

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**DIFFICULTIES IN THE STUDY AND USE OF CONCORD: A CASE STUDY OF
CHANSA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**



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CHANSA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

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**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Languages Education, submitted to the School of
Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
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JULY, 2023

DECLARATION

Student Declaration

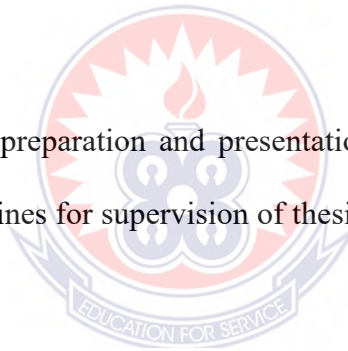
I, Anaab, Ronald Amaagoa, hereby declare that, this Dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

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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.



SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. KWAKU OFORI

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this thesis to my entire family.



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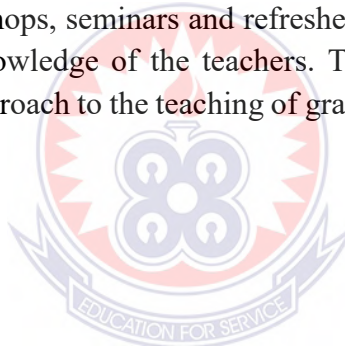
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ABSTRACT

One of the basic grammatical rules often abused by basic school students is that regarding the use of grammatical concord. Thus, many Junior High School learners are challenged in the appropriate use of grammatical concord which obstructs communication. In line with this the study explored the difficulties in the study and use of concord among students of Chansa Junior High School. The theoretical arguments of this study are grounded in the dependency grammar theory and the syntactic theory. The qualitative research approach was used in the study. In all, fifty-six (56) students and two (2) teachers participated in the study. Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used to select the teachers and students respectively. Data collection for the study was done using interviews, observations and content analysis of the essays of students. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis. The study revealed that the students had very poor knowledge of general basic grammar, especially in the area of agreement (concord). Tenses used were particularly chaotic. The pedagogical treatment of grammatical structures by the teachers has been ineffective. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service and the Metropolitan Director of Education are advised to frequently organize workshops, seminars and refresher courses that will help enhance the professional skills and knowledge of the teachers. Teachers are advised to use a more creative and simulative approach to the teaching of grammatical concord to build students' confidence in grammar.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter presents a concise introduction of the study, historical background of the topic under study, statement of the problem of the study, the scope of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitation of the study, organization of the study and summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background of the Study

Although, Ghana, like the majority of sub-Saharan countries, is endowed with a variety of indigenous languages, English continues to be essential to Ghanaians' day-to-day interactions. The Ministry of Education (MoE) has made it a policy to teach the English language from kindergarten to university level as a result of this pretty terrible instance of linguistic imperialism. Also, practically all subjects are taught using it as a medium. Afful (2007: p.144), has remarked that, apart from English Language being used as an official language or Lingua Franca in Ghana, it is an important method of inter-ethnic interaction locally and a source of communication with the international community - politics, trade, and science. Quagie (2014), who compliments the function of English and asserts that, he has not yet read or seen any written manifestos of political parties in other Ghanaian languages, supports Afful's assertion about the significance of English language in Ghana. This is unfortunate because, the vast majority of people are not particularly literate in English.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to note that, despite the prestige of the English language in Ghana, little has been done to enhance how it is taught and acquired, let alone spoken as one would have imagined. In this context, it is pertinent to note the difficulties Ghanaian academics and teachers continue to face in relation to concerns regarding the

teaching and learning of the language. This situation is not exceptional to the students at Chansa Junior High School. In fact, the application of grammatical concord is one of those fundamental grammar principles that is frequently broken. Grammatical concord is conceptually, a grammatical relationship between two syntactic components of a sentence in which the subject and verb must concur Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech & Svavik (2005). Essentially, the usage of grammatical concord has developed into a significant communicative idea because, it establishes the guidelines for putting words in the appropriate order to convey meaning. As a result, the methodology of its teaching should provide students with relevant debates. Therefore, it is important that, English language teachers and students follow the rules governing concord because, concord is a part of English grammar and is necessary for effective communication. Basic grammatical rules should not be broken in order for English language to be taught and learned properly, Klu (2014).

Research has shown that some English teachers, particularly those at junior high and senior high schools, lack the necessary training to teach the language's foundational skills to satisfy the requirements and aspirations of students Klu (2014). When second language learners make grammatical mistakes, Kwofie (2011, p. 23), citing Yankson (1994), asserts that it reflects poorly on their personalities, reveals something about their educational background, and demonstrates that, their interlanguage is still "developing grammar" that borders on illiteracy. This observation from a prominent Ghanaian researcher on English as a Second Language (ESL), gives validity to the idea that, one's inadequate command of English grammar might denigrate and humiliate one in the eyes of one's audience. In this aspect, English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers must exercise caution to avoid the risks associated with improperly using

grammatical concord in both their verbal and written communications. Nonetheless, Thakur,

(2002) makes it clear that, English is not a simple language to master and that, it is therefore not surprising that, even advanced English as Second Language (ESL) learners and speakers occasionally struggle to understand certain grammatical rules.

Despite the significance of the English language on a local and global scale, basic school students in Ghana typically have inadequate language skills in both speech and writing. According to the 2013 National Education Assessment (NEA), at least fifty percent (50%) of students were unable to accurately enunciate even one English word.

There are a number of reasons why English language usage is of poor quality, including teachers' lack of the necessary pedagogical abilities Quagie (2014). Despite this, the language is so widely used that, both teachers and students should be extremely proficient in it. The aim of the current study is to identify solutions to some of the problems that English as a second language learners face, when using grammatical concord. Examples were taken from the exam scripts of Chansa Junior High School students in forms one (1) and two (2).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

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. However, concord, a central aspect of English grammar, has become very problematic among the students of today in general and the junior high school students in particular. Relating verbs correctly with their subjects in sentences has been the problem of many students at both junior high and senior high levels of education in Ghana. Most students are not able to apply the rules of concord correctly, they are punished during assessment and the punishment affects

their performance negatively. Students 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 one another.

The use of grammatical concord is one of the fundamental grammar rules that is frequently misused. Less than half of the students passed the English language exam in 2021, 2019, and 2018, according to data available from the Builsa South District Education Office in the Upper East Region of Ghana (43.9%, 47.2%, and 36.8%, respectively). Particularly, it has been observed and experienced in the district's teaching profession that, many Junior High School (JHS) students struggle with the proper usage of grammatical concord.

In Ghana and elsewhere, the problem of English grammar inconsistency has grown to be a burden on the shoulders of both teachers and students. The issue of grammatical concord is so pervasive that Owusu Ansah (1997; p.30), citing Yankson (1989), said that "concord errors...are detrimental to one's reputation than other errors...". Generally, students seem to struggle with subject-verb agreement when they do so in different phrases, the same clauses when the normal word order is altered, and even when there are no words in between the subject and the verb. Due to these violations of the concord rules, students now communicate phrases with a variety of nuances in meaning. As a result of the incorrect tense concord, the recipient is severely harmed in this case as the phrases exhibit diverse shades of meaning. Students' improper use of grammatical concord impedes communication and consequently, the recipients' ability to understand. Thus, mistakes in the creation of the plural and past tense pattern result

from students' inability to apply the exceptions to grammatical concord rules. All stakeholders involved in the communication link are still unable to overcome the improper usage of grammatical concord. Inappropriate usage of grammatical concord by teachers, students, and other stakeholders, according to Quagie (2011), results in a decrease in audience interest and attention span. Indeed, when it comes to grammatical concord, teachers and students tend to focus only on subject-verb agreement, forgetting that, other crucial issues like concord between tenses, notional concord, proximity concord, and concord with relative pronouns -who, which, that, whose, among others, remain insurmountable to all parties involved Quagie (2011). As a result, since grammar is now a crucial communicative tool, teaching on it should make way for practical discussions about how students might use it to convey important information. According to Johansson (2012), there are a number of factors that could cause concord-related issues for English language students, and these concerns may be linked to inter- or intra-lingual aspects. According to Quagie (2014), concord still causes problems for students in general since some teachers lack the training necessary to teach the subject. Intra-lingual errors, however, frequently result from the incorrect application of the rules guiding the use of grammatical concord. This study aims to investigate the difficulties in the study and use of concord among students of Chansa Junior High School in the Builsa South District. Thus, the study also aims to identify the various grammatical concord errors that students most frequently make.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the difficulties in the study and use of concord, using Chansa Junior High School as a case study.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To assess the types of English concord errors encountered among Chansa Junior High students.

2. To determine the factors influencing the wrong use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students.

1.5 Research Questions

This study aims at finding solutions to the following key questions:

1. What are the types of English concord errors that are most common among Chansa Junior High Students?

2. What are the factors influencing the use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

In general, the results of this study will aid in determining if teachers are well prepared to teach the foundations of English concord to students in order to meet their good grammatical demands. This study specifically suggests effective areas of teachers' training to have a favorable impact on their usage of grammatical rules and principles by looking at the instructional methods utilized in the teaching of English concord among teachers.

The findings will assist in determining the factors that continue to contribute to Junior High School (J.H.S) students' incorrect usage of English concord when formulating policies. This will further make it easier for the Ministry of Education to launch initiatives through the Ghana Education Service to solve the difficulties. This study will contribute to the existing literature on English concords in academia, enhancing its value as a resource for academics, researchers, and scholars.

1.7 Limitations of the study

Geographically, this study was restricted to students and teachers at Chansa Junior High School. Hence, the results cannot be generalized to all basic schools in Ghana. The conclusion is that, the study's external validity may be impacted because, external validity has to do with how well a study's findings can be extrapolated from a sample to a population, Creswell & Creswell (2018). Despite this, the study's findings may offer useful guidance on how to properly apply grammatical concord. It might also inspire more thorough investigation into the relevant problem.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

Reading, grammar, writing composition, and library are all included in Ghana's English language syllabus. The focus of this study was on the syllabus's grammatical component. In addition, despite the fact that, there are a number of concord errors, such as grammatical concord and distance concord, this study concentrated on the difficulties students face when learning and using concord. This is because the subject and the verb are considered to be the two most significant parts of a sentence, and because, concord is one of the fundamental grammatical rules that is misused Estling-Vannestl (2007).

Although, concord is taught in both upper primary and junior high school, the study focused on the junior high school, specifically, Chansa Junior High School. This is founded on the idea that, by the time students are transferred from the upper primary to the junior high school, they would have at least had a basic introduction to concord and should therefore already be familiar with its rules. They may therefore, be more credible than those in upper primary in their responses to the study.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one, served as an overview of the subject matter of the study having provided readers with a brief introduction to the

study, the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance and limitations of the study, delimitations, organisation and summary of the study.

