

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE ANALYSIS OF CONCORD ERRORS IN THE WRITING OF STUDENTS OF
TUMU SENIOR HIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL**

MORO KWASI BINTEY

2019



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MORO KWASI BINTEY

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**A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages
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partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of**

Master of Education

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Moro Kwasi Bintey declare that this thesis with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole for any other degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....

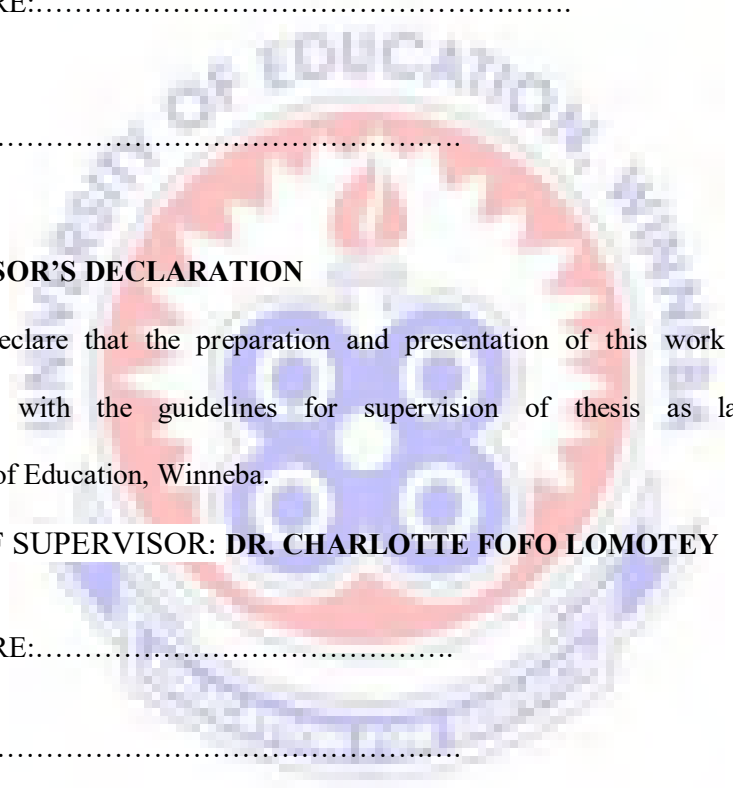
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: **DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTey**

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:.....



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God. Almighty and my entire family, especially my wife,
Madam Rita Bintey and my Senior Pastor, Rev. Issifu Noah.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to Almighty God who endowed me with good health and wisdom to complete this work. I would forever be grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Fofu Lomotey, for the constructive criticisms and suggestions offered me to accomplish this work. In spite of her busy schedules, she was able to discuss all aspects of the thesis with me. My special thanks go to her for her indefatigable effort and invaluable assistance. I am also highly grateful to all the lecturers in the linguistics Department, University of Education, Winneba, who have unveiled new vistas of knowledge to me and have been a source of inspiration. . I am equally immensely grateful to my lovely wife, Madam Rita and the church members, Victory Assembly of God, Tumu, for their support. I also thank Madam Monica Batong and Madam Agnes Bagan both typist and the students at Tumu Sectech whose input made this work successful. Finally, I wish to show my appreciation to all authors whose works I consulted and whom I have duly acknowledge in my bibliography.

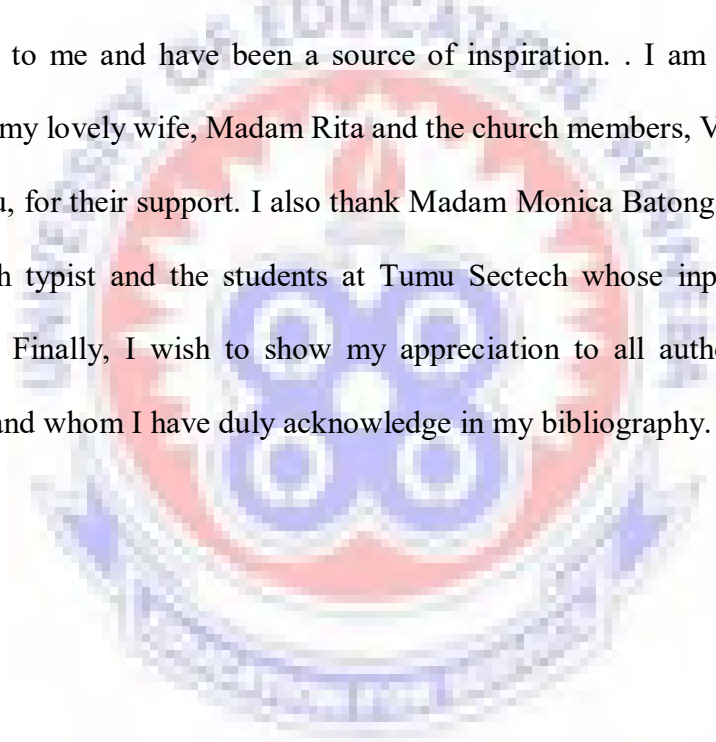


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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study that analysed common concord errors in the written tests of Tumu Senior High Technical School. The data used for the analysis comprised students' written tests. From this, a total of 7156 concord errors were identified. Seven concord error types were identified and they include subject-verb concord errors, concord with indefinite expressions of amounts, determinant-noun concord errors, noun-pronoun concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, inverted subject-verb concord errors and coordinated subject-verb concord errors. From this, concord with indefinite expressions of amounts had the highest frequency with errors on determinant-noun concord errors and noun-pronoun concord errors being the lowest. Based on the findings of the study, causes of errors in learners' tests were identified as overgeneralization of concepts and rules, communal pull causes, influence of computer/technology, intralingual as well as L1 interference. Some suggestions are made to various stakeholders to ensure effective teaching and learning of the English Language in second-cycle schools.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The English Language is widely used by people of different socio-cultural backgrounds. As a result, it has become a unifying force and also a vehicle for international communication. This is because the language makes it possible for people of diverse language backgrounds to communicate and participate in economic, political and cultural activities far beyond their local areas. In Ghana, English has assumed a central position in our national life. According to Dakubu (1988), the country is linguistically heterogeneous as there are about forty five (45) different indigenous languages. To break the language barrier, English has become an effective medium of communicate in our multilingual setting. Therefore, acquiring a high proficiency in English in Ghana is essential. It is for this reason that Senior High School Students in particular and Ghanaians in general should be well equipped with the rules of the language so that they can function effectively and efficiently both in Ghana and around the world.

Our contact as a nation with the English people dates as far back as the second half of the 15th century. Like many other contact situations English was “transported” and “transplanted” in the country when Europeans through trade evangelization and colonilization penetrated the African continent and came to the shores of the Gold Coast. The voyages became very frequent in the 16th and 17th centuries, leading to the establishment of trading post and the construction of forts and castles by Europeans governments. For their trading business to go on smoothly, the Europeans needed interpreters, middlemen and clerks who would assist them to link with the local people. By the 18th century, attempts were already in place to establish schools for Gold Coast

children and by 1788 a castle school at Cape Coast had been established with twelve (12) mulatto children in school. This step marked the beginning of formal education in the Gold Coast, now Ghana. The missionaries namely: the Basel, Wesley, Bremen and later the Catholic spread across the country to propagate the gospel. In 1835 the Wesleyan missionaries established a school in Cape Coast and taught the pupils through English, hence the spread of English language in Cape Coast and its environs.

Notwithstanding the importance of English to the Europeans, it was also the desire of the missionaries in the 18th century to develop the local languages alongside the English language. This received the British government's approval and the teaching of Ghanaian languages was given a pride of place in the curriculum of schools. According to Macmillan and Kwamena Po (1978:54) in 1925 Sir Gordon Guggisberg, the governor of Gold Coast, directed that in order not to denationalize the country's children the local languages should be taught in our schools. In view of this, the missionaries developed some of the local languages by putting them into writing. Johannes Zimmerman for example, developed the Ga language by putting it into writing while J.K. Christler of the Basel Mission also put the Twi Language into writing and subsequently came with the Twi dictionary.

Since the beginning of the colonial administration, the English language has become the official language of government, commerce, law, the media and also as the medium of instruction in our schools from the upper primary four (4) to the university. Furthermore, in Ghana, it is the language for inter-ethnic communication as well as international communication. The English language, in fact, acts as a cohesive force for people of diverse backgrounds. The study of English is therefore crucial for all students, as well as all sections of the population. In Ghana, the system of education is organized in three levels namely: basic, second and tertiary cycles. The primary and the

Junior High Schools constitute what is known as basic education. The Senior High School is the second level of education in Ghana. The basic language skills such as: reading, writing, listening and speaking are introduced at the basic level. This implies that by the end of the first cycle of education, the products of the school system should be able to express themselves and socialize in English, but many of the students however, come out inarticulate, inhibited and insecure because they cannot express themselves in speech and writing.

It is essential that these skills are improved considerably to give students the confidence to communicate in the language. The general aim of teaching English as a subject at the Senior High school (SHS), among others, is to improve students' level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English so as to make them function efficiently and effectively. Therefore, the importance of a high level of competence in English in a country such as Ghana, especially for purposes of education and communication, is a well-recognized fact. Dolphyne (1989:xi) maintains that "*the aim of teaching English in West Africa should be to make it possible for West African speakers to understand and be understood by other users of English*". English is also the language for educational placement and career advancement in Ghana. One needs the English Language in order to qualify for admission into either the College of Education, the Polytechnic, Nursing College or the university. Hence mastery of English Language is a necessity. Furthermore, we live in a world of inter-dependence, hence a mastery of English Language is a great tool to break the communication barrier. The fact that English is the language of international communication par excellence cannot be denied for example, it is used greatly in most scientific researches and presentations.

Although English is a second language in Ghana, because of its significant role, a high premium is placed on its acquisition. To promote the use of English in Ghana, government language policy in education has been explicit. English is the medium of instruction in Ghanaian schools from primary four to all higher levels, and also it is a subject from the

Kindergarten to the University. The importance placed on the study of English in Ghana is summed up in the rationale for teaching English in the Junior High School English syllabus as follows: “Success in education at all levels depends, to a large extent, on the proficiency in English” (CRDD, 2007, p. 11). In the Senior High School (SHS) the purpose of teaching English among others include, *“to improve the communicative competence of students and to give them confidence to communicate, raise student’s level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English.”* CRDD (2007:ii)

The above quotations amply illustrate the fact that, the English language indeed occupies a pride of place in our developmental agenda as a nation. It is for this reason that the government and other stakeholders of education will have to do everything possible to improve our students’ performance in English. There have been great concerns about the falling standard of English in Ghana. Sey (1973, p. 11) writes, “there has been an urgent feeling among educationist that there is the need for research into the problems involved in the use of English in Africa....”. The study of English as a subject is intended to provide the language needs of students as they progress through all the levels of formal education. However, it seems that the study of the language is becoming increasingly difficult for students, especially those at the second cycle. Even though the English language is the official language in Ghana and teachers of English appear to be doing their best, each year the Chief Examiners

Reports show a decline in the performance of candidates. The latest Chief Examiners reports (2018, p.3) contain such comments as: "... the performance of candidates this year was lower than that of the preceding year. A striking observation was that most candidates lacked a good grasp of fundamentals such as tenses, grammar, punctuation and sentence construction". It is obvious that even when candidates are not able to perform well in other subjects such as Social Studies or Mathematics the blame is laid at the doorstep of English language that the inadequacy of the English of many candidates resulted in their poor performance in those subjects. The English syllabus for senior high school underlines the importance of English language in the curriculum. The English syllabus for senior high schools treats concord rules as one of the important topics in grammar. Since this topic is taught, if students are not able to apply the rules of concord correctly they are punished and the punishment affects their performance negatively students of Tumu Sec/Tech perform poorly in English language examinations because of their inability to apply correctly the rules of concord in their writings.

These students usually forget that the many parts of a sentence must work together to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Words within sentences should be arranged in an understanding pattern, and the words should have certain relationships with another. In other words, these words must have agreement. It is against this background that the researcher holds the view that there is the need to study the concord errors students make and identify reasons accounting for those errors, and strategies that should be adopted to enhance their performance. The researcher argues that concord rule violations negatively affect the writing ability of students and these violations contribute to the low performance in students' English language examinations at the second cycle level.

1.2 Statement of the problem

There have been great concerns about the falling standard of English in Ghana. Sey (1973:11) writes, “There has been an urgent feeling among educationist that there is the need for research into the problems involved in the use of English in Africa....” The study of English as a subject is intended to provide the language needs of students as they progress through all the levels of formal education. However, it seems that the study of the language is becoming increasingly difficult for students, especially those at the second cycle. Even though the English language is the official language in Ghana and teachers of English appear to be doing their best, each year the Chief Examiners Reports show a decline in the performance of candidates. The latest Chief Examiners reports (of 2017) contain such comments as: “..... the poor performance of the majority of the candidates was attributed to their inability to express themselves well in the English language”. It is obvious that even when candidates are not able to perform well in other subjects such as social studies, Mathematics; the blame is laid at the door of the English Language that the inadequacy of the English of many candidates resulted in their poor performance in those subjects.

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The researcher posits that concord rule violations negatively affect the writing ability of students and these violations contribute to the low performance in students English language examinations in the second cycle level.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to identify the common concord errors of Tumu Senior High Technical School commit in their writings. It analysed and discussed the causes of the errors as well as the implications of the findings, and made necessary suggestions to both teachers and learners to help solve the problem identified

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of the thesis are to:

1. identify the common concord errors of students of Tumu Senior High Technical School commit in their writings;
2. examine the causes of the concord errors found.

1.5 Research questions

The research seeks to find answers to the following questions:

1. What are the specific concord errors the students of Tumu Sec/Tech make?
2. What factors account for the concord errors they make?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings of the study are significant for several reasons. First, it creates awareness in language teachers, about the kinds of errors second-cycle schools make in their essays, as well as the sources of these concord errors. Secondly, it enlightens

language teachers on the role concord error plays in the language acquisition process. Again, the findings of this study reveal to language teachers, aspects of the subject that need more attention in order to devise the appropriate remediation to help students out. The results help students to identify and correct their own concord errors with time. In addition, the findings of the study provide language curriculum planners with enough input on how to design appropriate language programs and resources for the second-cycle school. Finally the results serve as a source of reference and add to knowledge on concord errors in Ghana and beyond.

