tense is determined by, among other factors, the person and number of the subject. This is particularly so when the tense is in present tense, ie., verbs change their form in the present tense when the subject noun phrase is 'he', 'she' or 'it' or any full noun phrase that could be replaced by one of these pronouns.

Person is marked by the subject of the sentence, while number is marked by the first verb in a complex verb group.

For example

(a) He does not like mangoes
Person number + tense
(3rd person (singular)
singular)

(b) They do not like mangoes
Person number + tense
(3rd person (plural)
plural)

(c) I do not like mangoes
Person number + tense
(1st person (singular).
Singular)

The change of the verb form due to person and number can be illustrated using the verb 'write' and 'be'. The morphological process of 'be', is particularly a very frequent source of errors among the Kimeru learners of English in the selected Day sec. schools.

NUMBER	PERSON	WRITE	BE	BE
		Present	Present	Past
Singular	1st (I)	write	am	was
	2nd (you)	write	are	were
	3rd (he, she, it)	writes	is	was
Plural	1st (we)	write	are	were
	2nd (you)	write	are	were
	3rd (They)	write	are	were

The change of the form of the verb according to number and person of the subject noun phrase is called subject-verb agreement. It is one area in which students make many errors, such as:

- * The student have an examination tomorrow.
- * They was here yesterday.
- * You was expected to attend the meeting
- * The students has to attend the assembly.

2.4.4 Polarity

Polarity refers to the idea of positive and negative sentences. The negative marker or particle in the English verb group is 'not'. Essentially an affirmative (positive) form is used to express the validity or truth of a basic assertion, while a negative form expresses its falsity.(Biber 1998)

For example:

- (a) The cow is dead. (positive)
The cow is not dead. (negative)
- (b) I will beat you. (positive)
I will not beat you. (negative)

(c) We went for a picnic yesterday. (positive)

We did not go for a picnic yesterday (negative)

The negative particle is placed before the main verb in the sentence. Any attempt to position the negative marker anywhere else results in error. For example

(a) * The cow not is dead

(b) * I will beat you not

(C) * We did go not for a picnic yesterday.

If there is no auxiliary verb in the verb group (hence, a simple verb group), and the tense is marked by a lexical verb, an auxiliary verb has to be supplied in order to form a negative construction. The auxiliary verb for this function is 'do'. This auxiliary verb 'do' will then be marked for number and tense since it is the first verb element in the new verb group.

Therefore in sentences such as:

(a) Pauline cooks the food well.

(b) Pauline boiled the food.

The corresponding negative equivalents are:

(a) Pauline does not cook the food well.

(b) Pauline did not boil the food.

Any attempts to mark number and tense in the main verb of such negative verb group constructions results in the following erroneous constructions;

a) *Leah does not cooks the food well

b) * Leah did not boiled the food.

2.4.5 Modality

Modals are part of the auxiliary structure and are optional elements within the verb group. Quirk et al (1985:120) say “modal auxiliaries are so called because of their contribution of meaning in the area known as modality (including such concepts as volition, probability and obligation

The modals in English are; can, could, may, might, will, would, shall, should, must, need, dare, ought to, and used to. These help to distinguish three moods: indicative, imperative and subjunctive.

Since modals are part of the auxiliary structure they cannot be used as full verbs; that is to say that they cannot be the only verb in a sentence, but must be used with another verb to constitute a complete verb group. A verb group can only contain one modal as a main verb. For example an:

1.) I might win the race.

The modal ‘might’ is in the indicative mood expressing a probability of winning the race. In this statement the modal ‘might’ is modifying the main verb ‘win’ and the sentence would not be complete in structure and meaning without the main verb.

For example:

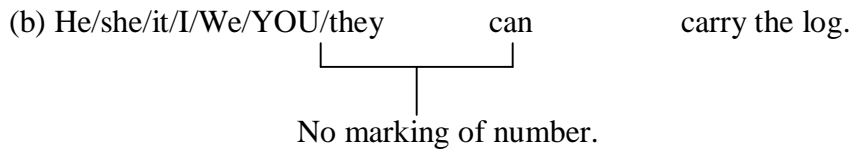
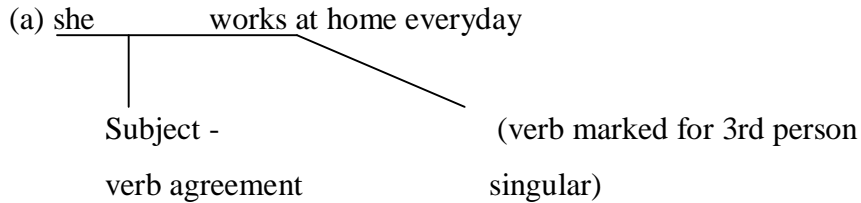
1) *I might the race

2)* we might the cow.

On the other hand we cannot add another modal in this verb group. For example:

- * I should might win the race

A further peculiarity of modals is that they are not marked for number. Therefore they do not exhibit subject — verb agreement. For example:



It would, therefore, be erroneous to say:

* He cans go home now.

2.4.6 Voice

Verb groups have two voices: the active and passive voice. The active voice is used most commonly since most statements' focus is put on the subject, which is the first element in the sentence. The voice of a verb describes the relationship between the action or state that the verb expresses and the participants identified by its arguments i.e., the subject or object. For example:

The boy kicked the ball. (active)

On the other hand the passive voice is used when focus is put on the object, thus placing it first in the sentence. The formula for passive construction is:

Be + v-en (+ 'by-phrase').

For example the above sentence can be passivised into:

The ball was kicked by the boy. (passive)

be + V-en + ('by - phrase').

However, there are restrictions in the use of the passive voice. First, only active, transitive verbs can appear in the passive voice. Since intransitive, stative and intensive verb groups do not take any direct objects, they do not have a passive counterpart. However, not all transitive verbs allow passivisation. There are some verbs which are exceptions to the rule.