Chapter two reviews existing relevant literature on the subject matter of the study and includes literature, dealing with concepts, theories and empirical studies. In doing so, the chapter affirms the research gap.

Chapter three indicates the manner in which the study's data was collected and analyzed and includes the research approach, research design, research paradigm, data collection instruments and procedures, methods for ensuring reliability and validity, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations.

Meanwhile, chapter four includes, the actual presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data. Finally, chapter five provides a summary of the study's findings, draws conclusions from those findings, provides study recommendations, and proposed directions for future research.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a concise introduction of the study, historical background of the topic under study, statement of the problem of the study, the scope of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitation of the study, organization of the study and summary of the chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature related to the study. The chapter analyses and discusses the relevant literature on the topic under study. The chapter reviews the pertinent literature for the study while drawing on earlier research and practice to improve a coherent conceptual and theoretical framework suitable for the proper use of grammatical concord. Conceptual, empirical, and theoretical viewpoints are used to review the literature. In this chapter, the following themes are reviewed and addressed in light of the study's research questions:

1. Concept of Grammatical Concord
2. Types of Grammatical Concord
3. Students' Use of Grammatical Concord
4. Factors influencing the incorrect application of grammatical concord
5. Performance of Basic Students in English Language in Ghana
6. Empirical literature (Previous Studies)
7. Theoretical Frameworks

2.1 Concept of Grammatical Concord

Fundamentally, grammatical concord has developed into a crucial communicative idea because, it establishes the rules for putting words in the appropriate order to convey meaning. Understanding the definitions of grammar and concord is crucial before exploring grammatical concord. Grammar is conceptually, the set of guidelines for arranging meaningful components into sentences. According to Hassan, Azmi & Atek (2015), these guidelines specify how sentences should be properly delivered. According to Linh (2013), following grammar rules in sentences is what gives language "flow"

and makes it engaging. It follows that, there must be certain rules that allow for orderly speaking and writing of grammar. Therefore, grammar offers the guidelines for arranging words in the proper sequence so that, their meaning is evident. The loss of such standards, however, leads to grammatical inconsistencies. This can be explained by the fact that, improper language use in communication diverts the attention, focus, and interest of the audience.

The verb agrees with the subject when it has the same number and person as the subject, according to Thukur (2002), who also lists this as one of the useful rules of English grammar. In terms of concepts, Quirk (2010), defines concord as the connection between two grammatical units that, aligns a specific feature with a feature that is presented in the other. As a result, when one of the grammatical units exhibits a certain property, such as plurality, it is consistent with an attribute that is presented in the other. Simply put, this indicates that, a form of one word necessitates a similar form of another. Concord, therefore, can be defined as a formal relationship between grammatical components, with one word's form necessitating another's corresponding form, according to the description given above. Concord is the precise way in which words are used together in accordance with grammatical norms, according to Kwofie (2011).

Therefore, it is evident that, the term “concord” refers to the harmony between the inflectional forms of various sentence parts. It can also be inferred that, formal links between grammar's constituent parts are referred to as concord in grammatical theory and description. This explains Dada's (2000), contention that, the essential notion or principle guiding a phrase should be concord. In other words, concord is one of the fundamental laws that, anyone using English as a first or second language must learn, depending on the situation. But according to Ogunsiji and Sunday (2005), scholars have

repeatedly emphasized how important it is to having a solid command of the English language over the years.

A conceptual definition of grammatical concord is undertaken after a review of the literature on grammar and concord. Fundamentally, the usage of grammatical concord has developed into a significant communicative idea because, it establishes the guidelines for putting words in the appropriate order to convey meaning. As a result, the methodology of its instruction should provide students with relevant debates. This is in opposition to the claim that, one's audience may denigrate and shame them due to one's inadequate command of English language. In this sense, students must exercise caution to avoid the risks associated with improper use of grammatical concord in both their spoken and written communications.

In light of this, Babajide (2004), defines grammatical concord as agreement between the subject, the verbs, and other phrase structure components. The word whose form is decided by the other is said to be in agreement with it in this context, which might occur over short or large distances in phrases. In the same vein, Quirk (2010), defines grammatical concord as the relationship between two syntactic components of a sentence in which the subject and the verb must agree. Quagie (2010), counters this claim, saying that, teachers and students should not limit grammatical concord to just subject-verb agreement.

This is explained by the fact that, in addition to subject-verb agreement, there are other types of grammatical concords as well, including concord within tenses, concord with relative pronouns, and concord with specific expressions or words like “as well as” or “in addition to.” Despite this, Estling-Vannestl (2007), contradicts Quagie's (2010), claim by stating that, the subject and the verb are the two most crucial parts of a

sentence. The foregoing review makes it evident that, one of the useful principles of English grammar is when the verb agrees with the subject in terms of the number and person, despite the opinion of some scholars that, grammatical concord should not be limited to just subject-verb agreement.

In conclusion, grammar offers the rules for placing words in the proper order so that, the meaning is evident. Therefore, in order to accomplish effective communication, teachers, students, and other language users must abide by the laws controlling it.

2.2 Types of Grammatical Concord

There are different kinds of grammatical concords, and each kind has specific guidelines that must be followed in order to use it correctly and productively. Subject-verb concord, concord between tenses, notional concord, proximity concord, and concord with relative pronouns are a few examples of the several types of concord. Focus is placed on subject-verb concord and concord within tenses for the purposes of this study. This is explained by Norlander's (2012), claim that, although, notional concord and proximity concord continue to pose significant challenges to students, verb-subject disagreement is the most common concord error observed among them Quagie (2011).

2.2.1 Subject-Verb Concord

A fundamental rule of grammar in the English language is known as “subject-verb concord,” which asserts that, the subject and the verb in a phrase must agree Lashari & Soomro (2013). According to the rule, a singular subject needs a singular verb, whereas a plural subject needs a plural verb. As a result, the first requirement of subject-verb agreement is that, a verb and its subject must agree in number. The rule for singular and plural nouns is the same, while the rule for singular and plural verbs is the exact

opposite. However, pupils frequently mix up singular subjects and plural verbs, or the other way round, Al-Murshidi (2014). The words that appear between the subject and the verb should not alter the subject's number (singular or plural), according to the second rule of subject-verb agreement. The noun or pronoun that identifies the person or thing the phrase is about, typically serves as the subject, although, the verb typically has both a singular and plural form in the present tense. "One of the eggs is broken," as an example. A prepositional phrase, "of the eggs," is used. The verb is singular, as is both the subject and the predicate one. To make the subject verb-agreement in this example simpler to form, mentally delete the prepositional phrase.

Since the verb must agree in person, number, and or gender with the subject as its main argument, subject-verb concord is typically viewed as a crucial component of English syntax. In light of this, Klu (2014), contends that, subject-verb agreement is a pertinent fundamental skill and applicable fundamental ability that, each learner must work to acquire. Tsuchida (2011), points out that, there are a few out-of-the-ordinary instances when non-concordance appears to be the rule. The placement of the subject and verbs in a phrase can also affect how the subject is identified. In this regard, Oriaku (2006), concurs that, concord issues are typically brought on by intricate structures in which the subjects and verbs do not clearly follow one another.

This happens when the verb agrees with the noun in the intervening phrase or sentence after the verb and subject have been separated by a phrase or clause. Oludare (2016), adds that, it is usual for pupils to struggle with simple forms in which the subjects and verbs come after each other. In a similar vein, Norlander (2012), argues that, the concord error that students make the most often while writing essays is the one where the subjects and verbs disagree. However, the subjects and verbs in a sentence must agree for it to have meaning Long (2007). However, according to Oludare (2016),

students often wrongly couple singular subjects with plural verbs or vice versa, resulting in mistakes with subject-verb concord. However, the general rule dictates that, a singular subject should select a singular verb, whereas a multiple subject selects a plural verb.

In conclusion, there are two main principles governing subject-verb agreement. According to the first criterion, a verb must agree in number with its subject. In exact contrast to the rule for singular and plural nouns, is the rule for singular and plural verbs. In rule two, the words that occur before or after the subject and verb do not affect the subject's number (singular or plural). "One of the females is nice," as an illustration. The phrase "one of the females" uses a preposition. The verb is singular, as is the subject one. To make the subject verb-agreement easier to form, mentally delete the prepositional phrase.

2.3 Students' Use of Grammatical Agreement

According to Muhsin (2016), writing is one component of English that students find particularly challenging, especially, when it comes to grammar and the usage of tenses. He points out that, pupils' failure to structure sentences or use verb tenses in their compositions is what causes them the most trouble when writing in English. This subsequently results in the misuse of grammar. According to Muhsin (2016), English teachers must evaluate the errors made by their pupils in order to set up an efficient learning approach for their students. In order to determine how well students grasp grammar and how they learn it, grammatical errors are analysed, claims, Emmaryana (2010). In order to improve instruction or the creation of teaching materials, this will help learn more about the students' common struggles with learning grammar.

Ifeyinwa (2009), posits that, a number of students lack sufficient information regarding the application of the rules governing grammatical concord of the various sorts. Because of this, the majority of them usually employ grammatical concord incorrectly. This means that, because the pupils are unable to apply the exceptions to the norms, problems in the creation of plural and past tense patterns ensue. In this context, Kwofie (2011), suggests that, when pupils make grammatical mistakes, it shows that, their interlanguage is still “forming grammar” and is on the verge of illiteracy. Conceptually, a concord mistake is a mismatch between two or more grammatical parts in a phrase, according to Norlander (2012). Anantri (2017), states that, a mistake happens when a learner does not understand what is correct in the language of study, meaning that even if the student has learned the language, he or she does not understand its form. This, according to Oriaku (2006), results from intricate structures in which the subjects and verbs do not always follow one another in a clear manner.

According to Al-Khresheh (2010), literal translation might also result in interlingual errors. Pratiwi (2015), divides interlingual errors into three categories based on this justification: transfer error, mother tongue interference error, and literal translation error. Interlingual transmission is brought on by mother tongue interference. A learner who is unfamiliar with the rules of the target language will apply the ones from his or her native tongue. Instead of transmitting models from their first language, learners make mother tongue interference errors while they try to understand the target language’s structure. Literal translation mistakes happen when sentences or idiomatic expressions are translated verb for verb from the students' native tongue to the target language Pratiwi (2015). Language transfer, which leads to interlingual error, is one of the main variables in this respect accounting for the incorrect usage of grammatical

concord. As a result, switching from teaching in the mother tongue to another language could enable students to correctly apply grammatical concord.