1.7 Delimitation

The study focuses on the application of English concord rules and how students of Tumu Sec/Tech apply these rules in their writings. The study concentrates on subject-verb concord and the exceptions to the rule of subject-verb concord namely, notional concord. Grouped under these findings as subject-verb concord. Also, the study deals with indefinite expression of amount (Quantifiers), coordinated subject concord, verb-tense concord, determine-noun concord errors and noun-pronoun concord errors

1.8 Limitation of the study

The five forms (classes) for this study are only just five out of several SHS in the country; therefore, there can be no strong validity to the findings of the study since the schools are not representative enough to make a definitive conclusion or claims. Another limitation of this study is time. The researcher had one year to complete the study. This account for the limited number of forms and school and the size of respondents selected for the study. A longer period of time preferably, two or three years would have been ideal to study student's language development at successive points. The current study makes it difficult to determine accurately the different errors

that learners' produce at different stages of their language development. However, notwithstanding these limitations, the findings provide a fair idea of the falling standard of English in the country.

1.9 Organization of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 reviews related literature on the study. This focuses on theoretical views that are closely relevant to concord error analysis. It includes what constitutes a concord error, categories of concord errors, the concept of errors and related studies. Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology adopted for the study. In this chapter, the instruments and sampling technique used for the study, as well as data analysis, are discussed. The results of the study are discussed in Chapter 4. The analysis revealed that students committed subject-verb concord errors, concord errors of indefinite expressions of amounts (Quantifiers), determinant-noun concord errors, noun-pronoun concord errors, coordinated subject-verb concord errors, verb-tense concord errors and inverted subject-verb concord errors. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study. This includes the summary of findings of the study, the pedagogical implications, as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the concept of concord errors and the types of concord errors. It also discusses the importance of errors in second language learning. The causes of concord errors and their categorization are also discussed. The chapter finally ends with a discussion on approaches to studying errors as well as related studies on errors in second language acquisition.

2.1 The concept of errors

According to Yankson (1996), an error is a noticeable deviation from the rules of a target system. It is therefore a breach of the language code. It may occur as a result of lack of knowledge or misapplication of the rules of the second language. Errors are recurrent, systematic and reveal ones level of competence in the language. Errors are systematic and may give valuable insight into language acquisition because they are goofs in the learner's underlying competence. (Scovel, 2001). In language study, errors can be termed as the deviation from the norms or rules of a language. Brown (1994) defines linguistic errors as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. For Burt, Duley and Krashen (1982), errors are the flawed side of a learner's speech or writing. They are those parts of conversation or composition that deviate from some selected norms of mature language performance. Errors are studied in order to identify the learning process and the strategies employed in learning another language (Lungu, 2003). The definitions by Brown and Burt et al differ from that of Corder (1981) who defines an error in the context of the effectiveness of the utterances made by language users. Corder (1971) identifies what he calls covertly idiosyncratic and overtly idiosyncratic

errors. The former refers to flaws in utterances that are grammatical but do not clearly convey the speaker's intended meaning. Overtly idiosyncratic errors on the other hand, occur in sentences that appear to be ill-formed but whose meaning is transparent to the listeners. Corder's provision of these broad error categories was preceded by that of Burt and Kiparsky (1972). They classified errors in terms of whether they were 'global' or 'local'. Global errors can be considered synonymous with what Corder refers to as covertly idiosyncratic errors while local errors, on the other hand, are synonymous with overtly idiosyncratic ones.

As indicated by Maicusi and Maicusi (2000), in the language learning process, errors have always been regarded negatively, and must be avoided. As a result, they contend that teachers tend to show a suppressive attitude to their students. On one hand, errors are considered as a failure of teaching process and on the other hand, they are seen as a natural result that can hardly be avoided, so we should deal and learn from them. Therefore, errors can be a very helpful means in learning a second language as Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005, p. 61) explain, learners' errors are significant in three ways. (1) They serve a pedagogic purpose by showing teachers what learners have learned and what they have not mastered; (2) they serve a research purpose by providing evidence about how languages are learned; and (3) they serve a learning purpose by acting as devices by which learners can discover the rules of the target language by obtaining feedback on

2.2 Concord errors in English

Leech (1989, p. 33) defines concord as "the matching relationship between the subject and verb". He goes on to say that the main rule of concord is simple. This is because singular subjects go with singular verb phrase while plural subject go with plural verb phrase. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) also define concord as the relationship

that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have the feature. According to Crystal (1988), concord or agreement is a way of showing that two grammatical units have a certain feature in common. Thus, if the subject is singular the verb must also be singular. For example,

(i) *My brother has a beautiful daughter.*

Singular subject with singular verb

(II) *My brothers have cars.*

Plural subject with plural verb

Crystal (1988) holds the view that the most important is the third person rule for verbs in the present tense, which states that singular subjects take singular verbs. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000, p. 176), define concord as “the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have that feature”. They further note that “the most important type of concord in English is concord of number between subject and verb” (p. 176). Quirk et al (1985, p. 755) define concord as “the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (e.g. plurality) that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other”. Mark and Kirsten further (2011) explain that concord or agreement occurs when one element in a sentence takes the morphosyntactic features of another element. Morphosyntactic involves both morphology and syntax. All the definitions cited above imply that if a grammatical unit possesses a feature, for example, a plural noun, that plurality feature of the noun should be matched correctly with the verb.

2.3 Types of concord errors

Concord errors found in second language learners’ writing are analyzed based on the principles governing their usage and categorized into various types as follows:

2.3.1 Subject -verb concord

This refers to concord of number and person between subject and verb. In other words, a singular subject takes a singular verb and a plural subject takes a plural verb.

Examples:

- i. The man dances. (singular)
- ii. The men dance. (plural)

Before one can decide whether the verb should be singular or plural, one must find the subject, decide whether the subject is singular or plural and then match the verb to the subject. To make verbs agree with their subjects, two principles may be applied. These are notional concord or proximity concord. According to Quirk et al, the most important type of concord in English is Subject-verb concord which involves, mainly, number and, or person. In English, syntactic concord is established between the central constituent of the number phrase subject, typically the noun head and the initial constituent of the verb phrase, predicator. Also, it involves a distinction between 3rd person singular number present tense verb form and non-3rd person singular number present tense verb form.

[The teacher] [writes] on marker board.

NP/Subj. VP/Pdctor

As Quirk et al explain that there is a basic rule to follow: a singular subject takes a singular verb as in *The boy dresses well* and plural subject takes a plural verb, as in *The boy and the girl dress well*. They treat the following as singular subjects which attract singular verb forms.

a. A clause that is in the position of a subject counts as singular for the purpose of concord. Observe the following:

- i. *To disrespect your lecturers* is uncultured behaviour.

- ii. *Breaking away from your love ones* is unfriendly.
- b. Singular subjects followed by intervening expressions like ‘with’ or ‘together with’, ‘including’ etc. take singular verbs:
 - i. The headmaster, *together with* his teachers is at the meeting.
 - ii. The president *as well as* the minister has arrived.
- c. Finite and non-finite clauses generally count as singular:
 - i. *How you get there* concerns the entire team.
 - ii. *Stealing from others* is a bad habit.
- d. Prepositional phrases and verbs functioning as subject also count as singular:
 - i. *In the church* comes the preacher.
 - ii. *On the tree* is the beautiful bird.

The second part of grammatical concord states that a plural subject attracts or takes a plural verb. Swan (1984) agrees with the above assertion that verbs form change according to whether the subject is first, second or third person. What he meant by person is that a subject can be of the first, second or third person. Hence, a singular subject must be paired with a singular verb and a plural subject must be paired with a plural verb. The following are examples:

- a. The teacher teaches well.
- b. Kofi and Ama are in the class.
- c. The headteacher, the teachers and the students are to meet the director..

Aarts (2001) makes a generalization that subjects of sentences are usually nouns, noun phrases or pronouns. Subjects are obligatory and they determine the form of the verb. A careful teaching of how subjects are realized in English sentences will help students to select appropriate verbs for their sentences.

2.3.2 Proximity concord

The principle of ‘proximity’ also termed as ‘attraction’ denotes agreement of the verb with a closely preceding noun phrase in reference to agreement with the noun phrases that function as subject (Quirk et al, 2005). The proximity concord may be extended to mean that concord is determined by whatever immediately precedes the verb. In other words, it is the position of the subject which normally determines the concord. Wiredu (1999, p. 113) has the same view that *proximity concord* refers to the agreement between a subject and its verb based not on notion but on the fact that there is a nominal group which is immediately close to the verb. That is, grammatical concord is established between these elements instead of the normal formal agreement with the head of the noun phrase/subject (NP/Subj). Below are examples:

- i. Either the teacher or his students *are* in class.
- ii. Neither men nor the woman *is* well.

In the above sentences, the predicators or verbs “are” and “is” have two or more alternatives subjects, linked by “or” or “nor”. This should agree with the subject that precedes it. Thus, “are” and “is” agree with his “students” and “woman” respectively. On the other hand, where the alternative subjects are of the same person and number, the verb can be common to them as in:

- i. Either the teacher or a student *is* allowed in..
- ii. Neither the girls nor their friends *sweep* the compound.

In agreement with this rule, Sekyi-Baidoo (2000, p. 483) states that two singular nouns joined by the correlatives; either...or, neither...nor, not...but, take a singular verb, the verb however agrees with the noun nearest to it when one of them is plural as in;

- i. Either the children or the woman *wants* the television.
- ii. Neither the woman nor the children *want* the television.

Yankson (1994) defines proximity concord as “the verb agreeing with the noun immediately preceding it in a sentence.” For example; the reasons for its fall in these areas are not known.

According to Sidney (1990, p. 215), proximity concord “denotes agreement of the verb with a noun or pronoun that closely precedes it in preference to agreement with the head of the noun phrases.”

2.3.3 Determiner-noun concord

This relates to the agreement that exists between a noun and its determiners in terms of numbers. Leech and Svartvik (2002, p. 280) describe determiners as words which specify the range of reference of a noun by making it definite as in (the book), indefinite (a book), or by indicating quantity (many books). Determiners always precede the nouns they determine but they have different positions relative to one another. Determiners in English include articles (a, an, the), demonstrators (this, that, these, those), possessives (my, our, your, his, her, its, their), cardinal numerals (one, two, three...), ordinal numerals (first, second, next, last). Examples:

1. The boy is my cousin. (Article)
2. I find that topic difficult to understand. (Demonstrative)
3. Have you seen my bag/your bags/their food? (Possessive)
4. Ten passengers were stranded at the station. (Cardinal numeral)

Philip had spent the first five years in Ghana. (Ordinal numeral)

2.3.4 Pronoun-antecedent concord

A pronoun typically restates a noun, called its antecedent; it must agree with its antecedent in gender and number as opined by (Wiredu, 1999) who states that pronoun antecedent refers to the agreement which exists between a pronoun and the noun it refers to. The agreement here involves three major features associated with pronouns.

These are number, person and gender. That is pronouns in English generally display distinctions in terms of;

- i. Number... whether it is singular or plural
- ii. Person ... whether it is first, second or third person
- iii. Gender... whether masculine, feminine or non-human.

Freeborn (1987) refers to pronouns as co-referential of nouns and when linked should agree with their antecedents so that it will be possible to associate them with the nouns in whose place they occur or perform. Sekyi-Baidoo (2003) buttresses this by proposing that since pronouns are pro-forms which are used in place of nouns, there is every reason they should agree with their antecedents so that it will be possible for us to associate them with these nouns in whose place they perform. Consider the following examples;

- i. George planted a palm tree on his farm.
- ii. The women have gone to their farms.
- iii. The hen protects its chicks.

. Brown (2009, p. 134) states the following rules of concord;

- a. A verb must agree with its subject in number/person; that is, a singular verb should follow a singular subject; and a plural verb should follow a plural subject.

Examples are:

- i. The book is on the table.
- ii. The books are on the table.

However, singular subjects followed by such word as: with, together with, as well as, accompanied by, take singular verbs. The phrases introduced by these expressions are not considered as part of the subject and so do not change the number, although they do suggest plural meaning. Examples are;

- i. The vice-chancellor, as well as his staff, is hard-working.
 - ii. Dr. Abdulai, together with other lecturers in her department, is here.
 - iii. The course representative, accompanied by the students, has arrived.
- b. Indefinite pronouns such as everyone, everybody, somebody, take singular verbs. Examples;

- i. Everyone is to blame
- ii. Someone has arrived
- iii. Everybody dislikes cheating

There are other subjects which appear deceptively plural but function as singular:

- i. Each of the students owns a car
 - ii. One of the teachers appears lazy
 - iii. More than one student has complained about her laziness
- c. When two or more subjects are joined by “and” and refers to the same person or thing, the verb is in the singular. However, compound subjects referring to two different people or things take plural verbs. Examples,

- i. His brother and sponsor was there to help him.
- ii. The president and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces has arrived.
- iii. A dog and a cat are seldom friends.
- iv. The man and his wife have come

d. When two subjects (a compound subject) refer to the same thing or is thought of as a simple idea or a unit, a singular verb is used. Examples:

- i. Gari and beans is my favorite dish.
- ii. Rice and stew tastes delicious.
- iii. Bread and butter is a snack that is easy to prepare.

e. Some nouns appear plural in form but are singular in meaning and therefore take singular verbs. Examples:

- i. The United Nations has its headquarters in New York.
- ii. Economics is an interesting subject
- iii. The sports news was aired an hour ago.

Other words that are always in the singular form include; information, music, advice, United States, evidence, aid, research, phonetics, semantics, physics, furniture, luggage, equipment, knowledge, stationary, mathematics etc.

f. When singular subjects are joined by “not only but also”, “neither...nor”, “either...or”, the verb is in the singular. Example:

- i. Not only the vice president but also his wife was present at the meeting.
- ii. Either the teacher or the class prefect is expected to attend the meeting.
- iii. Neither the boy nor his father has eaten.

However, if the subjects differ in number (that is, one subject is in the singular and the other is in the plural), the verb agrees with the subject (noun) nearer to it. For example,

- i. Either the students or the teacher has to be present.
- ii. Neither the teacher nor the students seem lazy.
- g. A collection noun takes a singular verb when the group is regarded as one unit.

But a collective noun takes a plural verb when emphasis is placed on the individual members of the group; that is, the individual members of the group are acting separately. Consider the following examples:

- i. The audience were arriving. (Individually).
- ii. The audience was clapping (together).
- iii. The committee are unable to agree on the matter (individually).
- iv. The committee is meeting today (together)

h. A demonstrative adjective (such as this, that, these, those) must agree in number with the noun it modifies. Examples are;

- i. That kind of music is out of date.
- ii. Those kind of cars are in high demand.

Nouns (subjects) that are always regarded as plural verbs are police, people, and the pooe. The poor look always sick.

- ii. The police are hard-working.
- iii. The people are here.