Examples of these kinds of verbs are:

- (a) John reached the hospital in time (Intransitive)
- (b) I believe he is a magician (stative)
- (c) George is a mechanic (intensive)
- (d) John resembles his uncle (transitive)

Any attempts to passivise these sentences will result in erroneous sentences. For example:

- (a) * The hospital was reached in time by John.
- (b) * He is believed by me to be a magician.
- (c) * A mechanic is being George.
- (d) * John's uncle is resembled by him.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Research Design and Methodology

This study is classified as a case study of the errors in English verb group in written sentences of Kimeru learners of English. It is used two day Secondary Schools; Ntharene Day Secondary and Nyombayathi Day Secondary School. The data was collected from form three classes from the stated schools. Each class had thirty five learners. Making a total population of the learners under the study to be seventy.

3.1 Sampling

The target population in this study was form three students from Imenti South Sub-County. The choice of this population was to enable the researcher to deal with a homogeneous learners. This would be very crucial when analyzing the interlingual errors from other errors. The sample population was selected from the sub-county Day Secondary schools as explained in chapter one section 1.7.1.

3.2 Methods of data collection

Two methods of data collection were employed in this research. However, the basic source of data was by administration of service as grammatical set test items. The items focused on different features of the verb group, such as main verb, tense and voice.

3.2.1 Composition

The task required the learners to write a composition. This was a guided form of writing as it had the first sentence given to the learners. They were to answer the following questions

Write a composition beginning with the following words. “As I left home that Sunday afternoon, I never thought that my life would completely be changed

Composition was meant to provide a contextualized use of the items that feature in a verb group. The students would do this without being prompted, as done in the set items. It allowed the learner to use language freely. If the error made are similar to the ones observed in the structural tests the composition would serve to strengthen the position as observed in the test.

3.2.2 Structured set tests

The English verb group has many features. These include; the modals, tense aspect, number person, polarity and the main verb.

The main verb was tested it had regular and irregular verbs. The test had twenty test items. Ten items tested regular verbs where the other ten tested irregular verbs.

The tense, being an obligatory part of the verb, was divided into six parts. These were simple present, present participle simple past, past participle and future tense.

The verb modal auxiliaries and polarity was also tested.

3.2.2.1 Irregular and regular verbs

This was meant to test the learner's ability to construct the form of the simple past tense of regular and irregular verbs. Blank spaces were provided and the learners were expected to fill in with the correct form of the verbs provided in brackets . . . Items were used in this section.

- i) The principal (talk) for long during the school parade until some girls fainted
- ii) Ngina's watch..... (cost) a lot of money

The regular verbs test section tested the learner's ability to add (-ed) morpheme to form the simple past tense . The irregular verb tested the learner's ability to recognize the verb as irregular and apply the appropriate phonological and morphological process to form the past tense.

3.2.2.2 Tense

It had six sections. The aim of the question was to test the learner's ability to use and form simple past tense, simple present tense and other participle and future

i. Simple present

Ten items were administered to the learners. The test was on the student's ability to construct the correct form of the simple present tense e.g.

- i) Kembo..... (be) a charming girl
- ii) His father(believe) in respect for all young and old

ii. Present participle

The learners were provided with a pair of sentences and were asked to combine into one sentence using a present participle. The aim was to test the learner's ability to construct the correct form of the present participle, V + -ING. Five items were used to test this section

e.g

- i) The leader noticed there was a lot of dust
He got into his hired plane
- ii) The farmer bought the sheep
She vowed to feed it everyday

iii. Simple past tense

Eight test items were administered to the learners. The task was to choose the correct answer from the two words provided in brackets to fill in the blank spaces.

e.g

- i) Last year Kemboi (faints) in the field.
- ii) When the village chief (See/saw) he was very afraid

iv. Past perfect

Five test items were used in this section e.g.

- i) Ledema knew the movie well because she (have) watched it twice.
- ii) Kisumu – (have) changed its appearance completely before it became a city

The aim was to test the learner's ability to use "have + vn" correctly to form past perfect

v. Past participle

The test in this section was to test the learners' ability to construct the correct form of participle " V + En" and form the past participle appropriately. It had five test items e.g.

- i) The politician was warned of danger.
He escaped in time.
- ii) Kinoti was dissatisfied with his salary.
He resigned from his job

The learners were expected to combine the two sentences into one using a past participle

vi. Future

10 test items were used. . The learners were to choose the choices given. e.g.

- i) Gatwiri on Friday
 - a) Shall be travel (b) will travel (c) shall travel (d) travels
- ii) The Olympic team – next month for U.S.A
 - (a) Shall leaves (b) is leaving (c) will leaves (d) are to be leaving

The task was to choose the correct item to express the future time. The aim was to use will or shall to express future time, in the second part of the test. e.g.

- i) John prepare breakfast tomorrow
- ii) We.....provide Peter with writing materials.

It was noticed that the various blank space had more than one answer , especially on the choice between will and shall. Any guess work could still land a learner into correct answer . Therefore this section was left out of the analyses.

3.2.2.3 Voice

The learners were expected to identify the voice into which a sentence was , and then change into passive or active as appropriate.

e.g.

- i) A cat killed a rat
- ii) Peter's family bought him a beautiful car upon his graduation

To passivize is to transform a sentence from active to passive the entire sentences is affected and not just the verb group.

There is subject - object inversion and the introduction of a prepositional phrase. This was beyond the scope of our analysis; therefore it was excluded in the main analysis.

1. A rat was killed by a cat.
2. Peter was bought a beautiful car by his family upon his graduation.

3.2.2.4 Modal auxiliaries

The use of modal had five test items. The students had to choose from the choices provided. The aim of the question was to choose from the choices provided. The aim of the question was to find out whether the students could express different mood and attitude. Some of the auxiliaries to be used were; could, can, may, might, shall, will, should, must, and ought to.