On the other hand, intralingual errors happen when grammatical concord rules are applied improperly or ineffectively. They are universal learning techniques that represent the general traits of learning laws unrelated to first language acquisition Akinbode (2009). In addition, Kaweera (2013), shows that, the target language actually adds to intralingual errors. Pratiwi (2015), further divides the intralingual mistakes into four groups, including overgeneralization, disregard for rule restrictions, insufficient application of the rules, and erroneous idea postulated or semantic errors:

1. Overgeneralization: this occurs when a learner constructs an erroneous structure using knowledge of other language structures as a base. Littlewood (1984), uses the example of adding “s” to even irregular plurals to illustrate how to pluralize words while simultaneously generalizing the “-ed” past tense.
2. Disregard of rule restrictions: James (1998, p.63) points out that, ignorance is specific in the sense that, one is typically said to be ignorant of structure; the second-language learner does not adhere to the target language’s structure. This error type occurs when the learner fails to notice already-present structures.
3. Insufficient application of the rules: this occurs when a learner does not fully apply the rules because of the stimulus language.
4. Erroneous idea postulated or semantic errors: Erroneous conceptualization and false concept hypotheses result from learners’ incorrect comprehension of the differences between target language items.

The handling of past events, the use of singular and plural subjects, and the use of the simple past tense and past perfect tenses are the most frequent types of grammatical concord mistakes. The subject verb concord rule, which was covered in the prior

paragraphs, states that, a singular subject should choose a singular verb and a plural subject should take a plural verb. Student pairings of singular subjects and plural verbs, or vice versa, are common, though, Al-Murshidi (2014).

Students typically are not aware of the rule, which states that, the past perfect is the appropriate tense to use when describing two previous events Klu (2014). They frequently overlook the fact that, the past perfect tense employs the auxiliary verb “had” and any lexical verb's ideal type. The subject-verb agreement problem has been identified as a specific flaw that frequently appears in student writing Chele (2015). Similar to this, Oni (2012), observes that, the absence of subject-verb agreement is one of the most typical grammatical errors in both written and spoken discourses because of the complexity of the English language. According to Bakuuro (2015), subject-verb concord has various challenges that many students have experienced in one way or the other. Typical development errors, notional concord errors, proximity concord errors, memory limitation concord errors, plural inflectional concord errors, and the failure to distinguish noun headwords are six of the flaws that contribute to these complications.

The auxiliary verbs “has” and “have” are linked to errors involving the use of singular and plural subjects Oludare (2016). ‘Has’ is a singular form, whereas ‘have’ is a plural form. According to the concord rule, “has” should be used with singular subjects while “have” should be used with plural subjects. Most pupils disobey this rule. According to Omotese (2012), because, most students are still having trouble using the simple past tense and the past perfect tenses, instances when students employ the basic (simple) tense incorrectly should be given serious consideration. Students frequently overlook the fact that, the past perfect tense calls for the perfect form of any lexical verb and the auxiliary word “had” Klu (2014). Norlander (2012), contends that, students frequently make the concord of the verb in relation to the subject error, and that, students may be

overgeneralizing and overusing the third person singular. Al-Murshidi (2014), further claims that, there are less concord errors involving determiner-head than there are involving person. Punctuation errors, which are special markings used to break sentences and phrases and to clarify meanings, are also among the most prevalent grammar errors in English. These errors could include overusing, incorrectly using, or not employing some of these markings Al-Murshidi (2014). Another common instance of grammatical concord error, according to Oludare (2016), is when the verb and subject are separated by a phrase or clause, and the verb is inadvertently made to agree with the noun in the intervening phrase or clause.

When students make any of these grammatical concord errors, according to Corder (2008), it is either because they have a deep comprehension of the idea or because they were taught by rote memorization rather than practice.

2.4 Factors Influencing the Incorrect Application of Grammatical Concord

Correct usage of grammatical concord is aided by avoiding concord errors. Simple concord principles must, nevertheless, be followed in order to avoid grammatical problems. If you wish to speak English accurately and efficiently, you should master the rules that govern it, just like any other language. The teaching and learning of English, particularly, grammatical concord, has encountered difficulties.

2.4.1 Faulty Instructional Materials and Instructional Techniques

Conceptually, a teacher's technique of teaching is faulty if he or she fails to make use of instructional materials where they are required. Akinbode (2009), states that, dynamism in instructional techniques and conversance with modern trends in language teaching is required of the language teacher. English language is governed by rules and so, teachers must be able to use the right structural and pedagogical techniques to teach

the subject. Largely, the faulty use of instructional materials and instructional techniques results in making both interlingual and intralingual errors. According to Akinbode (2009), the language teacher is expected to be dynamic in his or her instructional techniques. On the other hand, it is obvious that, inappropriate instructional materials and the pedagogical shortcomings of the teacher are the main factors responsible for some of the problems encountered by students in the use of grammatical concord. It is therefore necessary that, efforts are made by language curriculum developers to remedy the faulty use of teaching materials and methods by teachers.

2.4.2 Relevant Skills and Competence

Teaching intensive grammar instruction refers to instruction over a sustained period of time (which could be a lesson or a series of lessons covering days or weeks) concerning a single grammatical structure or, perhaps, a pair of contrasted structures (example, English past continuous versus past simple). Extensive grammar teaching refers to instruction concerning a whole range of structures within a short period of time (example, a lesson) so that, each structure receives only minimal attention in each lesson Ellis (2006). When it comes to extensive or intensive grammar teaching, Ellis argues that, grammar teaching needs to be conceived of in terms of both approaches. Therefore, he argues that, grammar teaching needs to be changed in teacher handbooks and include the kind of extensive treatment of grammar that arises naturally through corrective feedback Sheen (2002).

There is also a massed or distributed grammar instruction. By massed grammar instruction, Ellis (2006), argues that, the available grammar teaching time is concentrated into a short period. However, grammar instruction should take the form of separate grammar lessons of massed grammar instruction and should also be

integrated into communicative activities through distributed grammar instruction. According to Borg (1988), the lack of attention to the cognitive bases of teachers' work in grammar teaching represents a gap in the research agenda for English as a second Language (L2) teaching. Quagie (2014), notes that concord still bothers students, because, some teachers do not possess the requisite qualification to teach the language. Some Junior High School teachers in Ghana are teacher trainees who do not have much experience and necessary qualifications to teach the subject. Klu (2014), supports this view by noting that, some teachers of English Language, especially those at the Junior High Schools (JHS) and Senior High Schools (SHS) in Ghana, do not have the proper training to teach the language as will meet the requirements of students. The challenges in this regard, are attributed to wide disparities between the target language, English, and the local languages and that accounts for the difficulties faced by teachers and learners alike, Akurugu (2010).

2.4.3 Little Interest by Teachers in Teaching Grammar

Keck and Kim (2014), claim that, methods to grammar pedagogy are influenced by instructors' views on the significance of grammar, how it may be learnt, and how it should be taught. As a result, how grammar is taught to pupils can be influenced by teachers' attitudes towards the subject. According to Larsen-Freeman (2003), these ideas began to form when they were actually language learners themselves, before they were teachers. The majority of teachers have positive attitudes on grammar, and they support implicitly teaching grammar integration with other abilities, according to Pham (2004). However, teachers focus on merely linguistic competency by minimizing communicative features because, students are unmotivated to employ speaking and listening abilities outside of the classroom. In contrast to Pham (2004), Akurugu (2010), asserts that, many teachers have an escapist attitude toward teaching English grammar

and that, some teachers regard teaching English as a laborious job, leading them to look for simple solutions to problems. Furthermore, Klu (2014), postulates that, when it comes to grammatical concord instruction, professors only “buff off the surface” and leave more complicated problems, such as concord with relative pronouns, and other similar ones, for students to grapple with, on their own.

However, as suggested in the paragraphs before, this attitude could be justified by the low levels of expertise and understanding in the teaching of grammar. This might be problematic because, many students depend on or anticipate being inspired, challenged, and stimulated by their teachers. Generally speaking, a teacher’s ability to keep pupils interested is a prerequisite skill for effective learning in the classroom. Therefore, regardless of the degree of motivation pupils bring to the classroom, that motivation will be affected by what transpires there (the classroom) in terms of the teacher’s interest and attitude toward the teaching of the Language, for better or worse.

As a result, the instructional choices made by grammar teachers appear to be primarily based on their personal perceptions of what works and what does not Takala (2016). Akurugu (2010), however, contends that, it is crucial for English grammar instructors to identify the types of motivation that can spur students to take a desired interest in learning English grammar. Numerous researches on instructors’ perceptions of grammar instruction and learning have been conducted. Researchers that have looked at teachers’ perceptions of learners’ and teachers’ issues with grammar instruction and learning include Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), Burgess and Etherington (2002). All of these studies had one thing in common: teachers thought that, grammar mistakes should be corrected even when communicative objectives are met, and some teachers found it more challenging to correct their students’ spoken communication than their written work. Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), state that, although teachers

appreciate the use of authentic texts, using them to teach and practice grammar is viewed as problematic by both teachers and students. This is primarily caused by the wide range of structures, cultures, terminology, form-function matches, time required for their use, and the ability to generate appropriate tasks from them. Burgess and Etherington (2002), point out that, while teachers do not think the grammar in real texts is excessively challenging for their students, the presence of the specialist vocabulary prove to be a difficulty for them.

Al-Mekhlafi and Nagaratnam (2011), draws the conclusion that, grammar learning is difficult for learners in both written and communicative activities, with writing activities being more difficult than speaking ones. This study was conducted, since there has not been much research done in Ghana regarding the challenges basic teachers and students of grammatical concord encounter. However, recognizing these issues and being cognizant of them will aid teachers in finding solutions and delivering efficient grammar education. Therefore, it is obvious that, one of the techniques used to determine instructional approaches is the teacher's perspective on grammar instruction. As a result, it is critical to continue researching the literature on teachers' personal views in order to provide accurate descriptions of what grammar instruction at the elementary school level actually entails.