2.3.4.1 Count-nouns

This is basically one whose referent can be counted, as in one cow, two cows but not *one sheep, *two sheeps. The referents of these nouns are viewed as individuated in things or in persons. The following count nouns include both regular plurals in –s or invariable or ‘zero’ plurals: 5 cyclists, 3 trouts, a dozen eggs, three new television series, 7 minutes, 4 salmon, 3 crossroads, five and a half kilos, a hundred sheep, two US aircraft, five spacecraft. Countable nouns are nouns that can be quantified in units and in numbers; that means they can be counted.

2.3.4.2 Non-count nouns

This is one whose referent is cognitively perceived as not countable. We don’t therefore say, for example, three furniture, two luggages. furniture and *luggage*, as well as *news*, can be individuated by a preceding counter-‘a piece of’. Uncountable nouns are nouns that cannot be quantified in units and numbers.

2.3.5 Concord with coordinated subjects

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), Leech and Svartvik (2002), and Yankon (1994) discuss concord with coordinated or the compound subjects. The coordinated or the

compound subject is the subject that has two or more subjects connected by *and*, *or*, *nor*, *either...or* or *neither...nor*.

According to these writers, several rules apply using a coordinated or a compound subject. The rules include:

1. When a subject consists of two or more nouns or noun phrases coordinated or joined by *and*, the verb is typically in the plural form as in:

- i. *Kofi and Ama are* my friends.
- ii. *Monday and Thursday are* very busy for me.

In the above examples, the coordination is taken to be a reduction of two clauses:

- (i) *Kofi is my friend and Ama is my friend.*
- (ii) *Monday is very busy for me and Thursday is very busy for me.*

2. When coordinated noun phrases or nouns refer to the same person or thing, a singular verb is used as in:

- i. Gari and beans *is* my favourite meal.
- ii. The hammer and the sickle *was* flying from the flagpole.
- iii. My colleague and long-time friend *has* bought a car for me.

3. When the coordinated subjects are abstract nouns, the verb can be either singular or plural. The choice of singular or plural verb depends on how the speaker or the writer regards the qualities in the subject, if they are seen as separate issues or qualities, a plural verb is used as in:

Law and order *are* considered important in this election.

If the two are seen as a single, complex issue, a singular verb is used as in: Law and order *is* an election issue.

However, if the coordinated subjects are preceded by the correlative *both...and*, a plural verb is acceptable as in:

Both the judge's fairness *and* impartiality *were* admired.

4. When two nouns or noun phrases are joined by or the correlative pair: *either...or*, or *neither...nor*, the general rule is that the number of verb is determined by the number of the last noun phrase. This is the factor of attraction or proximity as discussed earlier in this study. Leech and Svartvik (2002:276) suggest that to avoid such concord problems involving the principle of proximity or attraction, it is possible to use a modal auxiliary verb that has the same form in the singular and the plural. For example:

Either the workers or the directors must be blamed for the disruption.

Nonetheless, Gogovi et al (2005, p. 132) explain that there are instances where *Pseudo-conjunctions* are used. These Pseudo conjunctions are not true conjunctions; they, therefore, cannot connect two singular subjects to make them plural. They are seen as *intervening phrases*, so, if the subject is singular, the verb is singular and if the subject is plural, the verb is plural. The pseudo-conjunctions include *with*, *in addition to*, *together with*, *including*, *no less than*, *along with*, *accompanied by* and *rather than*.

a. The headmaster *as well as* the teacher *requires* patience.

Several representatives of the Board, *including* the chair, *have* visited the region in the past year.

2.3.6 Noun-pronoun concord errors

Like a machine, for a sentence to be grammatically correct, all its parts should agree with one another. When a pronoun is used to refer to a noun used, there must be an agreement. A pronoun which refers to a singular noun phrase is in singular, and a pronoun which refers to a plural phrase is in plural, (Leech & Startvik, 2002). For example,

1. He goes to his work place
2. They go to their work place

A pronoun is generally defined as a word which can replace a noun. The definition may be considered appropriate at the basic level where the learners are studying mainly words or the parts of speech. However at the Junior High School (JHS) and Senior High School (SHS) levels, where phrases and clauses are taught, the definition must change accordingly. Hence, the pronoun may be defined as a word that can replace a noun or a noun phrase. Wiredu (1999) also defines pronouns as words which are used to replace a noun, especially where we do not want to repeat that noun.

2.3.6.1 Personal pronoun in the third person

Personal pronouns in third person must agree with their antecedents both in number and (with the singular pronouns; he, she, it) in gender, (Quirk et al, 2002).

Examples:

1. Salifu is a student (He is a student)
2. Rita cooks everyday (She cooks everyday)
3. The dog hunts on Saturdays (It hunts on Saturdays)

2.3.6.2 A pronoun which refers to a plural noun phrase

As Leech and Startvik (2002) write, a pronoun which refers to a plural noun phrase is in plural. For example,

1. Rita and Morot do their exercise (They do their exercise)
2. The head teacher and his staff go for their salary (They go for their salary)
3. Students do not want studies (They do not want studies)
4. A wrist watch does not like water (It does not like water)

2.3.7 Inverted subject-verb concord

Downing and Locke (2006:44) explain that this type of concord involves sentence whose subjects are interrogative pronoun, the adverbial 'here', or the unstressed existential 'there'. Interrogative pronouns include *what, which, who, whose*.

If an interrogative pronoun, the adverbial 'here' or the unstressed existential 'there' is used as subject of verb of a sentence, it is the noun phrase that follows the verb that acts as the subject. Therefore, if the noun or the noun phrase that follows is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice versa. Example:

- i. Who is your favourite author?
- ii. Here lies the oak tree.
- iii. What were the reasons for his actions?
- iv. There is no girl in the classroom.
- v. There are no girls in the classroom.

2.4 Causes of concord errors

It is very essential to know the source of errors learners commit in their writing because it helps the teacher to provide the appropriate remediation. Though knowing the source of an error is essential in language teaching, there is not a generalized agreement on the sources by researchers. For instance, errors may emanate from first language (L1) habits, psychological state of the learner, teaching methods, styles of course materials and introduction of written language. In the opinion of Touchie (1989), language learning errors consist of components like phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic. Brown (2002) classifies second language error sources into two main categories. These are L1 interference and intralingual and developmental factors. The intralingual and developmental errors are subdivided into simplification, overgeneralization, hypercorrection and faulty teaching. Other subcategories are fossilization, avoidance, inadequate learning and false concepts hypothesized.

In another development, Richards (1971) categorizes sources of second language errors into three which include interference errors, intralingual errors and developmental errors to build up hypotheses. According to Richards, intralingual errors

can be broken into overgeneralization, ignorance of rules, incomplete application of rules and false hypothesis. As a result of criticisms from Schachter and Celce-Murcia (1977), Richards combined intralingual errors and developmental errors into one and states that two major sources of errors are interlingual errors and intralingual errors. For him, the first refers to errors caused when learners wrongly transfer the rules of their first language to the target language as they produce sentences.

The second one is caused during the learners' language learning process and such errors include overgeneralization and false analogy. Heydari and Bagheri (2012) also suggest that interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer are the two main sources of errors committed by English learners. Based on her study, Penny (2001) also concludes that there are two sources of language errors namely interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Likewise, Kaweera (2013) argues that interlingual interference and intralingual interference are the two major sources of errors in language learning. He explains interlingual transfer error as negative transfer of the learner's first language while intralingual involves errors caused by the learner's incomplete knowledge of the target language. Besides, Hinno (2004) differently proposes that there are three sources of errors which are negative transfer of the mother tongue, limited knowledge of the target language and the difference between words and sentence structures of the mother tongue and those of the target language. Finally, James (1998, p. 178) identifies the following as sources of second language errors: interference errors or interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, communication strategy-based errors and induced errors. These causes are explained in the following sections:

2.4.1 Interlingual causes

Contrastivists have already established that the major source of errors in learner's performance was directly attributed to the interference from the learner's

mother tongue. The learner while learning a second language transfers the elements of his mother tongue whenever he feels difficulty to perform in the second language. According to behaviourists, L1 interference is the most prominent source of problems of L2 acquisition as a result of the differences between the systems of L1 and L2. Lado confirms this when he says that:

The student who comes into contact with a foreign language will find some features of it quite easy and others extremely difficult. Those elements that are similar to the learner's native language will be simple for him and those that are different will be difficult.

(Lado, 1957, p.

1)

Majority of scholars are of the view that the pull of the mother tongue is the greatest source of error committed by learners of the second language. The scholars like, Fries (1954), Lado (1957), Ferguson (1965), Selinker (1972), and Richard (1974) have recognized the pull of the learner's mother tongue in learning a second language.

2.4.2 Intralingual causes

Selinker (1972, p. 209) holds the view that the interference from learner's mother tongue is one but many of the several sources of errors in second language performance and hence other sources such as intralingua confusions and faulty pedagogical procedures may also be the source of errors. According to Krashen (1976, p.157), to him "many of the errors in the second language acquisition are 'developmental' rather than solely a result of interference". Intralingual causes can be classified into the following categories:

- 1) Overgeneralization
- 2) Ignorance of rule restriction

3) Incomplete application of rules

4) False concept hypothesis

2.4.2.1 Fossilization

Sometimes a learner's grammatical development appears to have stopped at a certain level and recurring errors of both grammar and pronunciation have become permanent features of a learner's speech. This is referred to as fossilization. It consists of the persistence of errors in a learner's speech despite progress in other areas of language development. Littlewood (1984) stresses that fossilization is most likely to occur when a learner realizes (subconsciously) that the error does not hinder him in satisfying his communicative needs (at the functional or social level). This is what Gass and Schacter (1989) refer to as a stage short of success as it is the stage when development ceases and even serious conscious efforts to change are often fruitless, and even if there might be some brief changes, those would just not take the learner anywhere as the learners always backslides to the stable state. Brown (1994) indicates that this could be a problem even with those who have otherwise learned the language quite well. For example,

1. I doesn't understand what she wanted.
2. He never ask me for help.

Errors due to fossilization such as those above tend not to affect comprehension although they might be stigmatized due to the fact that they often reflect errors that are typical of very basic-level learners (such as omission of 3rd person -s). It is therefore essential to discuss the global research findings on concord/subject verb agreement which will shed light on the complexity of the subject.

2.4.2.2 Incomplete application of rule

Learners of second language sometimes apply incomplete rules, consequently, their performance become erroneous due to incomplete applications of precise rules in the target language. An example of incomplete application of rules can be seen in the question forms. This type of errors has been observed in learning the interrogative sentences of English. Richards (1971, p. 118) has also mentioned the difficulty of learning – wh question.

The following are some examples mentioned by Richards.

1. Why the hall was air conditioned?
2. Where the film is running?
3. What you are doing?
4. Where you come?

2.4.2.3 Overgeneralization

This covers the instances where the learners create a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structure of the target language. Nordquist (2010) defines overgeneralization as the application of a grammatical rule in the case where it does not apply. He further explains that it is part of the language learning process in which children extend regular grammatical patterns to irregular words. Two of the examples of overgeneralization are:

a) When a learner adds a plural marker –s or –es on a noun which has a different plural formation as in:

1. Tooth – toothes/ tooths instead of (Tooth – teeth)
2. Equipment – equipments instead of (Equipment – equipment)

b) When a learner gives the past tense form of an irregular verb by adding –ed as in:

1. Teach – teached instead of (Teach – taught)

2. Buy – buyed instead of (Buy – bought)

This occurs when learners misuse words or grammatical rules. For instance, in the sentence: *The boy that came here*, the learner used a relative pronoun *that* instead of *who* and that is an error.

2.4.2.4 Simplification

This occurs when learners reduce a complex aspect of grammar to a much simpler set of rules and reflects a process that is used when messages need to be conveyed with limited language resources. For example instead of making the distinction between “he” and “she” the learner may use the masculine pronoun even where the feminine ones would have been a requirement. This is because he does not take the pain to differentiate between genders by using different pronouns. At other times, instead of distinguishing between first and third person in verbs (“I like, she likes”), the learner may use the first person rule for all persons (“I like, He/ She like”). This is also because the learner sees it simple using what he is already familiar with and so does not offer different inflections with any of the different number of pronouns. Brown (1994) explains this type of an error as intralingual transfer and claims that it is evident once learners have begun to acquire parts of the new system of the target language. Ignorance of rule restriction, occurring as a result of failure to observe the restrictions or existing structures causes simplification

2.5 Importance of errors in language learning

Language learning, like any kind of human endeavour, involves committing errors. Previously, language teachers considered errors as something unacceptable which they try hard to prevent from occurring (Touchie, 1986). Most second language teachers also think that every error students commit should be corrected to make them excellent. In recent times, second language teachers and even first researchers in the

area of applied linguistics have identified that errors are significant in language learning. They have noted that students' errors are evidence of what they are learning and how they are learning. It makes language teachers aware of how learners acquire the second language. In effect, errors are no longer seen as nuisance in the classroom which should be terminated by all means but are seen as enhancing second language learning. For the learners themselves, errors can be regarded as a device that one uses in order to learn. Gass and Selinker (2001) define errors as 'red flags' that provide evidence of the learners' knowledge of the second language. Selinker (1969, cited in Brown, 2002) has noted errors in two important ways.

First, errors make the language teacher aware of the progress of learners in the language learning process. Second, it gives language researchers an insight into how language is learnt and lastly, errors help language teachers to get involved in hypothesis testing to know whether what their students have learned is being used appropriately. This implies that errors in language learning have importance to the language learner, language researcher and the language. Richards (1971), from a linguistic, psycholinguistic and pedagogic perspective, observes that errors help us to discover what constitutes human intelligence, reveal the mental processes involved in language language, and help language teachers identify and analyse learners' errors and design appropriate ways of dealing with them.

2.6 Related studies

Various researchers such as Yankson (1994), Agor (2003), Nimako (2008) and Sarfo-Adu (2009) have studied errors of students. A research work which is closely related to the present work is that conducted by Yankson (1994) conducted a study aimed at increasing an awareness of the enormity of concord problems and helping both students and teachers to overcome these problems. The study was based on concord

errors made by first year undergraduates of two West African universities. He was of the view that concord rule deviances reflect badly on the speaker's personality. His study provides the needed scientific empirical data that are reliable to help English language teachers at all levels in West Africa who seem to be operating in the dark. Yankson analysed the errors students make and classified them into categories such as subject-verb concord errors, notional concord errors, proximity concord errors, and plural inflection concord errors.

Nimako (2008) book, *Mind Your Language*, analyses a number of errors on articles that have been published in newspapers, magazines, bulletins and books and, also those heard on radio and television. The study which is a compilation of errors for many years, to him, is to make the reader sensitive to good English. This book illustrates the lapses in both the written and spoken English of the Educated Ghanaian because some basic syntactic and semantic English rules have been violated. Nimako (2008) attributed these errors to mother tongue "interference".