Like the future tense, this section was excluded. Most of the blank spaces had more than one correct choice; therefore analysis of this section would not give us the correct picture of the learners' errors.

3.2.2.5 Polarity

The students were required to identify the negative and positive sentences. They were required to change the positive sentences into negative most student performed very well. The analysis was left out as it was hardly a problematic area.

3.3 Administration of the test and composition

The data collection took a space of one month. The research sought permission from the principals of Nyombayathi and Ntharene Day Secondary School. The permission to administer the tests was granted. It was left to the departmental heads to organize how and when to give the tests. After consulting with the head of department it was agreed that Saturdays would be the most appropriate. This was by reason of the length of administration e.g., the composition was to be given one and half hours. Therefore instead of making arrangement to have these instead of making

arrangement to have three forty minutes lessons, Saturday was proposed to be the most appropriate.

With the researcher being a teacher in one of the two schools, special arrangement was done for other school that was Nyombayathi day secondary school.

During the administration of structured test and the composition, both students and teachers were extremely cooperative.

The composition was given on a different Saturday, a week after the grammatical test was then administered.

3.4 Method of data analysis

After the learners had completed their tasks, all the scripts were collected for analysis. The analysis was done in terms of seventy students as one group.

3.4.1 Composition

The composition was read carefully and the general construction errors identified. The sentences which contained errors were identified and recorded down. Errors of the verb group were further discriminated from the general erroneous constructions. The identification of errors was determined by the deviations from the target language norms. This was done by comparing what the learners said and what they ought to have produced. This was in line with Corder and Allen 1974 who said,

“plausible reconstruction of what the learners intended to say in order to arrive at plausible interpretation of the same was used” (Corder and Allen (1974)

As cited in chapter one section 1.7 the errors collected from the composition were used to ascertain the fact that learners made similar errors as made in the structured set of tests. No further analysis was done to these errors as main source of data; the structured set test.

3.4.2 The structured set test items

Using an already prepared marking scheme the tests were marked with items being marked either correct or wrong. The number of both correct and wrong responses for each item of verb group was counted. This was done to help in analyzing the performance of each item as done in analyzing the performance of item as done by the seventy learners.

The study treated the entire seventy learners as one group therefore, the mean percentage score for all the seventy learners in each of the verb group features was calculated. To do this, each student's mark for each verb group features was converted into a percentage score, then added up all the learners' marks and divided the total by seventy.

Each item in the verb group had a table drawn and analyzed of the errors in regard to which rules were broken, disregarded, misused was then done.

Due to enormity of the errors found, the mean percentage helped identify areas of serious deviation and therefore analysis was done on them. That is the areas where the student performed more poorly was given further attention by analyzing the errors e.g. . The irregular verb and past participles were poorly performed with 43% and 16.8% correct items respectively.

Explanation of causes of errors was done in two categories. These were over generalization of rules and incomplete application of the Target Language rules. In order to determine the error category in which students made most errors percentage of errors attributable to a particular error category in each verb group feature was calculated. A frequency count of the items marked wrong in the verb group feature which could be attributed to a particular error category and the dividing total number of errors in the verb feature and multiplying this by 100 to get the percentage.

By so doing, we would discover the error category that contributed most error. It was hypothesized that overgeneralization was one of the causes errors among the Kimeru learner of English.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

The focus of the study was to investigate the errors in the verb group as they feature in the interlanguage (IL) of the form three class learners in two day secondary schools in Imenti South district. The study described errors of the verb group which were found to be most problematic. To arrive at this, an analysis of general performance of the structured test was done. The cited errors were described. Finally the possible causes of errors were done.

4.1 Data Analysis

The performance of each test was analyzed. The structured test was used as the primary source of erroneous constructions. The composition was used to identify more examples which would strengthen the findings in the structured set of questions.

The basic data of analysis was the structured test. The performance of the students in each of the tested verb group features was analyzed. The purpose of the preliminary analysis was to find out the general performance of the students in various features. Since the tests covered a wide scope of the verb group, the preliminary analysis was used to find out the trend of performance in each of the features

4.1.1 Regular and irregular verbs

In this section, twenty items were used. Ten items tested the past-tense form of irregular verbs and the other ten items tested the regular verbs.

4.1.1.1 Irregular verbs

The performance in irregular verbs was 42.3%. As Table 4.1 shows, the learners appeared to have had more problems forming the past tense of irregular verbs was noted as a big problem with analysis.

Table 4.1 Results of performance in irregular verbs

Item	Correct	Wrong
1.	29	41
2.	28	42
3.	26	44
4.	30	30
5.	32	38
6.	27	43
7.	29	41
8.	28	42
9.	28	42
10.	31	39

4.1.1.2 Regular Verbs

The learners scored a mean of 86.5%. Most learners did not have major difficulties in this area, relative to past tense of irregular verbs. The table 4.2. shows the results of the performance in regular verbs.

Table. 4.2: Results of the performance of regular verbs

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	61	09
2	60	10
3	63	7
4	58	12
5	59	11
6	62	08
7	59	11
8	61	09
9	62	08
10	58	12

4.1.2 Tense

Tense is an obligatory part of the verb group. It is used to show the time of action or state expressed by the verb. It is quite wide; therefore the tense and its related features were divided into six parts. These were:

- i. Simple Present
- ii. Present participle
- iii. Simple past
- iv. Past Perfect
- v. Past Participle
- vi. Future Tense

4.1.2.1 Simple Present tense

10 test items were administered to the learners. The mean % of the score was 62.2% with such % it was a difficult area, and therefore not included in the analysis. Some of the errors made by the learners were:

- (i) Kembo is be a charming girl
- (ii) He father believe in respect for all; young and old.
- (iii) The family lead a strict but happy life

Table 4.3 Results of the performance of simple present tense

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	44	26
2	43	27
3	43	27
4	45	25
5	42	28
6	41	29
7	45	25
8	44	26
9	46	24
10	42	28

4.1.2.2 Present participle

The test had ten items. The mean % score was 20.1%. With such a low score, the section was identified as a problem area

Fig. 4.4 performance in present participle

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	14	54
2	13	54
3	16	59
4	11	60
5	10	55
6	15	60
7	10	59
8	11	61
9	09	61
10	11	59

4.1.2.3 Simple past

8 test items were administered to the students. The details are summarized in table 4.5.