2.5 Performance of Basic Students in English Language in Ghana

A student's excellent performance in many other subjects is closely linked to their command of the English language, whether in writing or speaking, as evidenced by the fact that, English is the language that students use to communicate their thoughts to the examination bodies in almost all subjects; Chief Examiner's Report (2016). The primary testing organization in Ghana, the West African Examination Council (W.A.E.C), which oversees the conduct of Basic, Education, Certificate, Examination

(B.E.C.E), has frequently voiced complaints about pupils' poor English usage. The chief examiner stressed, among other things, that, while few candidates were able to produce work of exceptional performance at their level, overall performance did not significantly improve over the previous years when reporting on the performance of candidates who took the Basic, Education, Certificate, Examination (B.E.C.E) in 2008, Chief Examiner's Report, (2016). Therefore, it was recommended that, spelling and the fundamentals of grammar be stressed more throughout instruction and learning.

The chief examiner noted in 2016, that, the candidates' lack of proficiency in the English language was apparent in other subject areas. In terms of academic accomplishment in English, the analysis based on gender differences showed that, girls had a higher mean score than males. This suggests that, females performed better than their male counterparts in the English language. In terms of academic accomplishment in English, female students outperformed male students, according to Karthigeyan and Nirmala's (2012), research. The results concur with Ching's (2011), study, which showed that, there are gender differences in student performance and that, female students outperformed male students in reading and English proficiency.

All parties involved in education have expressed concern over the poor performance of pupils in government schools during the Basic Education Certificate Examination in the field of English Language, Abdullahi, & Bichi (2015). A number of factors that contribute to students' poor performance in the English language at the basic level in different locations have been looked at and discovered by various scholars. For instance, Etey et al. (2004), found that academic performance was better in private schools due to good work supervision in their research of some private and public schools in Ghana. These findings clearly show that, policymakers must address the

issue of the appalling performance in English language to avert students' performance continuous decline.

2.6 Empirical literature

The contextual studies in connection to the application of grammatical concord are examined in this section of the chapter. This review was conducted from a variety of nations to guarantee comprehensive coverage of the empirical literature. For instance, Borg (1998), presents an interpretive study that looked at how teachers approach teaching grammar, their personal pedagogical beliefs, the strategies they choose to employ in their courses, and the reasons for those choices. The study was carried out at an English language school in Malta, a hub for teaching English abroad in the Mediterranean. A semi-structured interview and classroom observations were used to gather data from the participant, an English-speaking instructor. The pupils in the lesson that were being watched, were intermediate-level English language learners (English as a Foreign Language). According to the study, the instructor based his grammatical instruction on the mistakes that his students made. According to the study, the primary benefit of employing student error is that, it persuades students of the importance of focusing on form and motivates them to do so. To put it another way, by genuinely pointing out the mistakes they had done, perhaps they would recognize that, they needed to practice more.

Ismail (2003), also conducted a subject verb agreement error analysis and case study at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan in Malaysia to pinpoint the mistakes in the students' descriptive writing. Thirty-four (34) writing samples from pupils were gathered in total. Through examination of the pupils' descriptive writing, the frequency of errors was determined. The study's findings demonstrated that, students made errors in subject-verb agreement in their descriptive writing, and that, these errors were brought about

by interference from their first languages (first language interference). The students' failures to correctly use the subject-verb agreement rule in their writing was, another factor in the error creation. Similarly, Arinacky (2007), investigated the mistakes of subject-verb agreement made by students at the English Department of the Widya Mandala University in Indonesia. The purpose of the study was to identify the various subject-verb agreement errors that students committed as well as their underlying reasons. The primary source of data for the study was the students' narrative essays. As a result, the research was non-experimental and focused on descriptive analysis. Students in their first semester served as the study's subjects. According to the study, subject-verb agreement is a common inaccuracy. The pupils were unable to identify the subjects' verbs, their singular or plural pronouns, or whether they were in the first, second, or third person. Additionally, they were unable to construct the proper verb phrase and were unable to apply the appropriate verbs in accordance with their time signal.

Oluwole (2008), also looked into how native language affected students' performance on the English Language portion of the Junior Secondary Certificate Exam in western Nigeria. The study revealed that, students' failure to perform well in examinations was caused by their language proficiency levels, teachers' lack of professional development, and their lack of enthusiasm. Paaku (2008), conducted research on the underwhelming academic results in some chosen schools in the Ajumako-Enyan-Essian district of Ghana's Central Region. According to the study, some of the reasons behind Junior High School students' poor academic performance were inadequate teaching techniques, students' bad attitude towards studying, and a lack of pertinent text materials.

Al-Badawi (2012), examined some Saudi Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) students' phonetic, morphological, and syntactic faults in English. The findings indicated that, the majority of students' syntactic mistakes were caused by their ignorance of the second language. Due to their ignorance of the English nouns' pluralization system, forty-two point five percent (42.5%) of the sample failed to adhere to subject-verb agreement in noun phrases.

Sokeng (2014), also examined the grammatical mistakes produced by first-year Francophone English learners at the University of Yaounde in Cameroon. Two hundred and fifty (250) students' essays were used as the source of the study's data. The essays were manually graded, and the errors were tallied and categorized based on how frequently they appeared in the students' essays. The results of the investigation showed that, the respondents' use of English grammar lacked sufficient evidence. Verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, word order, plurality, articles, passive voice, auxiliaries, and double negation were the main grammatical faults that were discovered. These findings demonstrated the need for critical consideration and advancement in the teaching and learning of English writing abilities in elementary and secondary schools throughout Cameroon.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study was informed by two theories; namely the dependency grammar theory and syntactic theory. The researcher chose these theories for the study, because of their relevance to the study's objectives.

2.7.1 The dependency Grammar Theory

The foundation of the dependency grammar theory, which had its roots in the middle centuries but is still relevant today, is that words "depend" on one another for a sentence

to make sense. By examining the relationship between a basic word and its dependents, one can infer the grammatical structure of a language. In languages that allow for word order mobility, such as German, Dutch, and English, this notion of grammar competency performs extremely well.

Concord, in a similar vein, is concerned with the proper arrangement of lexis or words in a sentence to create both social and grammatical sense. Word-order dependency is the crucial factor in all five aspects of concord, which is why this study applies the dependency grammar theory.

2.7.2 Syntactic theory

Essentially, syntax is the study of how different languages construct sentences. Conceptually, syntax is the study of sentences, how they are put together, and how they are put together. According to Matiku (2013), a key feature of a language's syntax is the common sequence in which the subject, verb, and object appear in sentences. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Chomsky created the syntactic theory, which depends on a set of principles to infer syntactic structures.

The theory attempts to define a finite grammar to some extent in order to explain the regularity of syntactic structures, Miyao (2006). Its use is important for developing a set of guidelines that clarify the intricate relationships between sentences and meaning representatives. Deductively, the syntactic theory addresses word order, examines the acceptability of sentences, and outlines the restrictions required to get rid of phrases that are not grammatically correct, Miyao (2006). The theory essentially holds that, each sentence must have a deep structure that specifies how it will be interpreted semantically, according to the syntactic component of a grammar. Thus, each of the infinitely many abstract formal objects that the syntactic component of a sentence

describes, contains all the information necessary for only one interpretation of that sentence, Chomsky (1960).

In general, grammatical harmony has rules and structures that must be followed to produce good speech. This means that, grammatical concord involves a set of principles that can produce a lot of different structures. The requirement that, subjects and verbs agree in number is one of the criteria that serves as the cornerstone of the application of grammatical concord. Butler's (2014), contention that, modern linguistic theorizing has given the syntactic functions typified by the conventional categories of subject and object a prominent role could be used to explain the significance of the theory for this investigation. Additionally, Alex (2013), makes the case that, syntax makes up the majority of English grammar.

In this study, the syntactic theory was used because, according to Farrel (2001), it provides a full, clear, and current introduction to a formal theory of grammar. In other words, its use in this work is predicated on the idea that, whereas applications frequently only call for the most plausible syntactic structures, grammatical concords are built to infer all grammatical syntactic structures. The theory would be put to use to investigate the difficulties Junior High Students (J.H.S) in Chansa have, adhering to syntactical rules and principles, as well as how English language teachers in Chansa Junior High School implement the syntactic component of grammatical concord in their instruction.

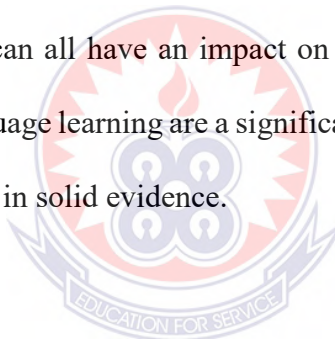
2.8 Chapter Summary

Concord between grammar-related components is conceptually, a formal relationship. Subject-verb concord, concord within tenses, notional concord, proximity concord, and concord with relative pronouns are among the main types of grammatical concord. Yet,

it is evident from the study that, the subject-verb concord is one of the helpful rules of English because, the subject and the verb are the two most crucial parts of a sentence.

In conclusion, many basic school students do not have a sufficient understanding of the rules governing grammatical concord, which leads to incorrect application of the notion. Grammatical concord errors are either the result of the mother tongue's influence, a word-for-word literal translation from the mother tongue (interlingual), or the inadequate and incorrect use of grammatical concord rules (intralingual errors). Transfer from the first language is unrelated to intralingual mistakes.

Conclusively, pedagogical methods used to teach the language, teachers' qualifications to teach concord, teachers' enthusiasm in teaching grammar, and students' perceptions of grammatical concord can all have an impact on how well students comprehend it (grammar). Errors in language learning are a significant concern, yet Ghanaian research in this area is still lacking in solid evidence.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methods that were used to explore the research questions. The major components of this chapter are; the research approach, research design, the study site (area), the study population, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, validity and reliability of the data collection instruments, and ethical considerations. The methods used for analysing the data from the field are also discussed in this chapter as well as a summary of the chapter.

3.1 Research Approach

To answer the formulated research questions and objectives, this study employed the qualitative research approach. Nkwi, Nyamongo and Ryan (2001, p.1), refer to qualitative research as that, which involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values. That is to say that, qualitative research involves collecting and or working with texts, images and sound or audio. According to Shuttleworth (2008), qualitative research paradigms are particularly useful when the complexity of a subject demands an answer that cannot be covered by a simple yes or no hypothesis. Thus, a problem that is simple and straight forward does not lend itself to qualitative research. In the view of Berg and Howard (2017), qualitative research refers to a concept, definition, metaphors, symbols and a description of things. This clearly indicates that, qualitative research contains all the essential instruments that can prompt recall which aids problem solving. In line with this, Merriam (2009, p.13), argues that, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. Though, some researchers as Silverman (2010), contends that, qualitative research

approaches sometimes leave out contextual sensitivities, and focus more on meanings and experiences, the merits of qualitative research approaches far outweigh the demerits.