Another error analyst worth mentioning is Sarfo-Adu (2009). In his book *Your English Is You* examines the error pattern of students in their essays. The purpose of his study is to draw attention to certain wrong expressions and grammatical errors which featured prominently in the speech and written works of many students and public speakers. The discoveries of various studies have affirmed indeed that the standard of English Language of Senior High School Students has fallen considerably and therefore proper investigation and recommendations be given so that eventually standards will improve once more hence the current study.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter deliberated on the concept of error and narrowed down specifically to the concept of concord errors. It also discussed the importance of errors in second

language learning, the causes of errors as well as their categories. The chapter finally touched on some important related studies on concord errors in second language acquisition. The discussion shows that second language learners are bound to make errors (Myles, 2002). Error analysis can therefore be considered as one of the effective ways to identify and analyze such errors since it can reveal the causes of the errors of their frequent occurrences. It is possible to determine a remedy once the causes of the errors are noticed (Penny, 2001).



3.0 Introduction

The data collected for the study has been analysed in this chapter. After the collection of samples of concord errors, the researcher classified them for analysis. This includes recording the pattern of the concord errors, finding their percentage density and plausible sources. This is guided by the research question and the objective set for the study. The Error Analysis theory of second language teaching and learning and contrastive analysis theory of language were employed to carry out the analysis. The methodology adopted to achieve the objectives of the study is discussed in this chapter.

This includes the research design, population, sampling technique, research instrument, and data analysis

3.1 Research design

Research design is the plan structure and strategy of investigation conceived to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 300). For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose a sample survey research design. Survey research is a form of descriptive research that is aimed at collecting large and small samples from the populations in order to examine the distribution, incidence and interaction of educational and sociological phenomena (Dengar & Ali, 2008). Survey research was therefore, suitable in this context because the data for the study was collected and analysed from a substantial representative of the entire population of the study of five out of ten classes in Tumu Senior High Technical School. The result of the study would be generalised to represent the performance of the entire population. The researcher believed that since the subjects of the study were drawn from fifty percent of the entire population, their (the subjects') performance would give an insight into the general performance of the SHS 2 students of the area in the English concord.

3.2 Population and sample

The sample population of the study comprised two hundred and fifty (250) SH2 students of five classes in Tumu Sectech. These classes were randomly selected from ten classes in the school. The tools used were further stratified in the context of their unique Status thus: boys and girls. Fifty (50) students were selected from each of the classes. The classes used as samples were General Arts, Agriculture, Business, Technical, and Vocational. The choice of population of the study was deemed appropriate because the students were at the secondary education, and consequently, will be preparing for West African Senior Secondary Certificate examinations

(WASSCE). A success in English remains a prerequisite for admission into any course of study in Ghana tertiary institutions. Therefore, a sound knowledge of the rules of concord could make students improve on their English Language performance. This would invariably lead to success in English as well as other subjects taught through the medium of the English Language.

3.3 Sampling technique

A simple random sampling technique was used to get the population of the study. Each of the five forms used had at least a stream of five physical classes which had a nominal roll of not less than seventy students. For fair distribution of the objects of the study, Fifty (50) students were selected from every class of SHS 2A Tumu Sectech. Through this way, two hundred and fifty (250) Students were used for the investigation.

3.4 Research instruments

The instruments used in this study were multiple objective test, class exercise and take-home essay, and observation. A total of fifty (50) objective test items were administered by the researcher under examination conditions. It lasted 45 minutes. The need to test competence informed the choice of the testing instruments. Through objective testing strategy, the researcher was able to cover different types of concord. Testing instrument was made in a manner that the testees were pinned down to one correct answer for each items of the test. The multiple choice objective testing is considered suitable in most language studies, since generally, each question tests a particular point at a time and measures the learner's specific knowledge of the aspect of the language that is being studied. Therefore, the answers to the multiple test items adopted in this study would give reliable information of the student's knowledge of concord in the English Language.

3.5 Data analysis

The data were sampled from five forms namely: General Arts 2A, Business 2A Agric. 2A, Tech 2A and Vocational 2A comprising 250 students in all.

3.5.1 Take-home essay

The respondents for the study were given a take-home assignment (essay) and they were allowed three days to submit it. The topic was for them to write a story which states: “As a room monitor, write a story on a fight you have ever witnessed in your dormitory to your house master”. The basis for the choice of this topic was to give the respondents the free opportunity to explore their world of imagination and creativity. This also allowed the researcher to analyse the essays for concord errors. Because students were not confined to the classroom, working without any time limit, and under no supervision, it encouraged them to do the assignment at their own pace and freedom. These conditions enabled them to have access to the dictionary and also to do self-editing of their work.

3.5.2 Class exercise

A class test on the topic, “Write a story which illustrates the statement that ‘I will never go there again’” (essay) was also administered to collect data for the study. In all, 250 scripts were received and marked. The researcher then identified and analysed the concord errors and also traced the possible source or causes of these concord errors in the writing of students. The researcher chose class exercise because students attach great importance and seriousness to class exercises since that mark is 40% of the total examination scores. Poor performance in class exercises may have a ripple effect on the end of semester results. The final test was an objective one. Answers were provided for students to make their choices. The purpose of the test was to find

out if students could select appropriate lexical and grammatical items when given the opportunity.

3.5.3 Objective test

An objective test covered a wide range of the aspect of concord error based on the objective of the researcher. It was to ascertain the specific challenges of these students. Fifty (50) questions were used in this test and the time duration was forty-five(45) minutes(See Appendix).

3.5.4 Class observation

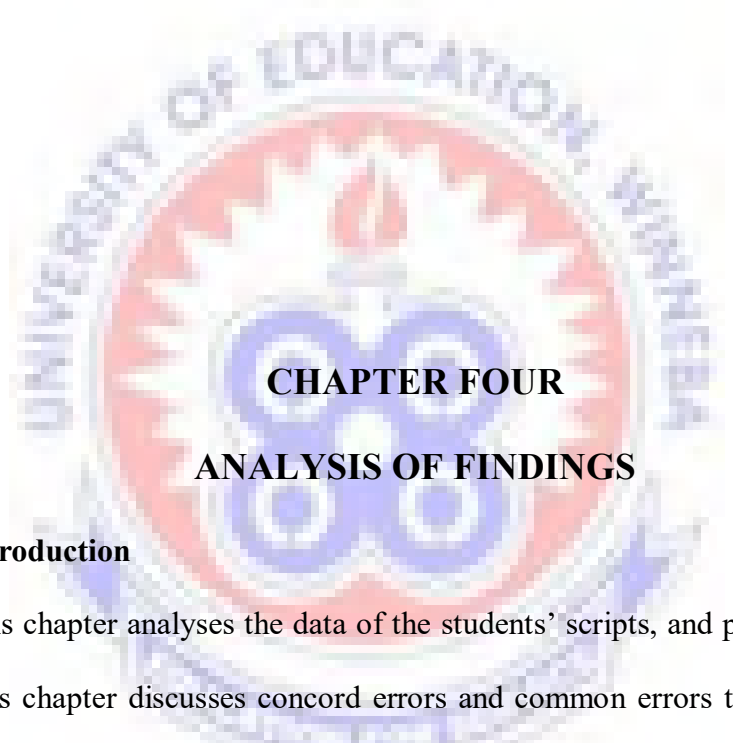
The results of eight (8) classroom observations were given narrative summaries. The purpose of this technique was to find out which method(s) the teacher use(s) to teach English and to assess how effective and appropriate the methods(s) is/are to improve teaching and learning of English. The observations also helped the researcher to get first-hand information about how students respond or react to teaching and learning in the classroom

When the essays were marked and assessed, the researcher grouped the identified, systematic and recurrent concord errors into categories. To make the analysis simple, and essay to understand, the focus was on phrases and sentences containing concord errors. The deviant forms were ringed or underlined in the students' essays where necessary. The categories of concord errors identified and analysed in the corpus were categories of error identified. When the tests were marked and assessed, the researcher grouped the identified and systematic and recurrent errors into categories to make analysis easy to understand.

3.6 Conclusion

Basically, using Error Analysis of second language and contrastive analysis, the researcher identified those errors in the tests of the respondents from the selected

classes. These errors were classified and analysed. The study has shown that the students of English language may not be peculiar to them; therefore, there is the need for improvement in the teaching of grammar (rules and principle) at all levels of our educational structure. The following chapter will look at the analysis of data and discussion of the concord error captured in the study.



CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data of the students' scripts, and plausible source of errors. This chapter discusses concord errors and common errors that students make and causes that accounts for those errors. The first part addresses the major concord errors of Tumu Senior High Technical School, Form 2A. Six major types of concord errors are to be discussed in students' exercises, take-home tests and an objective test, comprising fifty (50) set of questions. These categories are subject-verb agreement (concord) errors, Errors of indefinite expression of amount, coordinated subject-verb concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, determiner-noun concord errors and Inverted subject-verb concord errors. The chapter will also talk about the sources and causes of students' errors. These are L1 interference, overgeneralization, intralingual errors, and

influence of computer/Technology, poor teaching method and lack of teaching materials.

4.1 Categorization of concord errors

After analyzing the data, different types of concord errors in students' written tests; an objective test, the class Exercise and Take-Home Essay were identified. These are: The subject-verb concord errors, concord errors with indefinite expression of amount (quantifiers), coordinated subject concord errors, verb-tense Concord errors, determiner-noun concord errors and Inverted Subject concord errors. Students' responses were collated from the three tests of 250 scripts. The subject-verb concord, 2125 concord errors were recorded. On the concord errors with indefinite amount of expression (Quantifiers), 2700 errors were identified. Also, 1453 errors recorded on coordinated subject-verb concord errors. Verb-tense Concord errors were not exempted. It recorded 528 errors. Seventy-five (75) were made up of determiner-noun concord errors and noun-pronoun concord errors. Finally, two hundred (200) concord errors were also recorded against inverted subject-verb concord errors. In sum, 7156 concord errors were identified in the scripts of students.

4.1.1 Subject-verb concord errors

Leech (1989, p. 33) defines concord "as the matching relationship between the subject and verb". He goes on to say that the main rule of concord is simple. This is because singular subjects go with singular verb phrase while plural subjects go with plural verb phrase. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) also define concord as "the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have the feature". Yankson (1994, p. 1) says concord errors reflect badly on the speaker's personality, they tell us something about his educational background, they portray his interlanguage as a "developing grammar"

that borders on illiteracy” The subject-verb concord errors in the data are shown as follows:

4.1.1.1 Plural subject with singular verb errors

The authors of the extracts below mismatched the subjects and the verbs. That is, the subject of each of the sentences is plural, but the verbs are singular. For example,

1. My *parents comes* always to visit me.
2. The *teachers teaches* mathematics
3. The *students doesn't* understand what they are thought in class.
4. *Students tends* to flee from the villages to the cities to pursue proper studies.
5. The *schools buys* some equipment.

Richards (1971) cited in Ellis (1994, p. 56-7) describes such errors as developmental errors. The frequency of subject-verb concord errors in these students' scripts indicates that they have not truly internalized the subject-verb agreement rules as a result; they consistently matched the plural subject with singular verbs. The grammatical rule states that the verb must agree in number with its subject. That is, the subject of a sentence and its corresponding verb must agree in number. An agreement error occurs when a plural subject is used with a singular verb as in the above extra.

4.1.1.2 Singular subjects with plural verbs

Regarding singular subjects with plural verbs, the following extracts are discussed.

1. *The teacher don't* like us.
2. *The man dance* in the hall.
3. The room *monitor separate* them.
4. My class member *Yahaya are* in the room...
5. *Saturdays is* our entertainment days.

Regarding singular subjects with plural verbs, the following examples show that students committed errors in their scripts. Though the subject of each of the sentences in the extracts above is singular, its corresponding verb is plural. Richards (1971, p. 204) describes the errors in the extracts as *interference errors*. Interference errors occur as a result of the use of element from one language while speaking or using another. Most of the respondents speak Sissala and Dagaare language. Students need to make a more conscious effort to understand the grammatical rule that when the subject of a sentence is a singular count noun, its corresponding verb in the present tense should have an –s at the end. In other words, students should be more sensitive to the subject-verb agreement rule that an –s is added to the verb in the present tense if the subject is a singular noun (i.e. a word that names a person, a place, an idea, a process, a thing, an object or an animal).

4.1.1.3 Demonstrative pronoun (subject) verb agreement errors

In this category of errors, the authors used demonstrative pronouns as subjects but they violated the rules of subject-verb agreement. The following extracts will be discussed:

1. Also, *this attract* students to fight in the public schools
2. When *this happen*, it does not attract students to attend public secondary schools.
3. *This are* all my suggestions and I think they will help to solve fighting
4. *This affirm* the saying, „Two heads are better than one“.
5. *This are* how the fight started between Yahaya and Kuri

Demonstrative pronouns are used to refer to the location of things and persons in space. In this sense, „space“ simply means any surrounding or environment. The demonstrative pronouns have number contrast and have two sets: *this and these*, and

that and those. Aarts (2010, p. 55) explains these four demonstrative pronouns are used in following reference: *this* and *these* are used to refer to entities that are proximal (close by), whereas *that* and *those* refer to entities that are distal (further away). *This* and *that* are (singular) while *these* and *those* are (plural). When a demonstrative pronoun is used as subject, the verb must agree in number with the subject. Unfortunately, the authors of the above extracts did not apply this grammatical rule. They failed to recognize that *this* as the subject should take a singular verb form, but its plural counterpart *these* should take a plural verb form. A possible cause for this violation could be given as fossilisation, thus, this error has become fixed that they find it difficult to change.

4.1.1.4 Headword concord errors

As stated in Chapter 2, the subject of a verb can be a nominal group, a phrase (prepositional, adverbial or adjectival), Dummy *it*, clause or a non-finite clause. The complex subject poses problems in that the student loses track of the headword or memory limitation prevents either him or her from employing the correct verb form, which should enter into relationship with the noun headword. The rule should not change if the subject is simple or complex. Thus, if the head is singular, the verb in the present tense should be singular and if the head is plural, so does the verb. Sometimes, there is an adverb between the subject and the verb. The adverb between the subject and the verb does not change the number, person or gender of the subject so if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice-versa. The following are examples produced by some students for the study.

1. Dear Sir, the cogent *reasons* of me about the fighting *proves* that girls should be pardoned.
2. Nuru, *one of the room monitors*, *are* in the.,,
3. The headmaster *as well as the teachers* *are* in school.

4. No one fails to realize that most *boys* of this generation *likes fighting too much* .
5. *I* therefore *wants* to tell you three problems of schools in deprived area.