The mean percentage was 80.7%. The question was not problematic to the learners.

Some of the errors made by learners included:

- i. * Last year Kembo faints on the field
- ii. * When the village chief see charms he was very afraid
- iii. * The male servant vomits painfully

The correct forms should have been:

- i. Last year, Kemboi fainted on the race tract
- ii. When the village chief saw the charms, he was very afraid
- iii. The male servant vomited painfully

Table. 4.5 Results of performance in simple past

Item	Correct	Wrong
1.	57	13
2	58	12
3	56	14
4	52	18
5	60	10
6	53	17
7	61	09
8	54	16

4.1.2.4 Past Perfect

Table .4.6 Results of performance in past perfect tense

It had five test items, and the table 4.6 below shows the performance

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	15	53
2	16	54
3	13	57
4	17	53
5	12	58

The percentage mean score was 21.5%. The learners found the past perfect very challenging, therefore it was discussed further in this project.

4.1.2.5 Past participle

5 items were used to test the learners. This was the worst performed test item. The mean percentage score was 16.8%. These errors were analyzed in the subsequent sections.

Table4.7 Results of performance in past participle

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	11	59
2	13	57
3	12	58
4	10	60
5	14	56

4.1.3 Voice

The process of passivisation affects the sentence in many ways and not just the verb group only. There is a change in a subject- object insertion and an introduction of the

prepositioned phrase. Therefore, it is not a good test of tense. For this reason, it was left out of the most analysis. Despite this, the students have performed quite well. The items were used in this section. The students did quite well. The mean % score was 69.5%

Table 4.8 Results of performance in passive voice

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	48	12
2	49	11
3	50	10
4	46	14
5	51	09
6	48	12
7	47	13
8	52	08
9	49	11
10	47	13

4.1.4 Modal Auxiliaries

In these sections, modals were provided and the learners were expected to make an appropriate choice. This question was a bit confusing since most items had more than one correct response. This was because modal auxiliaries are used to express attitudes, moods, possibilities etc. The result of the performance was very high. 96% since most choices could fit into the blank space, any multiple choices was correct. This is section was excluded from analysis because it would not have be a reliable measure of the students' performance.

4.1.5 Polarity

A total of ten items were given to the learners. The mean % was at 80.23%.

It tested the learners' ability to identify a positive sentence and change it into negative. To do so, the student had to use basic negative transformation formula, by adding a negative particle "not". It is placed before the main verb in the sentence.

Table 4.9 Performance in polarity

Item	Correct	Wrong
1	56	14
2	58	12
3	55	15
4	53	17
5	57	13
6	56	14
7	60	10
8	52	18
9	54	16
10	58	12

4.2 Analysis of Past Tense Errors

This section aims at discussing the problematic areas of the verb group as seen from the students' response to the test items. Tense and tense related features of the verb group error were more important than errors in other verb group features. Due to their enormity, it was not possible to analysis all the errors. Besides, some features of the verb group did not appear very problematic. The areas that were poorly performed were simple past tense and past tense related features such as past perfect and past participle.

4.2.1 Simple Past Tense Forms

The simple past tense has the regular and irregular features of past tense. Few errors were realized in the regular forms of past tense, where more errors were found in the constructions with irregular verbs past tense.

4.2.1.1 Regular Verbs

As discussed in chapter 2, section 2.1.1.1, regular verbs undergo various morphological and phonological conditioning for form their past tense. Going by the performance of the test items, this was an area with least problems to the learners. The mean percentage % score was 90.36%, with only 39 errors observed, e.g.

1. * The principal talks during the school parade, until two girls fainted

2. * The cow stopped chewing and as he milks it for two hours
3. * When the water calms down, Peter went across the river
4. * The layers kick the referee after he made a wrong call
5. * When Muthoni finish her work she checked the full stops carefully
6. * The teachers seem confidence about resolution of their salary dispute with the government.

From the above sentences, two problems can be identified. The students either used the wrong form of the verb or failed to inflect the base form, v + ed, to mark past forms. Sentences 1, 2 and 3, the students used wrong forms of the verbs while sentence 4, 5, and 6 they failed to inflect the base form with v + ed.

The correct sentences should have been

- 1a The principal talked for long during the school parade until some girls fainted
- 2a The cow stopped chewing as he milked it for a long time.
- 3a When the water calmed down Peter went across the river.
- 4a The players kicked the referee when he made a disputed call.
- 5a When Muthoni finished her work, she checked the spelling mistakes well.
- 6a The teachers seemed confident about the resolution of their salary dispute with the government.

Sentence 6 is wrong in the context that the students were to use past simple and not simple present.

4.2.1.2 Irregular verbs

The term irregular is applied to verbs which do not form their past tense and past participles according to the rules used in regular verb. This is the inflection of the base with {-ed}. The past tense of irregular verbs cannot be predicted from the base as is the case with regular verbs – hence the term irregular. These verbs undergo some internal morphological processes that are unique to particular verbs. Irregular verbs therefore fall into various categories. As quoted from www.english.com by Rebecca.

Category 1

In this group, irregular verbs, the past tense and past participle forms are the same. At the base

e.g.

<u>Base</u>	<u>Simple past</u>	<u>Past participle</u>
Cut	cut	cut
Put	put	put
Hurt	hurt	hurt
Bid	bid	bid
Hit	hit	hit
Put	put	put

Category 2.