From the above, it is justifiable to say that, the concept of grammatical concord, which is complex, needs the attention of qualitative research if it is to be thoroughly investigated. The qualitative research approach was applied in this study because, it is rich and deep in terms of explorations and descriptions. The approach allows for more diversity in responses as well as the capacity to adapt to new developments or issues during the research process itself, Tannor (2014). Thus, the qualitative approach was used in this study to gain rich information and deeper understanding of the concepts under study (the use of concord), since it has the ability to uncover complex understanding, opinions, attitudes and often hidden beliefs and perceptions on the subject under study as required in this research.

3.2 Research Design

The research design is intended to provide an appropriate framework for the study and use of concord, using Chansa Junior High School as a case study. According to Wiredu (1996), the design of any research describes in detail, all the procedures and methods the researcher employs in his work. A research design, again, as stated by Malhotra and Birks (2003), acts as a blueprint or framework of a research project that guides the collection and analysis of data. In general, it ensures that, the required data which lines up with the research questions are accurately and economically collected.

In this regard, the study employed case study as its research design. Case study according to Creswell (2014), is an empirical inquiry which involves an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon in its real-life context through an extensive data

collection. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 25) define a case as “a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context”. For the research to be a case study, one particular phenomenon, in this case English Language educators (a bounded system), was selected as the unit of analysis, Merriam, (2009). Kusi (2012), citing Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), assert that, case study researchers neither aim at discovering generalizable truth, nor look for causes and effect relations as quantitative researchers do, instead, they focus on describing, explaining and evaluating a phenomenon. The researcher gains a deeper understanding of the topic by spending extended period of time examining a teaching learning environment and the participants in the study. Through in-depth case study, the researcher presents a rich description of the events being studied to enhance understanding of the phenomenon, Stake, (2004). Base on this assertion, the researcher adopted case study because of its flexibility, that allows for multiple use of instruments to gather data from the researched (English Language teachers) in their natural context. Since English Language is most needful in the academic progress of the learner at all levels and a lifelong language that learners use extensively as a medium of communication, it is crucial that, students master the rules governing it. Therefore, adopting case study to gather data on the study and use of concord, using Chansa Junior High School students as well as English teachers.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Chansa Junior High School. Chansa Junior High School is located in the Builsa South District of the Upper East Region of Ghana. Chansa is a sub section of Kadema, which is one of the ten communities of Builsa South District. Chansa is located at the eastern part of the district. Chansa Junior High School is situated near the Chansa Area Council and the Church of Lord Mission. According to the 2010 Population and Housing Census, the population of Chansa is six thousand,

nine hundred and eighty-five (6,985) representing 8.2 percent of the district's total population with greater of the population being youth (GSS, 2010). The people of Chansa speak "Buli" as their mother language. Majority of the people are peasant farmers. Of the population, eleven (11) years and above, about sixty-five percent (65%) are illiterate (unable to read and write in any language) and forty-five percent (45%) are literate. The proportion of literate males is higher (87.1 %) than that of females (78.6%). According to GSS (2010), about forty-two percent (48.2%) of the population are capable of speaking and writing English language.

3.4 Research Population

Target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects which are of interest to the researcher in the generalization of the conclusions, Castillo, (2009). According to the Ghana Demographic Profile (2012), basic school children form a significant proportion of the population of Ghana (36.5%). Therefore, focusing on such a segment of the population in the educational sector in this study is important. The unit of analysis for this study was limited to students and English language teachers in Chansa Junior High School, in the Builsa South District. In this case, the targeted population for the study comprised of one hundred and twenty-five (125) students of form one and two, and English teachers of Chansa Junior High School. Specifically, the total English teachers of the school are three, of which one is a female while the other two are males. Therefore, the targeted population of the study stands at one hundred and twenty-eight (128), comprising sixty-one (61) male students, sixty-four (64) female students and three (3) teachers.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

Based on Fraenkel & Wallen's (2012), claim that, regardless of the method used for data collection, some strategy is needed for deciding which units should be measured

and included in a study and which ones should be excluded from the research population, sampling is considered to be a crucial component in every research. Tannor (2014), contends that, the sample used to make this determination must be representative of the population from which it was obtained. Because, no amount of analysis can make up for improperly gathered data, it is crucial to choose the method of getting data and the source of the data with caution. The units of analysis were sampled using a multi-stage sampling approach.

For the purpose of this study, focus was placed on the form 1 and 2 students and English teachers of Chansa Junior High School. One hundred and twenty-five (125) students and three (3) English teachers were randomly selected from the school. The names of the students were written on pieces of paper and put into a box. The box was then shaken after which a piece of paper was drawn and set aside. The box was shaken again, and another paper drawn and set aside until the researcher had selected fifty-six (56) students. This was done to give each student an equal chance of being part of the sample.

To have a representative sample, quota sampling technique was employed in the sampling of the respondents. This was based on Castillo's (2009), assertion that, even if it is possible, it is unnecessary to collect data from everyone in the target population in order to get valid findings. Quota sampling is defined as a non-probability sampling in which units are selected into a sample on the basis of pre-specified characteristics, Tannor, (2014). According to Ashley (2014), the difficulty in quota sampling is that, the researcher has to decide in advance the specific characteristics on which to base the quota.

For this study, students from form one and two formed the basis of the quota sampling. This was to ensure that, the study covers a range of grammatical concords issues peculiar to each form. Also, the method was applied because, it has these advantages; it is much quicker and easier to carry out since it does not require a sampling frame and the strict use of random sampling techniques, it is cost effective, and the quota sample improves the representation of particular strata (groups) within the population, as well as ensuring that, these strata are not over-represented. For example, it would ensure that, we have sufficient male students taking part in the research. However, quota sampling has the following weaknesses: The sample is not chosen using random selection, which makes it impossible to determine the possible sampling error. It is also impossible to make statistical inferences from the sample to the population. This could lead to problems of generalization.

After quota sampling had been used to select students and teachers from the selected classes, convenient sampling was then used to sample respondents from each form. Thus, the selection of the teachers and students was because they could be conveniently accessed. By ease of access, it means those who were willing to grant interview readily and sincerely. A sample size of fifty-six (56) students, thirty-five (35) students from the form two (2) class and twenty-one (21) students from the form one (1) class and two (2) teachers (one from each class) participated in the study. This included thirty-four (34) male students and twenty-two (22) female students. This is based on Crouch's (2006), suggestion that, the validity of fine-grained and in-depth inquiry in qualitative research is enhanced by small samples of less than twenty (20).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data gathering is crucial in research, as it is meant to contribute to a better understanding of a theoretical framework, Bernard, (2002). Data collection in this study

was done through interviews with students and teachers, classroom observation of instructional methods as well as the assessment of an essay written by the students.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

3.7.1 Interviews

Unstructured interview is a data collection method that is usually conducted face to face between the interviewer and the participants allowing the researcher to control the process, and allowing freedom for respondents to express their thoughts, O’Leary, (2004). In this study, the interview guide was designed using open-ended items to allow for further probing and discussions. Thus, opened-ended interviews were conducted with students and teachers as part of exploring research question two. Specifically, the interview guide sought to explore the underlying factors influencing the wrong use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students.

In-depth interviews were used in this study based on Guion, Diehl, and McDonald’s (2013), assertion that, qualitative interviews are excellent tools to use in planning and evaluating programmes, since they use an open-ended, discovery-oriented method, which allows the interviewer to deeply explore the respondent’s perspectives on a subject (In this case, grammatical concord). The application of the in-depth interviews granted the researcher the opportunity to deeply explore how the students feel about the use of grammatical concord.

The questions used in the interviews were unstructured (began with “why” or “how”) which gave the respondents the freedom to respond using their own words. This choice was based on Guion et al.’s (2013), assertion that, interview questions should be framed in ways that demand more than just a “yes” or “no” answer.” Each interview lasted between fifteen to twenty minutes (15-20). This was necessary to eliminate the boredom

often associated with long interviews including interviewer fatigue. The responses from the interviews were recorded and complemented with written notes (thus field notes) by the researcher with the permission of the participants. In establishing the rapport and confidence of the respondents, they were made aware that, recordings were only for academic purposes. Data was collected in the last term of the academic year, which was to ensure that, students had already treated English concord and could give proper responses.

3.7.2 Classroom Observation

The teaching methods employed by teachers are significant aspects that add to the difficulties students have when using grammatical concord. In this regard, teachers' pedagogical and instructional strategies were observed in the classroom. This made it easier to evaluate how teachers conceptualize and incorporate the grammatical concords principles into their teaching methods while responding to research questions.

The data obtained through the observation served as a check against that, through the interviews and content analysis of the essays of the students. In undertaking the observation in the classrooms, an observational guide was developed. But it is important to state that, none of the elements in the classroom including the teacher was made aware of the reasons behind the presence of the researcher. For the teacher, the researcher presented himself as a student in the school to observe and learn some teaching methodologies (no mention of English concords). This was relevant as teachers are more likely not to show the true character if they were made aware that, they were being observed with regard to grammatical concords in particular.

3.7.3 Essay Test

Data was collected from the students' essays and assignments in determining the accuracy of the grammatical concord used by the students as part of exploring research question one and two. In other words, the narrative writings of the students were used to determine the types of grammatical concord errors committed. Narrative writings have to do with writing skills and narrative text that tell a story usually of a sequence of events that happen over a period of time, Anantri (2017), while writing skills consist of constructing meaningful ideas using written work, Ginanjar (2015). In this study, students were given a narrative text on the food they like best. Therefore, analysing the writings of the students is the best way to ascertain their ability to express themselves in terms of their favourite food.

3.8 Reliability and Validity of Instruments

Generally, validity of data is defined as whether the data is plausible, credible and reliable, and can be defended when challenged. These principles were addressed when designing the interview guide and observation guide through pre-testing. Four types of validity were addressed in this study: descriptive validity, interpretive validity, theoretical validity and construct validity. According to Ginanjar (2015), descriptive validity is the accuracy of the behaviours, events, objects, settings and others reported by the researcher. For example, that, which is reported is actually what happened or what was heard or observed. Interpretive validity, on the other hand, is the accuracy of interpretation as to what happened in the minds of subjects and the extent to which the researcher understands exactly the opinions, thinking, feelings, intentions and experiences of subjects. Furthermore, theoretical validity is the extent to which the theoretical explanations developed are congruent with the data and is reliable and can be defended, Ginanjar, (2015). Finally, construct validity is the extent to which a test

measures what it purports to be measuring. In this context, pretesting of the instruments helped to identify potential challenges to be encountered during the main study.