These errors are attributed to the inability of the students to identify the headword of the string of words acting as subject. The head or headword is the most prominent element of a string of words. For example, a noun phrase is a string of words whose head is a noun as in *the green book*. Students who have properly internalised subject-verb concord rules have no problem matching subjects such as nominal group (a noun or pronoun) or the Dummy *it* with the right verbs in their speech or writing. In other words, it is easier for students to let the simple subject agree with its verb in the present tense. However, there are instances where the subject is a complex one. A complex subject can be a noun phrase with a multiple pre-modification and post-modification. Pre-modifiers precede their heads. For example; it is clear in the sentences that the authors could not identify the headword of the sentences and as a result, they were unable to match them with the appropriate verbs. For example,

Dear Sir, the cogent *reasons* of me about the fighting *proves* that girls should be pardoned.

In the sentence, the headword is *reasons* and it is plural. This headword is followed by a prepositional phrase *of me about the fighting*. The prepositional phrase that comes between the subject and the verb may be the cause of confusion in determining the appropriate verb. The verb *prove* is used and its usage makes the sentence incorrect. The author forgot the fact that no matter where a verb appears in a sentence, it must still agree with its subject. Students should understand that the verb agrees with its subject but not with a word in the phrase or a clause. They should

mentally cross out the interrupting group of words, because these words serve as modifiers of the subjects, but do not change the rules of subject-verb agreement.

In the second wrong construction, the student uses the headword *Nuru* and used it to refer to the phrase. The noun phrase, *one of the room monitors*, refers back to *Nuru* singular and therefore requires a singular verb *is*. In the second construction, *Nuru*, is the male and it is in the third person singular, therefore, the headword should agree with its verb as:

Nuru, one of the room monitors, is in the.,,

4.1.1.5 Notional (collective nouns) concord

The following are examples of notional concord errors produced by some students for the study:

1. The news are bad.
2. Tuberculosis are deceases.
3. The draughts are good game.
4. The means of transport hasten...
5. The remains of the boy has...

Quirk and Greenbaum (200, p. 176) explain notional concord as “agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the grammatical marker for that”. For example,

The *government* have broken all *their* promises.

In the example, *governmentt*, treated as plural takes the plural verb *have* and *their*. Singular nouns ending with the – s of the plural inflections are, however, apparent exceptions. These nouns include measles, billiards, mathematics, economics, linguistics, draughts, tuberculosis, remains, means and news. Students' failure to apply these rules ended up committing these errors in their scripts. The students' failure here

might be rule generalisation of count nouns ending with the inflection –s should correspond to plural verbs. A summary of the subject-verb concord errors is presented in Table 4.1.1.

Table 4.1.1. A summary of subject-verb concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Plural subject with singular verb concord	355	16.7%
Singular subject with plural verb concord	520	24.5%
Notional concord	330	15.5%
Headword concord	520	24.5%
Demonstrative subject concord verb	400	18.8%
Total	2125	100%

The table shows the different concord errors committed in subject verb agreement by students in this study and these are presented in Figure 4.1.1. The different types of subject-verbs concord errors identified indicated that getting a verb to agree with its subject is difficult from the point of view of respondents, particularly, the notional concord and singular subject with third person singular verb in the present tense.

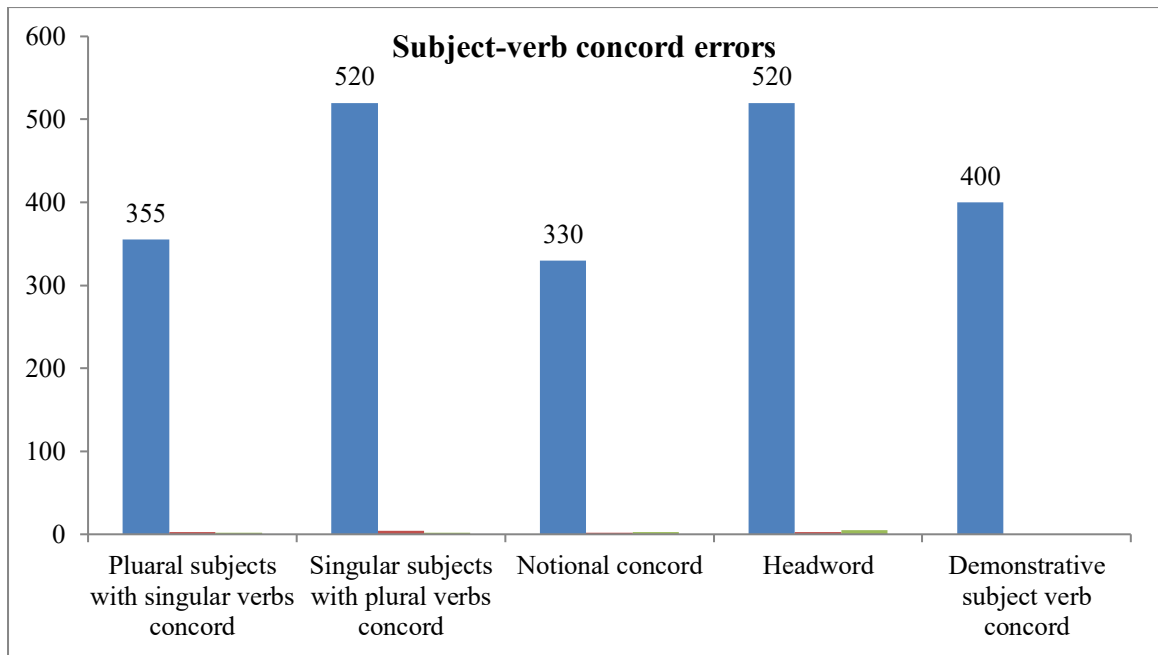


Figure 4.1.1. A summary of subject-verb concord errors

On determinative noun concord, students could not identify the right determinative with its noun. In the category of subject and object concord errors, they violated the rule of subject-object concord that a singular subject corresponds to a singular object. In the parenthetical concord the head noun is the most prominent element of a string of words and hence ought to determine the verb choice. However students failed to identify the head nouns hence mismatching. In the principle of proximity, the noun close to the verb corresponds to the verb. However students misunderstood this principle. On notional concord errors, students failed to understand that in British English the collective noun can take a singular verb or plural verb depending on the notional subject.

4.1.2 Determiner-noun concord errors

This relates to the agreement that exists between a noun and its determiners in terms of numbers. Leech and Svartvik (2002, p. 280) describe determiners as words which specify the range of reference of a noun by making it definite as in (the book), indefinite (a book), or by indicating quantity (many books). Determiners always

precede the nouns they determine but they have different positions relative to one another.

4.1.2.1 Plural determiner-noun errors

Examples of the determiner count errors that students made include:

1. *These man* are our teacher.
2. *Those dormitory* are built by kunyans.
3. *These young man* helped me.
4. *Many boy* shouted for people to come.
5. *Those answer* annoyed him.

Plural determiners in English include article (the singular or plural), demonstrators (these, those), possessives (our, your), cardinal numerals (two, three...) and quantifiers (many, Some) etc. Therefore, *these, those, many and those* (plural) as used above should agree with their noun counterpart plural *men, dormitories, boys and answers*.

4.1.2.2 Singular determiner-noun concord errors

Errors committed under this type of determiner-noun concord errors were 15 representing 43%. This and that are used with only singular nouns. According to Agor (2003), singular denote one. Examples are:

1. *This houses* is nice.
2. *This containers* is mine.
3. *This students* is a boarder.
4. *That bag* is mine.
5. *That men* is my uncle.

Here, the demonstratives *this and that* denote singular determiner and will correspond to singular nouns such as *house, container, student, bag and man*.

4.1.2.3 Non-count determiner-noun errors

This is one whose referent is cognitively perceived as not countable. We don't say, for example, furnitures, foods, monies, informations, luggages.. The accepted forms are *furniture, food, information, money* and *luggage* can be individuated by a preceding 'counter' – 'a piece of'. Uncountable nouns are nouns that cannot be quantified in units and numbers. Some errors that students committed include:

1. These *foods* were delicious
2. The *furnitures* were brought here...
3. Those *informations* were false
4. Those luggages are his.
5. *The monies* were stolen by him.

The words italicised in the above sentences should have been written without the plural markers as in *information, furniture, luggage, food and money*. The summary of these errors is shown in Table 4.1.2.

Table 4.1.2. A summary of determiner-noun concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Non-count determiner errors	35	46.7%
Plural determiner-noun errors	25	33.3%
Singular determiner errors	15	20%
Total	75	100%

Table 4.1.2 shows the different determiner-noun concord errors committed by students in this study and this is presented in Figure 4.1.2.

There are classes of determiners with respect to the co-occurrence with the non-count nouns, singular count, plural count and non-count nouns. The demonstratives *this* and *that* are one of the classes of determiners that can take both count and non-count nouns. With count nouns, *this* and *that* are used with only singular nouns. These and those form another class and they take count nouns that are in plural forms. They are never used with non-count nouns. Students could not apply the rules of classes of determiners and consequently produced deviant structures.

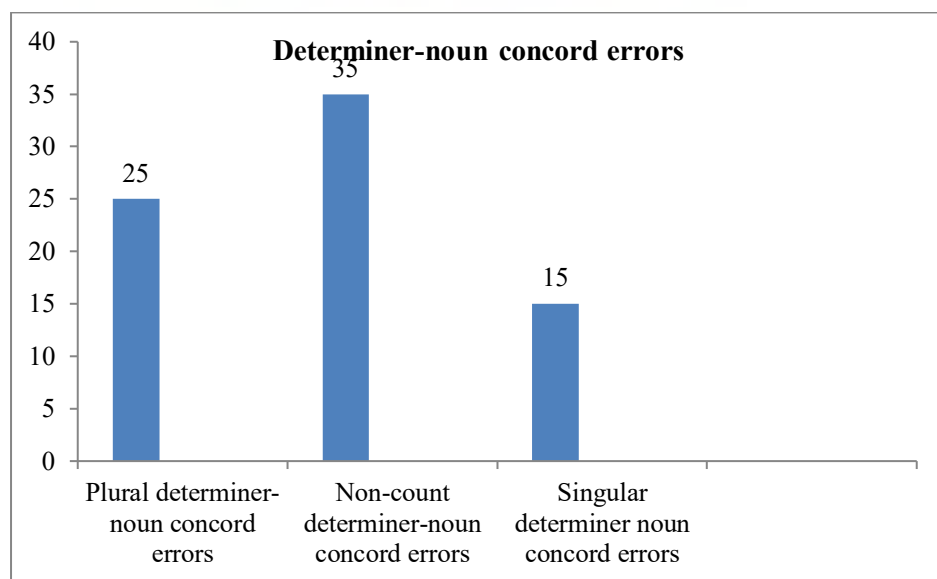


Figure 4.1.2. A summary of determiner-noun concord errors

The different types of determiner noun concord errors from students' scripts indicated clearly that students could not make a distinction between the count, plural count and non-count noun.

4.1.3 Concord with indefinite expressions of amount (quantifiers)

Concord with indefinite expressions of amount errors was common in the scripts of students. According to Greenbaum (2000, p. 179) and Svartvik (2002, p. 276), *every*, *each*, *anybody*, *somebody*, etc are mostly singular whiles *few*, *many*, *others* and *several* require plural verbs. And *all*, *any*, *more*, *some*, and *most* can agree with singular or

plural verbs depending on the object of the prepositions used. However, students could not apply these principles hence students scripts' errors.

1. *Many* a girl *are* here
2. *Every* ten litres of oil bought *comes* with a bonus.
3. Most of the time John *have* been here.
4. *Each* boy *have* a car.
5. *Everybody* *think* he stole money.

Although in (1), '*many*' denotes plural in quantity, the head noun is singular *girl* therefore the verb singular *is* because *many a girl* is taken as a unit. Teachers should help students understand that where you have *many* and a singular noun as a head noun, the head nouns correspond to the verb. Also in example 2 above, though *every* denotes singular by the principle stated under this section, *litres* as plural is the head noun of the subject *every ten litres of the oil bought* hence the noun *litres* agrees with its corresponding plural verb *come*, not *comes* as a third person singular. Also, *most* as a quantifier is plural in number and mostly used in plural sense. In example 3, *most of the time John ...* is the subject, however, *John* is the headword and therefore concords with the verb *has* since both denote singular in number. In example 4 the subject *each boy* is singular and corresponds to singular verb *has* since it connotes singular. Finally, *everybody* denotes singular as stated in the literature review and corresponds to singular verb *thinks* instead of *thinks*. The students failed to understand this concord principle. So the teacher should explain this concept thoroughly to the students to understand.

**Table 4.1.3. A summary of concord with indefinite expression of amount
(quantifiers)**

Types of Errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Many a concord	475	17.6%
A pair of concord	125	4.6%
More than concord	250	9.3%
Every(Indefinite Pronoun) concord	900	33.4%
Plural number concord	325	12.0%
Most or much concord	100	3.7%
Each and one of concord	525	19.4%
Total	2,700	100%

Table 4.1.3 shows the different concord errors with indefinite expressions of amounts committed by students in this study and this is presented in Figure 4.1.3.