The irregular verbs past participle and past simple are the similar different from the base

<u>Base</u>	<u>Simple Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
Leave	left	left
Lend	lent	lent
Hear	heard	heard
Sit	sat	sat
Get	got	got

Category 3.

In this group, the simple past tense and the past participle are different from each other and from the base

<u>Base</u>	<u>Simple Past</u>	<u>Past Participle</u>
Give	gave	given
Drive	drove	driven
Write	wrote	written
Do	did	done

Category 4.

Some irregular verbs undergo vowel change and vowel insertion or deletion in their base form while form the simple past

E.g.	Awake	-	awoke
	Become	-	became
	Wind	-	would
	Break	-	broke

4.2.1.3 Irregular Verbs

Performance in the sub-test

Table 4.2 presents the performance in irregular verbs as poor. The mean percentage score was 42.8. The 70 learners who took the test made 298 errors from the 10 items that were administered. The students made the errors due to the following:

- 1) Use of Regular Past tense formation rules
 - 2) Addition of {ed} to irregular verbs already in the past
 - 3) Use of simple present and base forms instead of past
 - 4) tense form
 - 5) Wrong vowel insertion and vowel change
- (i) Use of Regular Past Tense formation Rules

This type of error had the highest frequency that totaled 147 errors which are 35.6% of the total number of irregular verbs errors could be associated with this type of error.

Some of the errors are:

7. * Ngina's watch costed a lot of money
8. * I forgeted how much it was worth
9. * Mr. Ochieng' haved a new can before he got promoted
10. * What was meaned by that word?
11. * Mrs. Muli knowed the problem
12. * The bus leaved very early in the morning on Friday
13. * Ruth sitted for her exam in 2013

In the sentences 7, 8, 9,10,11,12 and13, the students used rule of the past tense formation in regular verb. They added {-ed} the base, thereby coming up with an erroneous construction.

The correct sentences should be:-

- 7a Ngina's watch cost a lot of money
- 8a I forgot how much it was worth.
- 9a Mr. Ochieng' had a new car before he got promoted
- 10a What was meant by that word?
- 11a Mrs. Muli knew the source of the problem
- 12a The bus left very early in the morning on Friday
- 13a Ruth set for her exams in 2013.

(ii) **Addition on{-ed} to irregular verbs already in Past form**
examples are:

- 14 *I forgoted how much it was worth
- 15 * The bus lefted very early in the morning
- 16 * What was meanted by that word?
- 17. * Ruth sated for her exams in 2013
- 18 * The rally ace droved the vehicle very fast
- 19 * The cleaners swepted the class in the morning
- 20 * Since the boys woked up late, they missed the bus

These types of errors had a frequency count of 51 from 16.3% the total errors in irregular verbs. The students had correctly constructed the irregular verb but added the regular past tense morpheme {-ed}, hence making it incorrect. The correct forms are given below:

- 14a I forgot how much it was worth.
- 15a the bus left very early in the morning.
- 16a What was meant by that word?
- 17a Ruth sat for her exams in 2013.

- 18a The rally ace drove the vehicle very fast.
 19a The cleaners swept the class in the morning.
 20a Since the boys woke up late, they missed the bus.

iii Use of simple present and base forms instead of past tense forms

This type of error totaled 83 from the irregular verb errors

e.g.

- 21 * I forgets how much it was worse
 22 * Mr. Ochieng' haves a new car before he got promoted
 23 * What was means by that word?
 24 * The bus leaves very early in the morning
 25 * Mrs. Muli knows the source of the problem
 26 * The cleaners sweep the class in the morning
 27 * Since the boys wake up late, they missed the bus

The learners have used the simple present form in place of simple past form; therefore resulting in erroneous constructions. The correct forms should have been:-

- 21a I forgot how much it was worth
 22a Mr. Ochieng' had a new car before he got promoted
 23a What was meant by that word?

Sentences 24, 25 and 26, are accepted in their simple present tense. They are however wrong because the learners did not follow the instructions that required the said sentences to be in simple past tense.

The correct sentences should have been:

- 24a Mrs. Muli knew the source of the problem
 25a The cleaners swept the class in the morning
 26a The bus left very early in the morning.

The learners may have left the verbs in their base form due to ignorance of the irregular verbs simple past tense forms or they used the base form to substitute the simple past the

form. Nevertheless, the results were erroneous constructions. The correct construction should have been,

27a Since the boys woke up late, they missed the bus.

i.v. Wrong vowel Change and insertion

In the sentences below, the learners appear to have knowledge of the process of vowel change and vowel insertion in irregular. Verbs past tense formation; however, they changed or inserted wrongly, resulting to erroneous sentence, e.g.

- 28 * Ngina's watch cast a lot of money
- 29 * The rally ace drauve the vehicle very fast
- 30 * The cleaners swip the class in the morning
- 31 * I forget how much it was worth

The correct constructions are:

- 28a Ngina's watch cost a lot of money
- 28a The rally ace drove the vehicle very fast
- 30a The cleaners swept the class in the morning
- 31a I forgot how much it was worth

4.2.2 Perfect tense

The perfect is a verb form that indicates an action or a circumstance occurred earlier than the time under consideration, often focusing attention on the resulting state rather than the occurrence itself e.g.

I have made dinner.

In sentence 1 above, although this gives information about a prior action,(my making dinner), the focus is likely to be on the present consequences of action(the fact that the dinner is now ready)

The verb ‘have’ is used as a lexical word and as an auxiliary verb. When used as an auxiliary verb, it combines with a past participle to form a past perfect. i.e.

Have +past participle → past tense

The auxiliary ‘have’ is marked for a person, number and tense.

4.2.2.1 Past Perfect

It expresses the idea that something occurred before another action in the past. It can also show that something happened before a specific time in the past. The term aspect reflects the way in which the verb action is experienced with respect to time. There are two aspects in English: perfective and progressive aspect.

The perfective aspect denotes a complete action. It is conveyed by the primary auxiliary verb ‘have’. The verb that follows have in a perfective construction always appears in its non –finite perfective form.