3.9 Data Analysis

Literary analysis was done on the essays of the students using critical discourse analyses. According to Caulfield (2022), literary analysis means closely studying a text, interpreting its meanings, and exploring why the author made certain choices. It can be applied to novels, short stories, plays, poems, or any other form of literary writing. On the other hand, critical discourse analysis is an approach used to analyse written, spoken, or any significant event, Stubbs (1983). Specifically, written discourse analysis was performed on the written texts from students' essay test. According to Baker and McGlashan (2020), there are several types of critical discourse analysis including argumentative, narrative, descriptive, and exposition. For the purpose of this study, narrative discourse was employed. This is used in writing or speaking when the composer is attempting to narrate to an audience his or her opinions, experiences and encounters, typically by using logic and appealing to the audience's sense of reason. For this study, the narrative discourse is used because in essays, students are required to scrutinize each part of their ideas.

On the other hand, inductive thematic analysis was performed on the interview data. In inductive thematic analysis, coding and theme development are directed by the content of the data, Braun & Clarke (2006). Specifically, the following steps were taken in analysing the qualitative data: reading through the interview responses and looking for patterns or themes among the participants. Where a variety of themes were found, the researcher tried to group them in any meaningful way, such as by type of grammatical concord error. Also, identifying the responses that seem to have been given with enthusiasm, as opposed to those that the participants answered in only a few words;

checking whether or not, there are deviations from the patterns and common themes that emerged and interpretation of the data by attaching significance to the themes and patterns observed.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are very important for every research adventure or study. This, according to McNamara (1994), is most important for studies that involve the use of human subjects. Participants have a right to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation and the fact that, they have the right to decline to participate if they choose to do so. Therefore, the policy of voluntary participation was strictly adhered to, during the data collection phase for the purpose of ensuring the privacy as well as the safety of the participants.

The significant ethical issues considered in this research process include respondents' consent, confidentiality and anonymity, and voluntary participation. To secure the consent of the selected participants, the researcher relayed all important details of the study, including its aims and purpose. To protect the anonymity of the respondents, both teachers and students were also asked by the researcher not to mention their names during the interview. Rather, the study assigned index numbers to them throughout the process to ensure that, they felt comfortable about taking part in the study. Only participants who were willing to participate in the study, after being fully informed of the aim of the study and methodology, were included in the target sample of the study. All participants had the right not to participate in the study or to withdraw from the interview before completion.

Gaining access to research sites, involves obtaining permission to sites and individuals, and negotiating approval with these individuals at a site which can facilitate the

collection of research data, Creswell & Creswell (2018). To gain access into the schools, a letter of introduction was obtained from the University to the management of the school, explaining to them that, the researcher is a student who is on academic research assignment and should be accorded the needed assistance.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter looked at the methods used to gather data and analyse such data. The case study research design with qualitative analysis approach was used for the study. A total of fifty-six (56) students and two (2) teachers were selected through a multi-stage sampling technique from form One and Two of Chansa Junior High School. Interviews observations and essay test were used to gather data for the study. The instruments were pilot tested to ensure their validity and reliability.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative analysis of the data from the students and English Language teachers of Chansa Junior High School. The study explored students' difficulties in the study and use of concord. The analysis involved the categorisation of the data into common themes and presentation of the results in sections based on the research questions of the study. The first section explores the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The other sections focus on the types of English concord errors most common among the students and the factors influencing the use of concord among the students as the instructional as well as pedagogical methods used by teachers. All examples cited in this work are just as they appear in the essays of the students. None has been edited. All spelling mistakes are just as the students made them.

4.1 Research Question 1: **What are the types of English concord errors that are most common among Chansa Junior High Students?**

Considering the above findings that the students are unable to accurately use grammatical concord, it was essential to explore the specific types of grammatical concord errors most common among the students. This section was largely explored using the reviews of the essays of the students. This was complemented by the interviews conducted with the students and teachers.

Several grammatical concord errors were committed by the students. The two major types identified in the essays of the students were subject-verb disagreement and inappropriate tenses. This result was not surprising considering the assertion of Quagie (2011), that, subject-verb disagreement and inaccurate tenses are the most frequent

concord errors found among students. However, for most of the students, they are unable to tell if the error committed in the use of grammatical concord is related to subject-verb concord or concord within tenses or both.

Aside the normal spelling mistakes, use of wrong prepositions and punctuations, a major grammatical concord error noted was the subject-verb concord error. This is in agreement with Norlander (2012), claim that, the most frequent kind of concord error found in essays written by students is of the type where the verb is in disagreement with the subject. Nonetheless, for a sentence to have meaning, subjects and verbs need to concur with each other, Long (2007).

4.1.1 Subject-Verb Disagreement

Generally, the syntactic theory according to Chomsky (1960), requires that, subjects and verbs agree in number, thus as singular or plural. Therefore, a subject-verb agreement error occurs when the subject and verb of a sentence do not agree in number. The content analysis performed on the essays of the students highlights the following subject-verb disagreement constructions among the students.

A male student wrote:

“It is give me energy”.

The above statement shows a subject-verb disagreement. The subject “it” is a singular pronoun, while the verb “give” is in the plural form. To correct this sentence and achieve concord, the verb needs to be in agreement with the subject. Therefore, the correct sentence would then read, *“It gives me energy.”*

Another student (female) wrote:

*“Ingredient use for the stew are: pam oil, onion,
koobi, pepper, tomato, magi,”*

In this sentence, the word ‘ingredient’ connotes one ingredient which disagrees with the verb ‘are’ that has been used because ‘are’ connotes plurality. At a second glance, the list of ingredients at the end of the sentence gives substance to the use of ‘are’, making ‘ingredient’ misplaced. For there to be an agreement between the subject and the verb, a plural subject ought to be used. The use of ‘use’ is also wrong because the idea being portrayed here is one that is a usual occurrence in all similar situations, therefore ‘used’ should be employed. The correct sentence should read, *“Ingredients used for the stew are...”* This is also a violation of the subject-verb agreement rule.

Another male student wrote:

*“Put water and salt in the pot and put it on fire
for some minute... and you will use rubber to
cover it, for some minute.”*

In this sentence, ‘some’ which connotes an unknown amount has been used with ‘minute’ which is connotative of ‘one minute’. Since there must always be agreement in number, the correct sentence should be, *“Ingredients used for the stew are; oil, onion... Put water and salt in the pot and put it on fire for some minutes”*. The same applies to the latter part of the sentence.

Another female student wrote:

“My dog always eat the food I don’t finish”

The student’s statement highlights her difficulty with the concept of concord, particularly subject-verb agreement. In concord, the verb in a sentence should agree with the subject in terms of number and person, Oludare (2016). In this case, the subject

is “My dog” which is singular, while the verb “eat” is in the plural form. The correct verb form is “eats” to match the singular subject. Additionally, the statement contains another concord error. The student says, “the food I don’t finish” which implies that she does not finish multiple food items. However, the noun “food” is singular, so it should be “the food I do not finish” or “the foods I do not finish” to maintain concord. When there is a lack of concord, the sentence becomes grammatically incorrect and may not convey the intended meaning clearly. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, “*My dog always eats the food I don’t finish.*”

In the corrected sentence, the subject “dog” agrees with the verb “eats” both being in the third person singular form. This maintains the concord in the sentence and ensures grammatical accuracy.

Another in the same class wrote:

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central lamp with a flame, set against a background of a sunburst. Below the lamp, the motto 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is written in a circular path. The entire emblem is surrounded by a decorative border.

“In my house, Sister Anaamlie and Ajuipok
cooks good food very well.”

Here, there is a plural subject, ‘Anaamlie and Ajuipok’. This calls for a plural verb. However, a singular verb has been used. This results in the subject and verb disagreeing in number. The correct sentence should then read, “*In my house, Sister Anaamlie and Ajuipok cook good food very well.*”

Another student (male) wrote:

“*The ingredient used to prepare the food is
onion, pepper, tomatoes, rice, fish*”

Although the sentence is illustrating a number of ingredients, it is introduced as if it is just one ingredient. Even though, the demonstrated sentence above has the subject and the verb following each other, this form of error was common among the students. This

is consistent with Oludare's (2016), assertion that, students also have problems with simple constructions in which the subjects and the verbs follow each other.

Another student wrote:


"The ntews are presented by Asiatewon"

Here, 'news' which is a singular subject must take a singular verb and not a plural verb 'are'

The correct version of the sentence therefore is:

The news is presented by Asiatewon; where 'news' a singular subject, concords (agrees) with the singular verb 'is'.

A female student wrote:



"I like tuo-zaafi with groundnut soup because it have the entire nutrient. And first of all, whenever I see someone cooking that food, it give me the nutrient that the body need."

In this sentence, the subject is "tuo-zaafi with groundnut soup" which is a singular entity. However, the verb "have" is in the plural form, which creates the disagreement. To correct this, we can make the verb agree with the subject by changing "have" to "contains" or "provides," both of which are singular verbs that match the singular subject: *"I like tuo-zaafi with groundnut soup because it contains or provides the entire nutrient."* The second part of the statement also contains an error: *"And first of all, whenever I see someone cooking that food, it give me the nutrient that the body need."* In this case, the subject is "it," referring to "tuo-zaafi with groundnut soup." Again, the verb "give" does not match the subject in number, as it is a plural verb. To

correct this, you can change “give” to “gives,” which is a singular verb that agrees with the singular subject: *“And first of all, whenever I see someone cooking that food, it gives me the nutrient that the body needs.”*

Another student wrote:

“The proteins make me grow faster. The vegetable in the stew give me vitamin, which are very necessary for our bodies.”

In the first part of the sentence, the subject is “proteins,” which is a plural noun. The verb used is “make,” which is the correct form for plural subjects. Therefore, this part of the sentence demonstrates subject-verb agreement. Similarly, with the second portion of the sentence, the subject is “vegetable,” which is a singular noun. However, the verb used is “give,” which is the form for plural subjects. This results in a subject-verb disagreement because the singular subject “vegetable” should be paired with the singular verb form “gives.” Therefore, the correct sentence should be, “the vegetable in the stew gives me vitamins, which is very necessary for our bodies.”

A female student in the class wrote:

“The okro also Provide the body with materials that fight against diseases and keep the body healthy. Banku with okro soup is Cook with many Negetabel such as: peper, onion, Tomatoes, Solt, pam oil, Okro, Garden egg, lettuce, Corn dol and Cassavadol.”

In this sentence, the subject is “okro,” which is a singular noun. However, the verb used is “Provide,” which is the form for plural subjects. In the second part of sentence, there are several subject-verb disagreements. For instance, “Banku with okro soup is Cook”

should be revised to “Banku with okro soup is cooked.” Here, the verb “is cooked” agrees with the singular subject “Banku with okro soup.” Again, “Negetabel” should be corrected to “vegetables” for subject-verb agreement.