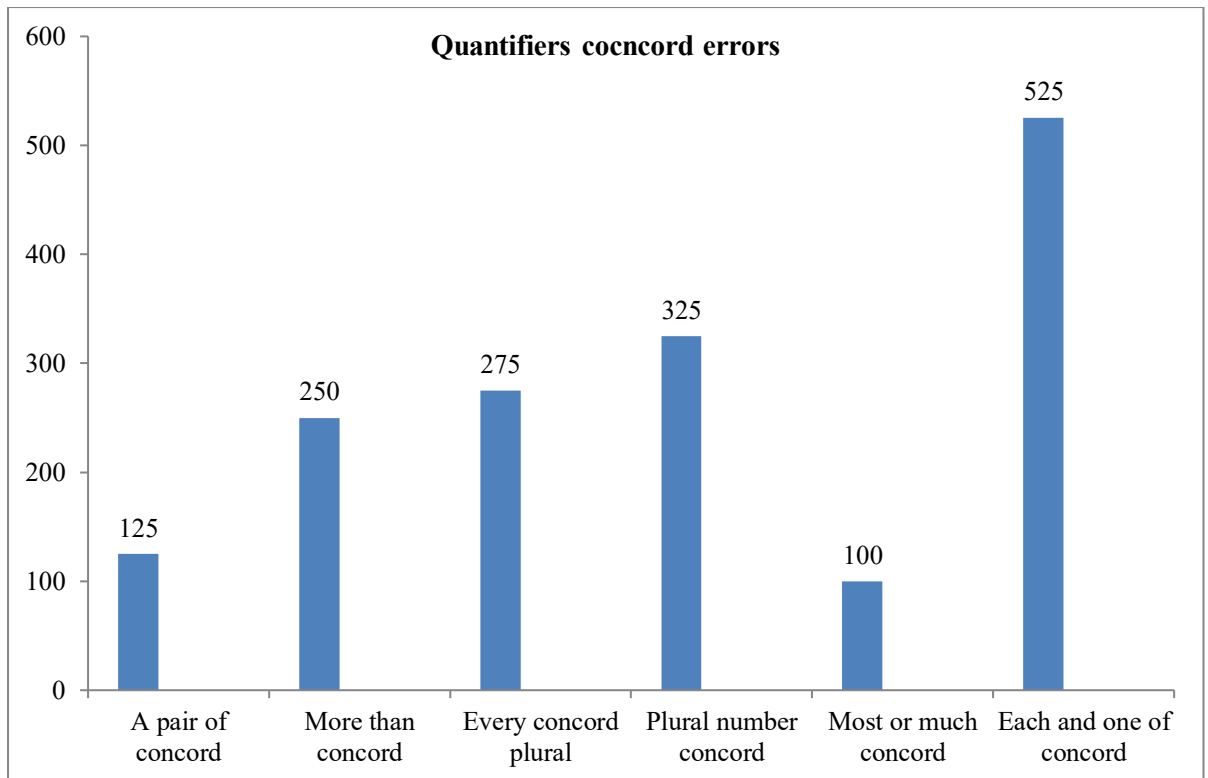


Figure 4.1.3. A summary of concord with indefinite expression of amount (quantifiers)

The different types of concord errors with indefinite expression of amount (quantifiers) from students scripts indicated clearly that students could not make a distinction between singular indefinite expression of amounts, plural and both singular and plural indefinite expressions of amount.

4.1.4 Noun-pronoun concord errors

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2002), personal pronouns in the third person must agree with their antecedents both in number and (with the singular pronoun he, she and it) in gender.

4.1.4.1 Singular noun-pronoun concord errors

After analyzing the data on singular noun-pronoun concord errors, it was realized that most students performed well. However, some students could not pick the

correct answers too. The analysis shows that some of the students are yet to be conversant with the choice of pronouns to go with certain subjects which serve as their antecedent. For examples, some students wrote “*He injured herself*” “instead of “*He injured himself*” These are some of the errors the students committed:

1. Everybody knows *their* name.
2. The dog fed *himself* yesterday.
3. The man *herself*...
4. The girls enjoyed *themselves*.
5. He *herself* supported her...

For a sentence to be grammatically be correct, all its parts should agree with one another. When a pronoun is referred back to noun used, there must be agreement. Leech and Startvik (2002, p. 273) write that; A pronoun which refers back to a singular noun phrase is in singular. Therefore, everybody, the dog, man, girl and he denoting singular, it is appropriate to use singular reflexive pronouns like herself, himself and itself.

4.1.4.2 Plural noun-pronoun concord errors

As Leech and Startvik (2002) write, a pronoun which refers to plural noun phrase is in plural. Students’ scripts recorded the following errors since they could not apply the rule.

1. The *men himself* were at the party.
2. The *girls herself* are here to solve the problem.
3. The *women herself* booked for the seat.
4. Selfish *people* live only for *himself*.
5. The young men reported it *himself*.

The men, the girls, the women, people and young men are plural nouns and will correspond to plural verbs.

Table 4.1.4. A summary of noun-pronoun concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Singular noun-pronoun concord errors	45	60%
Plural noun-pronoun concord errors	30	40%
Total	75	100%

Table 4.1.4 summarizes the errors made in noun-pronoun concord. This is illustrated in Figure 4.1.4.

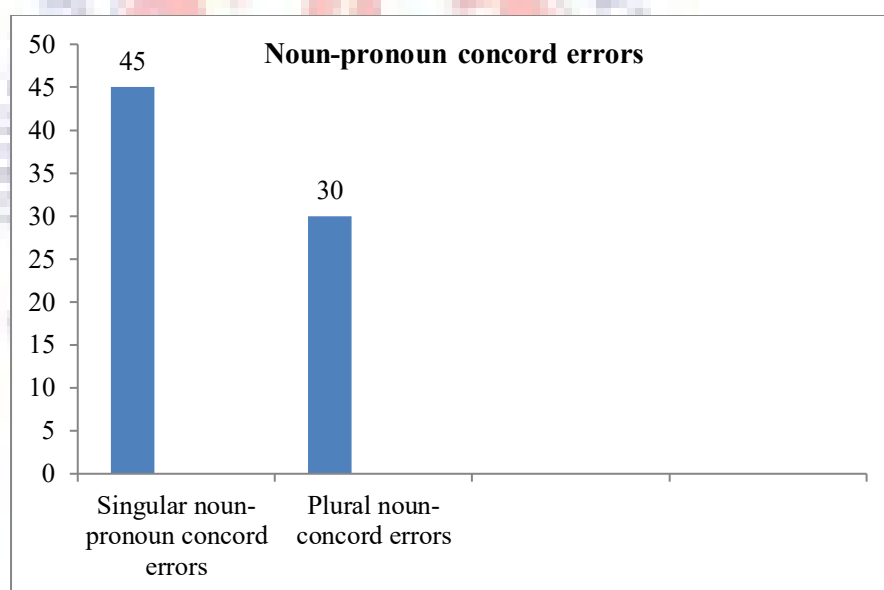


Figure 4.1.4. A summary of noun-pronoun concord errors

The rule of noun-pronoun concord says that a pronoun which refers to a singular noun phrase is in singular and a pronoun which refers to plural noun phrase is in plural. Personal pronouns in the third person must agree with their antecedents both in number and in gender. These rules of agreement between pronouns used to refer to nouns or noun phrases used in this type of concord were overly violated by some of the students.

4.1.5 Coordinated subject-verb concord errors

Concord with coordinated subjects has been discussed by Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) as a process where equivalent units are linked by *and*, *or* or *but*. They further explain that it can occur between different grammatical units: clauses, clause elements, words. Some of the common errors that students committed could be classified under the following sub headings: abstract noun coordinated subject, coordination with *and*, coordination within a singular subject and.

4.1.5.1 Abstract noun coordinated subject

Errors identified in the students scripts.

1. Gari and beans *are* my favourite meal.
2. The hammer and sickle *was* flying from the flagpole.
3. Fufu and palmnut soup are difficult to prepare.
4. Rice and beans are a delicious meal.
5. The student and his work are needed.

If the two are seen as a single, complex issue, a singular verb is used. When the coordinated subjects are abstract nouns, the verb can be either singular or plural. But in this case the coordinated noun phrase *gari and beans*, *the harmer and sickly*, *fufu and palmnut soup* *rice and beans* and *the student and his work* are respectively singular since they denote a unit or a thing and the preferred verb is singular.

4.1.5.2 Coordinating conjunction 'and' concord errors

When the subjects in a sentence are joined by "and," ALL the subjects collectively control the verb. Hence, you should use a plural verb. Some examples of errors committed by students under the coordinating conjunction concord errors include:

1. *My father and my mother is* visiting us today.

2. *Rukaya and Fati and comes* everyday.
3. *The headmaster and the staff are* in the meeting.
4. *The pen and the exercise book is* on the table.
5. *The headmaster and some teachers comes* to check on us.

In this instance, students could not apply the rules of coordination with *and* which simply states clearly that when a subject consists of two or more noun phrases (or clauses) coordinated by *and*, a plural verb is used even if each conjoin is singular. The examples cited from students' essays could be attributed to over-generalization of rules as most students concentrated on singular subjects with their corresponding verbs forgetting about the rules of coordinating conjunctions.

4.1.5.3 Correlative conjunction concord errors

Correlative conjunctions connect similar parts of a sentence, such as adjectives, nouns, and clauses. However, unlike coordinating conjunctions, correlative conjunctions are combinations of coordinating conjunctions, to create a single word. They always come in pairs and link grammatically equivalent items. Some students' faulty expressions are written:

1. Either Amina or her *friends is* over there.
2. If James fails his examination, his teachers, his parents, his friends or *I are* to be blamed.
3. Neither the students nor the *teacher are* to be blamed.
4. Either the teachers or the headmaster are going to the programme.
5. The school provides *not only* exercise books *but also provide* uniforms

Some commonly used correlative conjunctions are:

'As...as', 'Both...and', 'Neither...nor', 'Either... or', 'Not only...but also', 'Not...but', 'Whether...or' For correlative conjunctions only the subject after the

second part of the correlative conjunction controls the verb. So if the subject after “nor” or “or” as the case may be is singular, use a singular the verb. But if the subject after “nor” or “or” as the case may be is plural, use a plural verb. (<http://www.naijawriterscoach.com>). Leech and Svaitvik (2002, p. 275) term this principle as *attraction* because the last noun attracts a certain form in the verb and upsets the rule. The sentences from the students’ scripts could be attributed to the fact that students could not apply the rule of correlated conjunction which states that when two subjects are found in sentences only the subject after the second part of the correlative conjunction controls the verb

4.1.5.4 When coordinated noun phrases or noun refer to the same person

Some of the students violated this rule and made this sentences as follows

1. *The teacher and farmer respect people*
2. *My mother and friend are trustworthy*
3. *The woman and cleaner come here always*
4. *My teacher and pastor pray every day*
5. *My friend and roommate have gone out.*

When coordinated noun phrases or noun refer to the same person or a thing, singular verb is used as in:

- *The teacher and farmer respects people.*
- *My mother and friend is trustworthy.*
- *The woman and cleaner comes here always.*
- *My teacher and pastor prays every day.*
- *My friend and roommate has gone out.*

Geogovi et al (2005) explain that there are instances where Pseudo-conjunctions are used. These pseudo-conjunctions are not true conjunctions; they, therefore, cannot

connect two singular subjects to make them plural. They are seen as interviewing phrase, so, if the subject is singular, the verb is singular and if the subject is plural, the verb is plural. The Pseudo-conjunctions include “with”, “in addition to”, “together with”, “including”, “no less than”, “along with”, “accompanied by” and “rather than”. A summary of the errors is shown in Table 4.1.5.

Table 4.1.5. A summary of coordinated subject-verb concord errors

Types of Errors	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of Errors
Abstract noun coordinated subject concord	350	24.1%
Coordinated ‘and’ concord	325	22.4%
When coordinated noun phrases refer to the same person concord	428	29.5%
Correlative concord	350	24.1%
Total	1453	100%

The table shows the different coordinated subject concord errors committed by the students in this study and these are presented in Figure 4.1.5. The different types of coordinated subject concord errors from student’s scripts indicated vividly that students violated the above principles on coordinated subject concord and they ought to help students by explaining these principles.

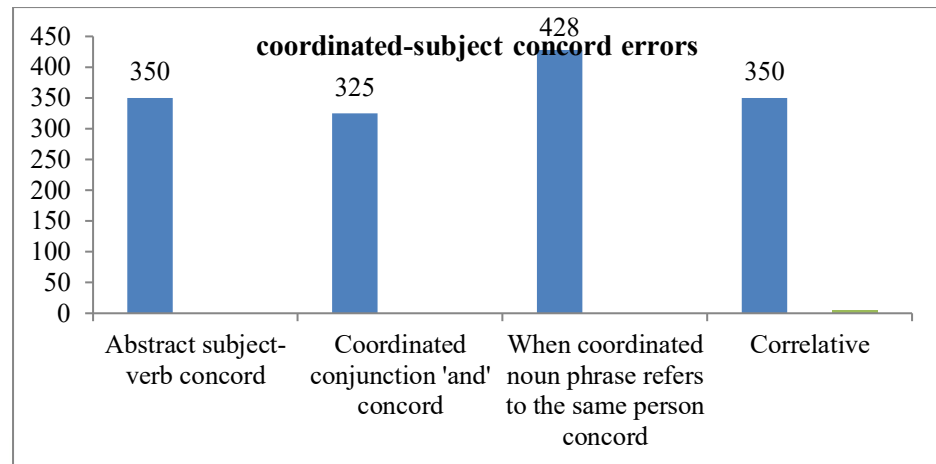


Figure 4.1.5. A summary of coordinated subject-verb concord errors

4.1.6 Verb-tense concord errors

A verb is the word that expresses time while showing an action, condition or the fact that something exists; verbs have tense. Downing and Locke (2006, p. 352) defines tense as “the grammatical expression of the location of events in time”. Thus, tense is the time expressed by a verb. Downing and Locke (2006, p. 353) state that “English has two tenses: the present and the past as in ‘goes’/went, respectively. Palmer (1956, p. 13) also states that all verbs of the language, with the exception of the modal auxiliaries (ought to, dare need), have two distinct present tense form: the –s form and the simple form. The –s form is used with the simple form. The –s form is used with the pronouns *he, she, it* and a phrase whose *headword* is singular. The simple form used with all other pronouns *I, you, we* and *they* and with noun phrase headword is plural. English has no verbal inflection to make a future tense. The forms ‘*shal* and *will*’ are not verbal inflections but are attached to pronouns, not to the verb root (I’ll wait outside). Examples;

1. They *walk* to school in the morning. (present tense)
2. They *walked* to school yesterday. (past tense)
3. Susie *will* be twenty next week. (future)

4.1.6.1 Simple present tense

According to Peter (2016, p. 1013) a grammatical tense refers to the conjugation of a verb to reflect its place in time- that is, when the action occurred. Present tense is used to describe that which is done habitually, that which is generally true, that which is always the case, or that which is scheduled to happen. It is made up of only the basic form of the verb: the infinitive (+-(e)s if used with the third- person singular). It is called simple because it does not rely on any modal or auxiliary verbs to complete its meaning. Some errors in the students' scripts:

1. I comes from Accra.
2. The train leave at 2PM.
3. He take breakfast every morning.
4. They likes ice cream.
5. The man play football.

4.1.6.2 Simple past tense

The past simple tense is used to express completed actions. It is known as the past simple because it does not require any auxiliary verbs to complete its meaning; its structure is simply the past –tense form of the verb. Faulty structures from the students:

1. I study my bible Yesterday
2. Nelson write the book few weeks ago.
3. He is there yesterday
4. The pastor preach last Sunday.
5. We meet the headmaster yesterday.

The action in the tenses expresses completion because of the adverbial expressions yesterday, weeks ago, last Sunday.