The test items administered to the students tests their ability to construct the correct form of primary auxiliary verb ‘have’ and the construction of the form of the past participle of the main verb. There were 272 errors with the percentage mean score at 21.50%. This performance was judged as poor. The following were the types of errors that could describe the features found in the erroneous constructions.

i. Use of wrong tense of perfective auxiliary verb ‘have’

Of the 350 sentences presented to the students, this type of error had a frequently count of 72 errors which translated to 25.7% of all the perfective errors.

Some of the erroneous sentences are

32 * Ledama knew the movie well because she have watched it twice.

33 * Kisumu has changed its appearance completely before it become a city.

34* Kagwiria has known Mutiso for a long time before it became a city.

35* they have done their homework by the time the party started.

The past perfective verb 'have' was used in the sentences 42-45, but in the wrong tense. The correct form of 'have' is 'had' in the past perfect; therefore the resulting constructions were wrong. The correct sentences should have been:

32(a) Ledama knew the movie well because she had watched it twice.

33 (a) Kisumu had changed its appearance completely before it became a city.

34 a) Kagwiria had known Mutiso for a long time before it became a city.

35(a) They had done their homework by the time the party started.

ii. Omission of past perfect auxiliary verb 'have'

This type of errors had a total of 48 errors. This accounted for 18% of the total errors of the past perfect tense.

In this type of error, the learner completely omitted the auxiliary 'have' which is an obligatory element in the construction of the perfect tense. As a result all the sentences constructed in this order were wrong. For example

36 * Kisumu was changed its appearance completely before it become a city.

37 * Ledama knew the movie well because she watched it twice.

38*The game was going on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

The correct form of constructions should be;

36 (a) Kisumu had changed its appearance completely before it became a city.

37 (a) Ledama knew the movie well because she had watched it twice.

38(a) The game had been going on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

iii. Use of wrong form of verb after the auxiliary ; ‘have’

This type of error had a frequency count of 59 errors. This represents about 20% of the errors made in the past perfective tense.

39* Kagwiria had knew Mutiso for a long time before the announced their engagement.

40* Ledama knew the movie well because she had been watched it twice.

41* Kisumu had being changed its appearance completely before it become a city.

42* The game had went on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

The above constructions are erroneous because the auxiliary ‘have’ in its past tense is followed by a wrong verb. It must be followed by a verb in its past participle form. That is

Had+ past participle

The past participle form is V+En while irregular verbs take the {-en} morpheme to form past participle and vary their forms, regular verb retain their {-ed} form. Therefore, in sentence 34 the learner used the simple past ‘knew’ after a correct auxiliary ‘have’, which was an error, instead of using the correct past participle;

Know+en → known

The correct form should have been,

49(a) Kagwiria had known Mutiso for a long time before the announced their engagement.

40(a) Ledama knew the movie well because she had watched it twice.

41(a) Kisumu had changed its appearance completely before it become a city.

42(a) The game had gone on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

Use of other form to substitute the past participle form.

The following were some of the erroneous constructions in this category of errors.

43* Kisumu changed its appearance completely before it become a city.

44* Ledama knew the movie well because she watched it twice.

45* The game went on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

This type of error had a frequency count of 78% errors which translated to 29.41% of the errors in the past perfect form. Sentences 53, 54, and 55 used the simple past tense, 'changed', 'watched' and 'went' to substitute the past perfect form. 56* The game will go on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

In the above sentence, the learners used 'will' a future marker, to substitute for 'had gone', therefore making the sentence wrong. The following should have been the correct constructions.

43(a) Kisumu had changed its appearance completely before it became a city.

44(a) Ledama knew the movie well because she had watched it twice.

45(a),56(a) The game had gone on for thirty minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones.

4.3 Past Participle

A past participle indicates past or completed action. It is often called 'ed' form as it is formed by adding {-d or -ed} to the base of regular verbs. It is formed in various other ways for irregular verbs. A past participle is non-finite verb form. It is represented as the (-en) form of a verb. The test in this tense was the learners' ability to construct and use the 'V+En' form correctly. A total of 291 errors were realized in this feature. The learners generally did not use the past participle as instructed.

The errors observed can be described in the following types:

- i. Use of simple present tense and simple past tense to substitute past participle
- ii. Use of conjunctions to combine the sentence instead of past participle
- iii. Use of present participle to substitute the past participle

a) Use of simple present and simple past tense to substitute past participle

The frequency count of this type of error was 86 which had 29.5% of the total error in the past participle question. Some of the erroneous constructions are:

46* the police arrests the imposer and took him to the police station.

47* the politician escapes in time after he was warned.

48* Girls are afraid of darkness and asks Peter to accompany them to the village.

In sentences 46 and 47 the students used a simple present and simple past tense instead of past participle. In sentence 48, the learners used simple present only.

The correct sentences should have been:

46(a) Arrested by the police, the imposer was taken to the police station.

47(a) warned of danger, the politician escaped in time.

48(a) Afraid of darkness, the girls asked peter to accompany them to the village.

b) Use of conjunctions to combine sentences instead of the past participle

The total errors of this type were 94 which were 31.25% of the past participle errors. The learners got the sentences wrong because they failed to follow instructions. Some of the sentences which were wrongly constructed are:

49* The man was tired due to a long trek so he rested under a leafy tree and fell asleep.

50* The police arrested the impostor and he was taken to the police station.

51* The politician was warned of danger but he escaped in time.

52* Kinoti was dissatisfied with his salary therefore he resigned from his job.

Sentences 49 and 52 are acceptable but in the light of the student's instructions they are deemed erroneous sentences. 51 used a conjunction which marks a contrast, therefore making it unacceptable in any contest. The correct sentences should have been:

49(a) Tired due to a long trek, the man rested under a tree and fell asleep.

50(a) Arrested by the police, the impostor was taken to the police station.