As a result, the correct descriptive should then be, “The okro provides the body with materials that fight against diseases and keep the body healthy. Banku with okro soup is cooked with many vegetables such as: pepper, onion, tomatoes, salt, palm oil, okro, garden eggs, lettuce, corn dough and cassava dough.”

Another student wrote,

“Because it provide nutrient for the body, and the soup is cook with many Vegetable such as garden eggs, tomatos, ginger, peper, onion and some fishes. And the fufu is make with cassava and plantain...”

In this sentence, ‘it’ which is a singular subject, does not agree with ‘provide’ which is a plural verb. Also, ‘is’ as mentioned above always takes on the perfect form of the verb when indicating a usual occurrence. The correct construction will then be, “Because it provides nutrients for the body, and the soup is cooked with many vegetables such as garden eggs, tomatoes, ginger, pepper, onion, and some fishes. And the fufu is made from cassava and plantain...”

In these sentences, the subject and verb do not agree in number, resulting in a subject-verb agreement error. In the essays, there were several instances where the students used singular subject to select a plural verb, or using plural subjects to select a singular verb. Thus, most of the students do not know that, the identification of the subject is influenced by the positions of both the subject and verbs in a given sentence. This reaffirms the students’ position that, they do not know the rules of grammatical concord,

supporting Oludare's (2016), argument that, errors associated with subject-verb concord are as a result of students mistakenly pairing singular subjects with plural verbs or vice versa.

Several forms of subject-verb concord errors were found in the essays of the students.

Major among them include:

a. Words separating the subject and verb

Largely, the students had challenges when the subject and the verb were separated by an intervening word or phrase. When certain words or phrases come between the subject and the verb, they are called intervening words or phrases. An intervening phrase is defined by Kiesz (2014), as a word or phrase between the subject and the verb that does not affect their agreement to each other. Thus, verbs must agree with their subjects regardless of intervening phrases. In most of such cases, the student mistakenly makes the verb to agree with the noun in the intervening phrase or clause, instead of the verb agreeing with the subject regardless of the intervening phrases. One of such examples identified from the essays is illustrated:

“One of my friends like to cook with me”

In this sentence, because of the presence of the intervening word ‘friends’, the student matched a singular subject ‘one’ to a plural verb ‘like’. Thus, the student was unaware that, the intervening word ‘friends’ can be dropped so that, the subject-verb relationship is clear. Since a singular subject must agree with a singular verb, the correct sentence should be structured as.....“One of my friends likes to cook with me” A male student in form two wrote:

“One of my favourite foods are donuts because they are round and easy to eat.”

Here, the misunderstanding is in the intervening phrase ‘of my favourite foods’ especially the ‘foods’ that appears just before the noun. This ought not to be so as the real subject is the ‘one’ mentioned at the beginning of the construction. The student is talking about just one of the foods she likes but got carried away by the presence of ‘s’ at the end of ‘foods’ to choose a plural verb for the subject which is singular. It therefore, calls for a singular verb. In accordance with the suggestion on how to overcome this problem, the intervening phrase should be ignored. It then becomes “One ... is donuts because...” Thus, the correct sentence should be, “One of my favourite foods is donuts because, they are round and easy to eat.” Another male student in Form One indicated

“My dog always eat the food I don’t finish.”

This construction has a singular subject which is ‘dog’. And in agreement with the rules of subject-verb agreement, a singular subject demands a singular verb. However, there is an error in the sentence emanating from the intervening word ‘always’ which gave the student the impression that, he should use a plural verb eat because of the ‘s’ at the end of ‘always’. Clearly, this student has not mastered the identification of a subject in a simple sentence. Adhering to the suggestion above, ‘always’ should be ignored so it becomes “My dog...eats the food...” because the singular of eat is ‘eats’. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, “My dog always eats the food I don’t finish.”

A male student in form one indicated,

*“Some foods like banku, fufu, gari and kooko has some sort of starch
in it.”*

In this sentence, the subject is “Some foods like banku, fufu, gari, and kooko,” which is a plural noun phrase representing multiple foods. The verb used is “has,” which is the

form for a singular subject. This results in a subject-verb disagreement. To correct the disagreement, the verb should be changed to the plural form “have” to match the plural subject “Some foods like banku, fufu, gari, and kooko.” To rectify the separation of words between the subject and verb, the sentence could be revised as follows: "Some foods like banku, fufu, gari, and kooko have some sort of starch in them." In the revised sentence, the verb “have” agrees with the plural subject “Some foods like banku, fufu, gari, and kooko,” and the pronoun “them” is used to maintain agreement between the subject and verb.

Another in form two (2) wrote:

“My favourite food are rice and egg stew.”

Here, though, rice and egg stew are connected by ‘and’, they refer to a single idea or a single dish. This is therefore considered as a singular subject and requires a singular verb. The correct sentence is, “My favourite food is rice and egg stew.”

A female student in Form One wrote,

“There is nine clean plates in the cupboard.”

This construction has a plural subject which is plates; its plurality is even indicated by the number ‘nine’. It therefore, requires a plural verb. The correct construction should be, “There are nine clean plates in the cupboard.” These examples show that, the students have a major lack of understanding of the rule that a singular subject requires a singular verb form regardless of all plural forms in intervening prepositional phrases, appositives and participle phrases. This is consistent with Davis (2009), that these words or phrases often than not, confuse students as they tend to match the verb with the word closest to it. Specifically, the students were unable to locate the real subject, thereby not

ignoring the intervening word or phrase resulting in making the verb to disagree with the subject.

- b. The verb in the adjective clause does not match the noun it is referring to.

Another instance where the students largely commit subject-verb concord error is where the verb in the adjective clause does not match the noun it is referring to. One of such examples identified from the essays is illustrated:

“The people in my house comes to ask me for pepper”

In this sentence, the student mixed up ‘people’, a plural subject with ‘comes’, a singular verb. However, since a plural subject must agree with a plural verb, the correct sentence should be structured as.....”The people in my house come to ask me for pepper”

A male student in form two wrote,

*“It is a very good for Ghanaian especially
Akans. After it bolls you will put a palm nut
inside the water.”*

Although, the first sentence is referring to a collection of people, a singular subject is used. We know this, because, a plural noun ‘Akans’ cannot be derived from the singular ‘Ghanaian’. Therefore, a plural noun should be used which is “Ghanaians”. The second sentence makes a similar mistake, in that, palm nut soup is not made from just one palm nut. However, the sentence indicates that, it is just one palm nut by the use of ‘a’ and the absence of ‘s’ at the end of the ‘nut’. The correct sentence should be, “It is a very good food for Ghanaians especially the Akans. After it boils, you will put the palm nuts inside the water.”

A female student in Form Two indicated:

“When the noodles starts to separate from each other...”

With this construction, ‘noodles’ which is a plural subject and requires plural verb has been matched with the singular verb ‘starts’ creating a disagreement between the subject and the verb. The correct sentence should then be, “When the noodles start to separate from each other...”

c. The verb comes before the subject

When dealing with sentences in which the verb comes before the subject, it is always important, as with all other sentence forms, to first identify the subject in the sentence. This will guide you in the use of the appropriate verb. Even though, the verb precedes the subject, the rule of subject-verb agreement must always apply, Biney, (2019). The subject and the verb must always agree in number. The syntax of the sentences was also noted to largely contribute to the subject verb errors made by the students, particularly if the verb comes before the subject. One of such examples identified from the essays is illustrated:

“There is many reasons I did not go to the market”

In the above sentence, the student used a plural subject ‘reasons’ with a singular verb ‘is’. However, since a plural subject must match with a plural verb, the correct sentence should have been...” There are many reasons I did not go to the market”

Another in form one wrote:

“I like it when my rice are very hot.”

The subject in the sentence is singular, 'rice' and therefore requires a singular verb. The disagreement stems from 'rice' being matched with 'are'. Though, the rice is made up of many single grains, it is counted as a whole meal and not counted per grain. That would have meant saying rice grains but as a dish, it is a single plate. Therefore, the correct sentence is, "I like it when my rice is very hot."

In conclusion, although Klu (2014), argued that, the subject-verb agreement is an important skill every student must possess, it is evident that, most of the students are not obtaining such skills from the pedagogical process. This problem could be explained by the fact that, concord problems usually arise as a result of complex constructions in which the subjects and the verbs do not follow each other specifically in a clear way. This is in line with findings of Larsen-Freeman, (2011), who argues that, errors in subject-verb agreement often arise when the subject and the verb are separated by other constituents or modifiers, making it harder for students to maintain agreement. This supports the idea that, concord problems arise due to complex sentence structures.

4.1.2 Concord within Tenses Error

Another kind of error found in the essays written was the concord within tenses error. Concord within tenses error, also known as tense agreement, refers to the consistency of verb forms within a sentence or clause; Biber, Conrad & Leech (2002). It involves ensuring that, the tense of the verb matches the intended meaning and aligns with other elements in the sentence, such as the subject or the time frame of the action. From the findings, it was observed that, the students were not abreast of the rule that, when constructing a sentence, it is important to think about when the action in the statement occurred. The study revealed that, most of them were unaware that, the tense of a verb in the subordinate clause changes in accordance with the tense of the verb in the main

clause; Biber, Conrad & Leech (2002). Several forms of concord within tenses errors were identified from the essays:

a. Present Tense

The present tense is a grammatical tense that is used to express actions, events, or states that are happening now or are generally true. It is typically used to describe ongoing actions, habitual actions, or general truths; Swan (2005). The present tense describes an action that is taking place at the moment. A few examples that violate this rule are given below

A student in Form One wrote:

“As the oil is in the pot, poured your onions into it.”

This is an example of a simple present tense with a mix of the simple past tense. In the first part of the sentence, “As the oil is in the pot” is in the present tense, using the verb “is” to indicate a current state. However, the student then shifts to the simple past tense with the verb “poured” when referring to the action of adding onions into the pot. This mixture of verb tenses creates an inconsistency in the sentence and hampers its clarity. Additionally, the use of “your onions” may suggest possessive pronouns, but it is unclear whose onions are meant. If the intention was to refer to the student’s onions, it would be more appropriate to use the pronoun “my” instead of “your” to maintain consistency with the first-person perspective. However, if the intention was to give a general instruction, The correct sentence should be: “As the oil is in the pot, pour the onions into it.”

Another student in Form One indicated:

“Before I begin to cooked, I chopped my onions.”