4.1.6.3 Future

We cannot refer to future events as facts, as we can to past and present situations, since future events are not open to observation or memory. We can predict with more or less confidence what will happen, we can plan for events to take place, express our intentions and promises with regard to future events. Although, English has no future tense in the strict sense, (i.e., it has no verb form specific to future meaning), we commonly refer to several structures that are used for future meaning as belonging to the “future tense”. The most common structures begin with ‘will’ or a form of the verb ‘be + going to’. For example,

1. I will go with you.
2. I am going to send you an email.

While these verb markers tell us that the action takes place in the future, it is the aspect of the verb that tells us how the event will be temporally structured. The combination of the future markers and the aspects results in the verb structure that we call the future simple, the future continuous or future progressive, the future perfect and the future perfect continuous.

Some faulty statements of students are shown as follows:

1. We go to the supermarket another time.
2. In future I bought a car.
3. I am famous in the future.
4. I went to buy a calculator tomorrow
5. A week’s time Safia go marry

The expressions *if he comes, another time. in future, in the future, tomorrow and a week’s time* are normally used to expression actions in future.

Teachers can help the students do better on verb-tense by teaching them all the basic rules related to verb-tense discuss.

4.1.6.4 Subjunctives

Downing and Locke (2006, p. 219) say that Mood in English has to do with clause types rather than verb inflection. It leaves the subjunctive somewhat isolate. That in independent clauses, the subjunctive can express a *wish*, but only in fossilized stereotyped expressions like *long live the Queen! So be it, Heaven be praised! Far be it from me to doubt your word. We recommend that he gets/ should get a visa* .On the past subjunctive mood, they added that, it can be identified only in the form *were* in the 1st and 3rd persons singular of be (*if I were you - if he were to return alive*. Since most students could not relate to these rules, they violated it. These were some of the verb-tense errors committed by the students;

1. The man demanded he obeyed.(obey)
2. If he was to come alive
3. She said that long lived Tumu
4. If I was a king. (were)
5. It has been suggested that he goes away.

Table 4.1.6. A summary of verb-tense concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency of errors	Percentage of errors
Present tense	26	4.9%
Past tense	21	4.0%
Future	6	1.1%
Subjunctive	475	90%
Total	528	100%

The table shows the different verb-tense errors committed in verb-tense concord errors by students in this study and these are presented in Figure 4.1.6. The different types of verb-tense errors identified especially on the 'subjunctive' indicated that getting the right verb with its subject is difficult from the point of view of the respondents.

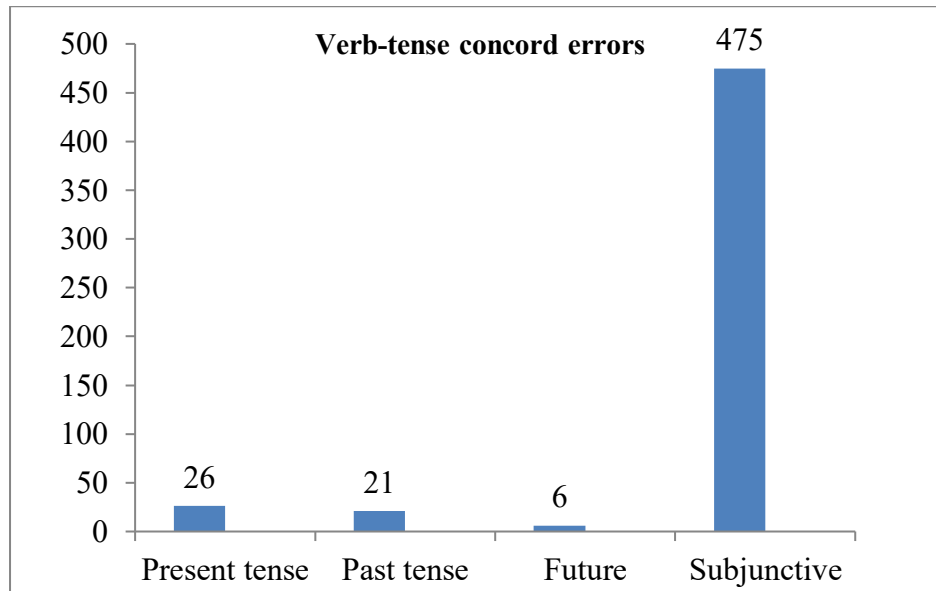


Figure 4.1.6. A summary of verb tense errors

The students who made this type of error could not decipher the principle of sequences of tenses. When one is talking about the same event or group of events, one must make sure that he or she sticks to a single general tense-present, past or future and this was the students' problem.

4.1.7 Inverted subject-verb concord

Downing and Locke (2006, p. 44) explain that this type of concord involves sentence whose subjects are interrogative pronoun, the adverbial 'here', or the unstressed existential 'there'. Interrogative pronouns include what, who, which whose. If an interrogative pronoun, the adverbial 'here' or the unstressed existential 'there' is used as subject of verb of sentence; it is the noun phrase that follows the verb that acts as the subject. Therefore, if the noun or the noun phrases that follows the verb that acts

as subject, and, if the noun or noun phrase that follows is singular, the verb must be singular and vice versa.

4.1.7.1 Wh-interrogative

Few of the students violated this rule and produced the following structures:

1. How is *Rukaya and Tanko*.
2. What are *the reason...?*
3. What is *your reasons for his actions?*
4. How is they?
5. Who is *your favourite author?*

In Wh-interrogative, it is the noun phrase that follows the verb that acts as the subject. Therefore, if the noun or the noun phrase that follows is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice versa. In the examples, the noun phrase '*your favourite author*' which is a singular form controls the sentence; therefore the verb must be singular. In the example, '*Rukaya and Tanko*', the controller of the verb used is in plural hence, the verb must be plural. The example *what is the reasons*, the noun phrase *the reasons* is plural therefore plural verb *are* is required. The example, *what is the reason* is correct because the singular noun phrase *the reason* agrees with its verb *is*.lastly, on *how is they* is wrong because the pronoun *they* is plural and will need a plural verb *are*.

4.1.7.2 The unstressed 'there'

These errors from the students' scripts are the results of the learners failure to apply the principles yet to discuss.

1. There **is** *inadequate facilities* in these schools.
2. *There are no girl* in the classroom.
3. *There is no girls* in the classroom.

4. *If there is enough classrooms and dormitories, students would be able to study well*
5. *Here lies the oak trees.*

Downing and Locke (2006) explained that this type of concord involves sentence whose subject is the unstressed existential ‘*there*’ is used as subject of verb of a sentence. It is the noun phrase that follows the verb that acts as the subject. Hence, if the noun or the noun phrase that follows is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice-versa. In the first sentence, the noun phrase ‘*no girl*’ controls the verb *is*. In sentence two, ‘no girls’ being the noun phrase is the controller of the verb *are*. The controller of the verb *are* in the next example is the noun phrase ‘*enough classrooms and dormitories*’. The noun phrase inadequate *facilities* controls the verb *are* because both are plurals. Finally, the noun phrase oak trees as plural agrees with the plural verb *lie*.

Table 4.1.7. Summary of inverted subject-verb concord errors

Types of errors	Frequency o errors	Percentage of errors
The Wh- interrogative	110	55%
The Unstressed ‘there’	90	45%
Total	200	100%

The table shows the different concord errors made in inverted subject-verb concord. This is shown in Figure 4.1.7.

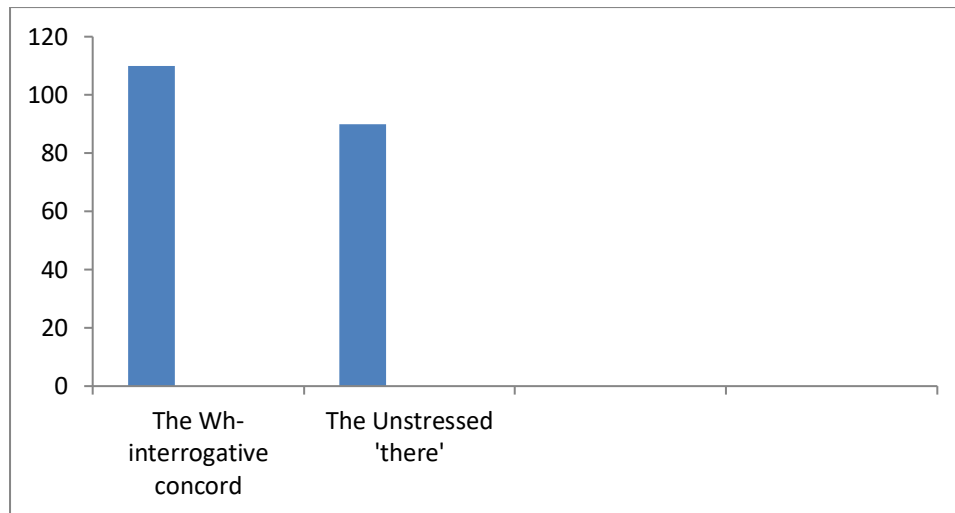


Figure 4.1.7. Summary of inverted subject-verb concord errors

The inverted subject is the same as the noun phrase that follows the verb and this noun phrase is the same as the subject. Hence, if the noun phrase is singular, the verb must be singular and if it is plural, the verb must be plural. Under this type of concord, the unstressed “There” and the Wh-interrogators are used as temporary subjects. Few of the students violated this rule by matching singular verbs with plural noun phrase and plural verbs with singular noun phrases.

4.1.8 Concord errors in students’ writings

Table 4.1.8 presents a summary of the categories of concord errors identified in student’s scripts.

Table 4.1.8. A summary of concord errors

Categories of errors	Frequency of Errors	Percentage of errors
The subjects-verb concord errors	2125	29.7%
Concord errors with indefinite expression of amount (quantifiers)	2700	37.7%
Determiners-noun concord errors	75	1.0%
Noun-pronoun concord errors	75	1.0%
Coordinated subject concord errors	1453	20.3%
Verb-tense concord errors	528	7.4%
Inverted subject-verb concord	200	2.8%
Total	7156	100%

The information in Table 4.1.8 is illustrated in Figure 4.1.8.

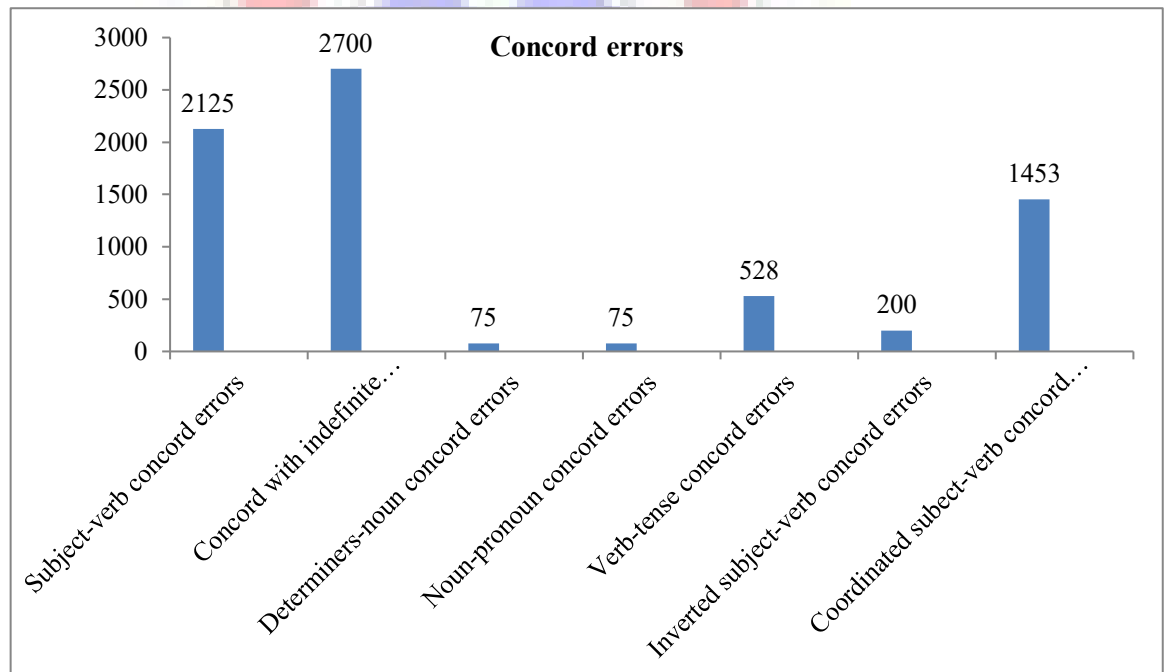


Figure 4.1.8. A summary of concord errors

Figure 4.1.8 shows that concord with Indefinite Expression of Amount (Quantifiers) of Errors constitutes the highest error which could be found in the student's written tests. This had the percentage of 37.3% with 2700 cases recorded in this study. It can be said that the concord errors may be due to simplification of strategy and overgeneralization of English Language rules. Though indefinite expressions of amount as *few* and *many*, require plural verbs, this principle has been overgeneralised by the students. This might have resulted from inadequate competence in the target language. The chart again reveals that the subject-verb concord errors have a total of 2200 errors occurrences representing 30.7%, was due to lack of knowledge of the basic rules on subject agreement therefore resulting in students producing deviant construction of sentences. The next is subject-verb concord errors also constituting 29.7% representing 2125 cases clearly shows that students are not familiar with the rules of concord in terms of the usage of singular subject agreeing with singular verbs and vice-versa. Also, coordinated subject-verb concord errors recorded 1453 representing 20.3%. Also verb-tense concord errors had a frequency of 528 representing 7.4%. These errors also occurred due to the students' inability to apply rules of headword. Finally, the determiner-noun concord errors and noun-pronoun scored the same frequencies 75 comprising 1.0% of the data indicating the the teachers need to help their students abreast of the concord rules.

4.2 Causes of errors

An attempt was made by the researcher to trace the sources or causes of some of the errors identified in the corpus. In as much as most of the errors could not be traced to any particular source, some few errors, however, could be traced to their likely sources or the error emanated from a combination of factors.

4.2.1 L1 Interference

The study could not rule out completely the role of the L1 as a contributory factor to some of the errors identified in the corpus. Ellis (1985, p. 21) states that “According to the behaviourist theory, old habits get in the way of learning new habits. Therefore, in SLA situation, the grammatical apparatus programmed into the mind as the first language interferes with the smooth acquisition of the second”. The behaviorist predicts that transfer will take place from the first to the second language where there were differences between the L1 and L2; the learners L1 knowledge would interfere with the L2. This situation creates learning difficulties which result in errors. The following errors which are traceable to L1 interference were identified in the corpus.

1. I collected a lot of insults from the seniors.
2. She asked me to remove my mouth from the discussion..
3. Aruna helped the father to cook the medicine.
4. I heard the noise from my back.
5. You have to *pour libation* to the goods.