51(a) Warned of danger, the politician escaped in time.

c) Use of present participle to substitute past participle

This type of error was the most common in this section. It had a percentage mean of 37.8%. The actual errors were 109. Some of the erroneous constructions are:

52* arresting the impostor the police took him to the police station.

53* warning the politician of danger, he escaped in time.

54* resting under a leafy tree, the man was tired due to long trek fell asleep.

Sentence 52 is acceptable, but in the context of the students' instructions, it is judged as wrong. The learners were to use past participle and not present. Hence all the above sentences were wrong. The correct sentences are:

52(a) Arrested by the police, the impostor was taken to the police station.

53(a) Warned of danger the politician escaped in time

54(a) Tired due to long trek, the man rested under a leafy tree and fell asleep.

4.4 Error Categories

- i. Interlingual error
- ii. Intralingual errors
- iii. Overgeneralization
- iv. Incomplete application of rules

4.4.1 Categorization of Errors

This study set out to investigate the difficulty areas in English verb group as used by the Kimeru Learners of English. As noted, the tense related features emerged as the most difficult areas. It is in these sections that the students made most errors. In this section, we shall endeavor to explain the possible causes of these errors. This is done at linguistic and psycholinguistic theoretical positions. The linguistic theories help to explain how the learner has malformed or has had an erroneous constructions.

Psycholinguistic theories explain why the sentences are malformed. An error may be caused by many reasons therefore it is difficult to say the actual cause of an error.

Interlingual and intralingual errors were realized.

4.4.1.1 Interlingual Errors

These are errors which result due to first language's interference. The behaviorist theory of language acquisition stated that language was a set habit formation to conform with the

target language. In learning new habits, it is believed that the old habits interfere with the learning of the target language. This interference was seen as a source of many errors. Some of these errors featured prominently in compositions, which gave students unrestricted opportunity to construct their own sentences. Some of these sentences are:

*55 I heard very hungry

*56 the terrible smell entered the hotel from the toilet

*57 the cups came and the guests were served

The sentences above (55-57) are erroneous constructions. They are a direct translation, and reflect that the speakers are kimeru speakers. The correct sentences should be:

55. I felt hungry.

56. The terrible smell spread to the hotel from the toilets.

57. The cups were brought and the guests were served.

4.4.1.2 Intralingual Errors

The origin of intralingual errors is found within the structure of the target language itself. Richard (1974) defines intralingual errors as those errors which reflect the general characteristics of rule learning, such as faulty generalization, incomplete applications of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply.

4.4.1.3 Overgeneralization of Rule

The learner tends to over-generalize the use of already internalized rules of T.L. Wrong constructions result when rules of target language are used in the wrong linguistic context. For example, a rule applies to a class of linguistic items such as simple present tense. In English, to derive simple past tense from simple present, an {-ed} morpheme is added. However, these linguistic items have exceptions to this rule. Therefore it would be erroneous to have go+ed →goed, see+ed →seed, come+ed →omed.

This is because the verbs 'come', 'go' and 'see' are irregular verbs, whenever there are both regular and irregular forms constructions in a language, learner apply the rule used

to produce the regular ones to those that are irregular resulting to errors of generalization Burt (1982) .

This type of errors was observed in all the items tested and the written composition. E.g

*58 The students standed around the classroom during that rainy day.

*59 The teacher speaked to the boys in the afternoon.

In sentences 58 and 58, there was generalization of the rule of simple past tense formation in verbs to irregular verbs.

The correct constructions would have been:

58(a) The students stood around the classroom during the rainy day.

59(a) The teacher spoke to the boys in the afternoon.

Overgeneralization or system of simplification is a type of errors found when the writer learns rule or pattern in the target language; he then assumes that the rule or pattern operates without exception. Once the writer learns a set of rules, he overuses one form in the set and under use the other (scovel 2001).

4.4.1.4 Incomplete Application of Rules

The errors found in this category are as a result of partial use if the formation rules. This is unlike overgeneralization that tends to over use the rule. E.g.

*60 the students stode around the classroom during that rainy day.

*61 the teacher spake to the students in the afternoon.

In sentences 60 and 61 the learners appear to be aware of the past tense formation rule in irregular verbs, yet there is a partial application because the vowels are wroggly placed, therefore resulting to erroneous constructions. The correct constructions should have been as sentences (58a) and (59a) above.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

The focus of this study was to analyze the errors in the English verb group journal in the sentences written by learners in form three classes in some selected day, see schools in the Imenti South Sub County. The research question which the study sought to answer was:

- (i) What are the English verb group errors in Kimeru learners of English inter languages?
- (ii) What are the likely causes of those errors?

The study had hypothesized that, indeed there are errors in the (I.L) interlanguage of (K.I.E) Kimeru learners of English. The nature of these errors made is intralingual and interlingual and the possible causes could be languages transfer and overgeneralization.

5.1 Summary of findings

The verb groups is an obligatory and central feature of a sentence if not well mastered learners will inevitably construct erroneous sentences.

5.1.1 Possible causes of error

An explanation of possible causes was done in regard to intralingual and interlingual error causes. This was discussed in chapter 4 section 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.1.2

5.1.1.1 Interlingual causes of errors

These errors were found in the composition since the composition gave the learners an unrestricted opportunity to construct language was clearly observed.

- (i) *I heard very hungry
- (ii) *The terrible smell entered the hotel from the toilet.

This appears to be a direct translation from Kimeru language as the learner makes effort to communicate in English. The correct construction should have been:

- (i) I felt very hungry.
- (ii) The terrible smell spread to the hotel from the toilets.

This served to confirm the hypothesis that some errors made in the verb group was as a result of mother tongue interference and hence the interlingual error.

5.1.1.2 Intralingual errors

These errors were discussed in two levels only. There were overgeneralized and incomplete applications of rules. There were mainly found in the structured task items. They also featured in composition questions.

However after calculating the percentage mean, it was found that most errors were as a result of overgeneralization. For example:

- (i) The students **standed** around the classroom during that rainy day.
- (ii) The leader **speaked** to the boys in the afternoon.

The learners tended to simply the system of past tense. They then assume that the rules operated without exception.

5.2 Pedagogic implication of the findings

In a teaching learning situation identification and description of errors is important to those involved in the policy making, developing resource materials and these in charge of implementation.

- (i) Curriculum developers, test book writers and teachers will be able to apportion time, emphasize and material relative to areas deemed to be difficult for learners.

For example, irregular past tense errors features could be given more space and time.

- (ii) More correction of actual errors and drill may not achieve much. Learners must be taught that there are sub classes within the verb group features which are not covered by generalized rules. E.g. the case of regular and irregular past tense formation. It is therefore important to examine and modify the teaching techniques and presentation of learning items.
- (iii) Learners will be in a better position to correct their own errors if they are provided with learning materials with an explicit mechanism in them to motivate the student to test the generalized rules and identify their shortcomings.
- (iv) Once a teacher understands the source and nature of errors, he will view them as a vital condition for learning and not as sin to be banished. This will make learning more rewarding and meaningful.
- (v) The errors made by the learners are very important. They provide feedback to the teachers. It is on the basis of the information the teacher gets from the error made by his learners that he could vary his teaching methods, pace of progress and material to use among others. Therefore a teacher should be able to understand the psychological reasons behind the occurrence of errors besides detecting and describing errors unjustly.

5.3 Recommendations for further study

The focus of the study was on the verb group error in an English sentence. A few areas on tense were explored. More studies could be considered on the following:

- (i) A study on other syntactic constituents of a sentence such as non-phrase, prepositional phrase or adjectival phrase.
- (ii) Students also make errors in the spoken language. A study should be carried out to find out if similar observations could be realized.
- (iii) The population under this study was from Imenti South Sub County. Same study could be done in a cosmopolitan area, say an urban area to find out if the results would be similar.

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APPENDIX

Instructions;

(i) Answer all the questions

(ii) The composition to be written on a separate foolscape

Fill in the blank spaces in the following sentence changing the verb in brackets into their simple past

1. Ngina's watch(cost) a lot of money
2. I.....(forgot) how much it was worth
3. Mr. Ochieng'.....(have) a new car before he was promoted
4. What is.....(mean) by that word?
5. Mrs. Muli(know) the source of .problem
6. The bus(leave) very early in t he morning on Friday
7. Ruth(sit) for exams in 2013
8. The girl.....(cry) when her dress was soiled
9. We (get) better results than Leruka Girls Secondary
10. The mason.....(build) the house for two months

Choose the correct alternative

1. The principal(talks/talked) during the parade until two girls fainted
2. The cow stopped chewing as he(milk /milked) for a long time
3. When the water(calms /calmed) down Peter went across the river
4. The players (kick/kicked) the referees after he made a wrong call.
5. The teacher(seemed /seem)confidence about resolution in the salary dispute
6. When Muthoni(finishes /finished) her work , she checked the full stops carefully.
7. The teacher(spent /spends) a lot of time in class yesterday
8. All the deer (cross /crossed) the mare river safely.

9. The game.....(be go) on for 30 minutes before the unruly fans started throwing stones
10. All the candidates were(ask) not to carry cell phones into the exams room.

Fill In the Blanks with the Correct Word in Brackets (5) Questions)

1. Ledema knew the movie well because she (have) watched it twice
2. Kisumu(change)its appearance completely before it became a city.
3. Kagwiria (Know) Mutiso for a long time before they announced the engagement.
4. They(do) their homework by the time the party started
5. The game(be go) on for 30 minutes before the unrolling fans started throwing stones

Combine the follow two sentences into one use a past participle

1. The man was tired due to a long trek he rested under a leafy tree and feels asleep.
2. The police arrested the imposter. He was taken to the police station.
3. The politician was warned of danger. He escaped in time
4. The girls were afraid of darkness. They asked peter to accompany them to the village.
5. Kinoti was dissatisfied with his salary. He resigned from her job.

Choose the correct alternative and fill in the blank

1. Gatwiri.....on Friday

a) Shall be revel	c) Will travel
b) Shall travel	d) Travel
2. The Olympic team..... next month for U.S.A

a) Shall leaves	b) Is leaving
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6. He cautioned them against cutting trees
7. Rudisha won the race. The fans ran after him.
8. The workers realized the factory had closed. They started to riot.

Fill in the blank spaces with the correct word in blanket in the its simples past tense

1. Last year Kemboi.....(faint) on the field.
2. When the village chief.....(see) the charms he was very afraid.
3. The male servant..... (vomit) painfully
4. After three o'clock the cock.....(keep) crawling.
5. The visitors..... (stand) at the gate for two hours
6. John.....(give) peter his pair of shoes.
7. The girls..... cut their clothes well during the home science lesson
8. We..... (shut) the entrance of the cow shed at 7:oclock every day.

POLARITY

Rewrite the following sentences into negative or positive form as appropriate.

1. A cat killed a rat
2. Ndumba has won a car
3. We like playing scrabble.
4. The weather is not fair today.
5. All books are not white in colour.
6. Winner is not a lair.
7. He slapped his wife yesterday.
8. They did not drink yesterday.
9. Mzee Ojwang, found his own jokes strange.
10. They lost trier dog.

Fill the blank space with the correct word in brackets in its simple present tense.

1. Kembo..... (be) a charming girl
2. His father.....(believe) in respect for all young and old.
3. The family.....(lead) a strict but happy life.
4. I.....(pay) for my siblings school fees.
5. The pigs.....(feed) very early in the morning.
6. The pupils..... (walk) to each every day.

Composition

Write a composition beginning with the following words “As I left home that Sunday afternoon I never thought my life would completely be changed(use a maximum of Three Hundred words)