4.2.2 Overgeneralization

Many of the errors identified in the study could be traced to overgeneralization. Overgeneralization occurs when the L2 learner uses his/her previous knowledge of the L2 in situations where that knowledge does not apply. This results from false hypothesis, ignorance of selection rules and incomplete application of grammatical rules. Examples from the study include the following;

1. When Dedra casted the news yesterday (Dedra-Debate and Drama club).
2. The House master splitted the students into two groups.
3. We took our lugguages to the box room.
4. There were many peoples at the party

5. The bell boy **ringed** the bell.

4.2.3 Communal pull

Some of the errors captured in the study could be traced to extra-mural English, that is, the kind of English spoken outside the walls of the classroom. This includes English spoken or found in the print media, television, radio and newspapers or in the speech community. If the learner is continually exposed to certain wrong forms of the language he internalizes them as correct forms. The following examples were identified from the study. It must be stated that they were not significant enough.

1. We **discussed** about the problem.
2. I took another pen **should in case** this one gives me proble
3. The incident occurred during the **inter-schools** games.
4. When I went to the office I **met his absence**
5. Cut your **coat** according to your size.

4.2.4 Intralingual errors

There are errors or deviant structures which are not mother-tongue induced. They occur as a result of the learner's partial exposure to the L2 linguistic data. These errors are across cultures and so it can affect all learners of the English Language. Faced with a complex's linguistic system, sometimes with no neatly codified rules governing a particular area of grammar, the second language learner would analyze, hypothesize, analogize or over-generalize, thereby producing incorrect forms. In the research, very few intralingual errors were identified. They include the following.

1. My mother packed my **lugguages** into the car.
2. There were plenty of **furnitures** in the school.
3. There were several **equipments** in the science laboratory.
4. I bought the **stationeries** from the stores.

5. **Informations** were given to us...

4.2.5 Influence of computer/technology

In recent times, students' essays are greatly influenced by computer or social media language. It was, therefore, not surprising that in the study some of these errors were identified in their scripts. The following are some of the examples:

1. You don' **ustand** the problem.
2. I said, I don't like **dat**.
3. It is **Ova** to you to **disid**.
4. It happened **be4** classes began.
5. I wish you safe **jeni**.

4.2.6 Summary of causes of concord errors.

The chapter focused on the analysis of concord errors in the written tests of Tumu Senior High Students of Arts 2A, Agric 2A, Business 2A and Technical 2A. The results of the findings indicated that students' commit a lot of different types of concord errors in their scripts. Notable among these errors include: The subject-verb concord errors, concord errors with indefinite expressions of amount, coordinated subject concord, verb-tense concord errors and inverted subject-verb concord errors. The analysis has also revealed that student's errors could be traced to lots of concord rules; overgeneralization, lack of practice, inappropriate teaching methods used by some teachers, communal pull, language transfer (ie interlingual and intralingual). Also lack of exposure to the second language at the early stage of life and lack of motivation from both teachers and parents, is also another cause of student's concord errors.

4.3 Conclusion

The pattern of errors and their density have shown the low level of proficiency of Tumu Senior High School students as far as the English language is concerned. It is,

therefore, essential for teachers of English to identify student's errors in order to work in unison towards achieving a high level of proficiency among students. There must be a collective and concerted approach at all the levels of education geared towards improving the standard of English, especially, at the basic levels since they form the foundation for the senior high school education.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, SUGGESTION AND CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

This study investigated concord errors in the writings of students of Tumu Senior High Technical School in 2 A classes. The data, their analyses and discussion have been presented in Chapter 4 of this work. In this chapter, the summary of the findings, factors that account for the errors. The role of concord errors in the teaching and learning of English, the pedagogical implication and suggestions for future research will be discussed.

5.1 Summary of findings

The related issues of the whole study included the analysis of concord errors among SHS 2A students in Tumu Senior High Technical School. The summary of the findings included the findings from Class Exercises, the findings from Take-Home essay and Objective Test. After analyzing all the Two Hundred and Fifty (250) scripts of the respondents, it was discovered that students of Tumu Senior High Technical School made all kinds of concord errors. Out of the two hundred and fifty (250) scripts, all contained concord errors. It was also discovered that though students of Tumu Sectech had some understanding of concord of indefinite expressions of amount (quantifiers) rules, they were not able to apply those particular rules appropriately. One finding is that the respondents have more problems with these types of indefinite expression of amount: Every concord, Most concord, and Each concord, though these students have been taught these topics, misapplied the rules Each and one of concord and many a concord of sub-categories of concord with indefinite expression of amount (Quantifiers) recorded higher marks..

Through an interview with the respondents, they explained that they had for instance, *each of and one of* concord wrong because the right answer *is* when used did not sound good in their ears. However, *are* sounded good and 'normal' in their ears. *Each of the boys (is, are here)*. Students got it wrong because some applied the principle of plurality instead of singularity. The sentence, *Many a girl (is, are) here*. Those who applied the principle of many plurality explained that *many* means a large quantity therefore the verb should be plural *are* instead of *is* because of the quantifier *many*. The sentence; *Everybody (think, thinks) he stole the money*. Some of the respondents when interviewed why they chose a wrong option *think* instead of *thinks*, they explained that the singular form of a verb is without – *s* ending and the plural form takes an – *s*. Generally, students have learnt and understood the rules of concord, but they misapplied these rules.

It was observed that students' use of *each and one of* with plural verb was as a result of their own intuition that each and one of take plural verbs. For example, *Each of the boys are here*. In the above example, the author thought that the - *s* of boys should attract a plural verb *are*. Students should be made to understand that *each and one of* take singular verbs, this is because the phrase *each of the boys* is considered as a unit. Students should make conscious efforts to understand the use of the indefinite expression of amounts (Quantifies). Another finding is that of concord errors such as notional concord of subject-verb concord errors of students were misapplied by the correspondents. For example: *The news are bad*; This expression is notionally singular and will need a singular verb *is* instead of *are*.

Another finding is that concord errors such as coordinated subject concord errors, verb-tense concord errors, Inverted subject-verb concord errors and determinant-noun and noun-pronoun concord errors, though, were of low frequency as

compared to the other two from the above in the students' scripts, students will still need to do more to internalize these rules. It was also discovered that most of the errors committed in the students' scripts were developmental errors, interference errors and psycholinguistic errors. A number of factors accounted for the concord errors made by the respondents. Prominent among these factors are L1 interference, overgeneralization, communal pull, intralingual and influence of computer /technology.

5.2 The role of concord errors

The findings of the study have shown that learners' concord errors help teachers identify the problems learners face in the language class. Frequent exercises on the investigations of learners' concord errors and the frequency with which they occur will enable the teachers devise appropriate alternative strategies to organize remedial lessons on those concord errors to help reduce them. This is necessary because, concord errors provide adequate feedback that informs the teacher on the effectiveness of teaching techniques. For instance, Mohammed (2013) and Jabeen, Kazemian and Shahbaz (2015) confirm the importance of concord errors in language teaching and learning: They help the teacher to know a student's progress, provide feedback; they make the researcher aware of the effectiveness of one's teaching techniques, and show one what parts of the syllabus has been inadequately learned or taught and need further attention.

Errors on concord enable the teacher to decide whether he must devote more time to the item he has been teaching and provide information for designing a remedial syllabus or a program of re-teaching. Lastly, errors show how a language is acquired, what strategies the learner uses and help the learner to learn from these errors. According to Richards (2002), errors play the role of enabling the teacher to discover, identify and analyse learners' mistakes as well as designing the appropriate methods

for solving them. Again, errors are very important to the learner. This to Richards (2002) serves as a tool through which the learner discovers the rules of the target language which could not be understood earlier and with time, these learners will be able to identify and correct their errors.

5.3 Pedagogical implications

The findings of the research revealed that students have problems with concord rules. The study was also to find a solution to address the students' problems with concord. The solution has pedagogical implication for syllabus designers, textbook writers, teacher of English language and student of Tumu Senior High/Technical School and other schools by extension.

5.3.1 Syllabus designers

Since the only category of concord to be taught in the S. H. S. syllabus relates to the subject-verb concord, the present researcher suggest that syllabus designer endeavor to include all the categories or types of concord in the syllabus. These categories can be spread throughout the three-year programme. For example, in year one, the syllabus may specify two categories, year two and others.

5.3.2 Textbook writers

Textbook writers should not limit the contents in textbooks they write to the principle of subject-verb concord. They should emphasise the other categories. Secondly, they should include sufficient exercises that will help both teachers and students understand and gain both implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of concord thereby improving the proficiency of these teachers of English and their students.

5.3.3 Teachers of English language

Teachers of English Language, especially those at second cycle must do well to understand all the rules of concord so that in their teaching, they can explain the rules of concord with dexterity for students to internalize the various aspects of the broader concept of concord such as subject- verb concord, concord with indefinite expression of amount (Qualifiers) etc. If teachers of English can decipher which concord rule may be applicable in a particular context, they can help to clarify a concord rule that perhaps was misunderstood or partially learned by their students. Teachers of English should feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the students they teach. They should not be only concerned with the success of their students in both internal and external 'examinations, but these teachers should maintain a good relationship with their students and improve students' academic performance.

Teachers who are affable maintain a good relationship with their student, and are responsive to academic needs of their students and contribute greatly to the academic well-being of the students. The role of second cycle teachers in laying a strong foundation for the acquisition of proficiency in English cannot be undermined. There must be a deliberate effort to improve on the standard of teachers of English Language. They should be sent for regular in-service training, seminars and conferences. The syllabi for such programmes must be structured in a way that all the aspects of the language which pose great difficulty to students be given detailed attention. The training will keep the teachers abreast of the language. The teachers ought to subject themselves to frequent linguistic test on the general principles of English grammar. They should listen to and read good literature. This is because in a language learning situation, adequate exposure to the language leads to efficient and effective use. According to Otavio (2013), teachers should make students more sensitive to concord

rules . The more these students notice the 3rd person -s outside the classroom, the more likely they are to restructure their inter language. Otavio (2013) again entreats teachers to encourage students to monitor their speech, which might contribute to long term overall accuracy.

5.3.4 Students

Students should develop positive attitude towards the study of English Language. They should change their mindset that English Language is automatic and it is more speech subject than writing and should be prepared to be committed to the study of it. For instance, they should gradually move from lexical intuitive and offer erratic use of *each of* and *one of* towards more conscious and systematic assort of mapping and deployment of the underlying systems when it comes to the study of concord regularly to avoid deviations associated with concord.

5.4 Suggestions for future research

This study examined the concord errors learners at the Tumu Senior High/Technical School make in their writing. Researchers may also look at other categories of concord errors other than those found in the present study. Future research may focus on the verb-verb concord errors. Again, researchers may investigate how concord errors in the writing of L2 learners are corrected by both teachers and learners in the classroom. The researcher also suggests that this study be extended to other schools in the Upper West Region with an increase in the number of participants.

5.5 Conclusion

This study discloses that students of Tumu Senior High Technical School have plethora of problems in applying the rules of English concord. Students should be aware that it is unpardonable when their constructions of sentences are full of concord rules deviations. For one thing, their speech habits sometime interfere with their ability to

apply the rules of concord. If they have the habit of using wrong indefinite expressions of amount (quantifiers) for *each of* and *one of* from words when they talk, they need to be particularly careful not to leave off the right verbs when they write. Books that are made available to the students must be examined. The students must cultivate the culture of reading because the culture of reading can improve their performance.

The mastery of the syntax of English demands close attention to the minutest details of the language. Nothing should be taken for granted. Every effort must be geared towards the promotion of Standard English. Errors are not to be regarded as signs of failure, but as evidence that the learner is working his way towards the correct usage. An error in the use of English is an integral part of language learning process and a key to competence development in the language. Users of English must have positive attitude to concord errors and work towards the improvement of their performance in the language. The way forward has been suggested in this chapter under the sub-topic pedagogical implications and it is the researcher's fervent hope that these suggestions would be heeded to in order for students' concord errors to minimise.

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APPENDIX A

Test items on concord

Tumu Senior High Technical School

Time (45minutes)

1. She (go , goes) to school .

2. The teachers (teaches , teach) mathematics.
- 3 .Everybody (know , knows) their name . .
- 4.The teacher, not the students (are , is) in the class.
5. .The little kids alongside their parent (is , are) here.
6. .Nothing (go , goes) well here.
7. The school (buys , buy) some (equipments , equipment).
- 8.. The poor (need , needs) help from the rich.
9. Every body knows (his/her , their) name .
- 10 .The dog fed (himself , itself) yesterday.
- 11 .Although the apples were sweet, I did not enjoy (it , them)
12. (These , This) cars are his.
- 13.If I (were , was) king.
14. Tuberculosis (is ,are) deceases.
- 15.The draughts (is , are) good games.Either the teachers or the headmaster is going to the programme.
16. Either Amina or her friends (are , is) over there.
- 17.If James fails his examination, his teachers, his parents, his friends or I (am , are) to be blame.
18. Neither the students nor the teacher (are, is) to be blamed..
19. More than one oranges (are , is) here .
20. Every boy (likes , like) football.
21. Every ten litres of oil bought (come , comes) with a bonus.
- 22,Most of the time John (have , has) been here.

- 23,.Each boy (has , have) a car .
- 24.Everybody (think , thinks) he stole money .
- 25.All (is , are) seated in the hall (are)
- 26..The headmaster as well as the teacher (require , require)patience .
- 27..Either the maths teacher or the counselor (is , are) here.
28. The man demanded he (obeyed ,obey) .
29. Ibrahim and Yahaya (is , are) my friend.
30. It has been suggested that he (goes , go) away.
- 31 They (make , makes) me cry everyday.
- 32 Both Sailors (was , were) attempting to grap the life line.
- 33 Several of the students (have, has) gone home.
- 34 Many a girls (are, is) here.
- 35 The drug dealer, together with his agents, (was , were) arrested outside the city.
- 36 The couple (disagrees , disagree) with each other about where they should spend their vacation.
- 37 Remeo and Juliet still (retains , retain) much of its popularity.
- 38 All the soup (was , were) spilled on the new floor.
- 39 The cost of my dress in addition to my bag (equal , equals) fifty Ghana cedis only.
- 40 Hers (is , are) five examples of hard drugs.
- 42.That couple (has, have) been living there for years
- 43,He (was, is) there yesterday
- 44.The pastor (preach, preaches) last Sunday.

45. The teacher and farmer (respect, respects) people.
- 46 My mother and friend (is, are) trustworthy.
- 47 Gari and beans (is, are) my favourite meal.
- 48The hammer and sickle (was, were) flying from the flagpole
- 49 Selfish people live only for(himself, themselves)
- 50.(These, This) young man helped me



APPENDIX B

ESSAY QUESTION

1. As a room monitor, write a story on a fight you have ever witnessed in your dormitory to your house master.
2. write a story which ends I will never go there again



APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF ESSAY ANSWER