This is quite a tricky construction as it could either be in the simple present tense or the simple past tense. The obviously wrong verb is ‘cooked’ which will remain ‘cook’ no matter the tense employed. As mentioned early on, the sentence could go in two ways. The correct sentence can be either “Before I begin to cook, I chop my onions” or “Before I began to cook, I chopped my onions.”

Another student in Form Two wrote:

“Banku is my best food in this world because that food is provide energy in my life. That food is also provide nitient, carbohydrates into my life.”

This first construction gives the impression that, the narrative is in the simple present tense. However, the student’s attempt to convey this results in her committing a concord blunder. This affirms the students’ position that, they are unaware of the grammatical rules. It is evident in the latter statement as well where though, the subject is clearly identifiable, the verb that follows it does not agree with it in number. The correct sentence would then be “Banku is my best food in this world because, that food provides energy in my life. That food also provides nutrients like carbohydrates...”

Another student indicated:

“When the water has boil for a while, you can add the rice.”

This construction describes an action that is constant and can happen at any given time. There is therefore, the need for it to be expressed in the present perfect tense and not a simple present tense. The present perfect tense is most commonly used to describe

actions or situations which started in the past, have continued to the present, and may still be continuing. The presence of 'has' indicates that, the construction should be in the present perfect tense because it shows that, the action has already started. The correct sentence should then be, "When the water has boiled for a while, you can add the rice."

Another student in Form Two wrote,

"After you pound the cassava, then the plantain is add to it."

'After' is indicative of an action that has already happened, while 'add' is a present tense verb. The two mix very well but not in the presence of 'is'. The 'is' shows a condition that is constant, something that is the norm or the usual occurrence. Therefore, the sentence should be, "After you pound the cassava, then the plantain is added to it."

A similar, error is made by another student in Form One,

"After eating I wash my hands and mouth before I came to school to learn about something."

In this construction, 'came' does not fit into the sentence because, it is a past tense verb though, the narrator employs the present tense or everyday tense. The correct sentence would read, "After eating, I wash my hands and mouth before I come to school..."

Another girl wrote,

"After that, you wash the cassavia with water. and you will put it insiedi a silver with cover and you will be adding water to it."

The latter part of this sentence employs a tense that conflicts with the beginning of the sentence. Since future tense has been used from the beginning, the flow of thought should also be in the future tense. Using a present continuous tense throws the whole sentence off balance. The ‘ing’ at the end of ‘adding’ should be done away with for, it to be ‘add’. The correct sentence then is, “After you wash the cassava with water, you will put it inside a silver with cover and you will add water to it.” ‘Silver’ in the sentence is a direct use or translation; from the mother tongue. Most Ghanaians say ‘silver’ to mean ‘saucepan’ or ‘cooking pot’.

These examples lend credence to the assertion that, the students have great difficulties in using simple present tenses.

b. Past Tense events

Past tense events generally refers to actions or events that have already occurred in the past. This grammatical tense is used to express actions that took place and were completed before the present moment, or at a specific point in the past; Swan, (2005); Azar, & Hagen, (2009). In some of the essays, the students mixed past tenses in the main clauses with present tenses in the subordinate clause. A typical concord within tenses error identified from the essays of the students is:

“When I went to the market, I buy cassava and yam”.

'Went' is in past tense, but “buy” is in present tense. They do not match.

Another student in form one indicated:

“I go to the market yesterday”

Here, the time expression ‘yesterday’ clearly indicates that, the action took place in the past, hence the need to use a past tense.

Another student in Form One indicated:

“Last week, my banku fall from my bowl and roll across the floor.”

This is a construction that very obviously happened in the past. We know this, because of the opening of the sentence which states ‘last week’ as the time period the event being described took place. It is therefore, an error to use verbs like ‘fall’ and ‘roll’ which describe the present. The correct sentence should read, “Last week, my banku fell from my bowl and rolled across the floor.”

Another student in the same class, thus, Form One indicated:

“When I was young, my mum teach me that, salt dissolve in water.”

This is also an example of an event that happened in the past, but is being narrated with a present tense. We know this because, she uses ‘when I was young’ which indicates a past time. To fix this error, there is the need to use a past tense verb. The correct sentence should be “When I was young, my mum taught me that, salt dissolves in water.”

Another student wrote:

“This morning, when I cook rice, the fire burn it.”

From the use of ‘this morning’, we realize that, the construction to follow happened in the past. The tense to employ then is the past tense. Therefore, the correct sentence should be, “This morning, when I cooked rice, the fire burnt it.”

Another student in Form Two wrote:

“During the vacation, I learn everything about cooking jollof.”

Like most of the sentences before this, it begins in one tense and ends in another. The first part of the construction propels you to expect to hear of a deed already done or an activity already completed. However, the ending of the sentence is talking about an action that may as well take place everyday (which is the simple present). The correct sentence should contain simple past tense as the vacation has been over for some time. It should read, “During the vacation, I learnt everything about cooking jollof.”

A female student from Form One wrote:

“Banku and okro stew is my favourite food, because my mother’s said when I was a child, and if my mother prepare banku and okro, she give me some to eat, that’s why I like banku.”

Considering that, the student is narrating an issue from the past, with her use of “when I was a child”, the sentence should use the past tense. The word ‘if’ in the sentence is totally misplaced because ‘if’ is a conditional word and it cannot be used here since the issue being narrated happened in the past. The correct sentence would then read, “...when I was a child, and my mother prepared banku and okro, she gave me ...” ‘Mothers’ in “...because my mother’s said” is left untouched because, the student may be referring to more than one mother figure. Also, the entire construction is a direct translation from the mother tongue to English.

Another student in Form One wrote:

“When I was five years my mother take me to my grandma to cook, I stay with my grandma for four years.”

This is also a very typical example of tense mix ups in sentences, termed as concord within tenses error. Although, the narrative is in the past, the narrator employs only present tenses. We know the issue happened in the past because of the use of “when I was five years”. It is impossible for a form one student to still be five years old. Therefore, past tenses should be employed. Which will make the correct sentence: “When I was five years, my mother took me to my grandma; I stayed with my grandma for four years.”

A male student in form one indicated

“I like the food because it make me fell well when I enjoy it”

Another male student in form two indicated:

“It was prepare with cassava, fish, plantain...”

A female student in form two indicated:

“When I came back from the market, I open the bag and start cooking”

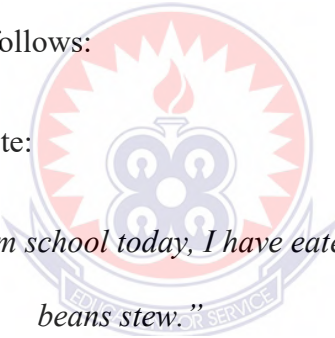
A review of the sentences above, gives the indication that, the students are unaware of the rule that, when the tense in the main clause is in the past, one would probably need a past tense in the subordinate clause as well. Thus, the students were unable to use the accurate tense when discussing things that happened at the same time, causing the tenses not to correspond to the situations. In other words, the students use tenses that refer to the present even when speaking about things that happened in the past. This supports the argument put forth by Omotese, (2012), that, majority of students battle with the use of the simple past tenses. However, the errors in this regard, could be explained by the fact that, the students have not treated clauses, particularly those in form one as of the time of data collection. This supports Erten and Razi's; (2009), claim that, students

learning English as a foreign language often confuse past and present tenses. The writers add that, students frequently used present tense forms instead of past tense forms when narrating past events. This confirms that, assertions made by the current study that, the issue of using present tenses to refer to past events is not limited to a specific group of students but can be observed among foreign language learners in general.

c. Future Tense Events

According to Thomson & Martinet (1997), future tense events refer to actions, situations, or states that are expected to happen in the future. In grammar, the future tense is used to describe events that have not yet occurred but are anticipated or planned for a later time; Swan, (2005). Typical expressions where this rule was violated by the students are presented as follows:

A student in form one wrote:



“When I close from school today, I have eaten rice and beans stew.”

This construction is a narrative of an event that has not happened yet. It is yet to happen and requires a future tense. Therefore, putting it as if it has happened creates confusion for the listener because, the student has not yet closed from school and therefore, has not eaten the food. The correct sentence should be, “When I close from school today, I will eat rice and beans stew.”

A female student in form two wrote:

“My mother said that, we will cooked banku and okro soup this Christmas.”

This is also an example of a future tense mixed with the past tense. ‘Will’ is used for the future and indicates something that is yet to happen. And also, seeing as Christmas is yet to come, it is not possible that, the banku and okro soup has been cooked already. Therefore, to match it with cooked is a total grammatical disaster. To make meaning, it should be followed by a simple present tense. The correct sentence should then be, “My mother said that we will cook banku and okro soup this Christmas.”

Another student in form two indicated,

*“And with the fufu, you will need cassava and
plantain and when it is cook after that you will pound
it.”*

This sentence has the same issue as the constructions just before it. Change the ‘cook’ to ‘cooked’ and the sentence is good. Thus, it will read, “And with the fufu, you will need cassava and plantain and when it is cooked...you will pound it.”

A male student in form three indicated

*“When you fienshed, you will washed the maet or fish, and put
it in to the stew, and added a small magic cube init.”*

Like the sentence just before this one, the tenses here are all mixed up as well. Though it is obvious that, the descriptive is about a daily or usual occurrence, past tenses have been employed throughout. The narrative is to show how to do something therefore; the tenses to use are the future tense mixed with present tense. The correct sentence will then be, “When you finish, you will wash the meat or fish and put it into the stew and add...”

Another in form one indicated

“By the time you will come it is ready.”

This construction is a very good example of a conflict with tenses in a sentence, termed as concord within tenses error. ‘By the time you will’ is indicative of something that is yet to happen; therefore, the future tense should be employed. The correct sentence should read, “By the time you come, it will be ready.” Like the present and past tense, the use of the future tense among the students is also abysmal.

4.2 Research Question 2: What are the factors influencing the use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students?

This section explores the underlying factors influencing the wrong use of grammatical concord among students in Chansa Junior High school. Data for this section was gathered using interviews with teachers and students as well as content analysis of essays and assignments written by students. Three intervening factors were identified (parental factors, teacher factors and student factors).

4.2.1 Teacher Factors

This section examined the teachers’ methods of teaching grammatical rules and principles in their teaching process and the use of instructional materials and techniques in the pedagogical process. This section was largely explored using classroom observations. The following major findings were established:

During the classroom observation, the study examined complete grammar lessons from beginning to end. The researcher identified two main teaching methods employed by the teachers for teaching grammatical concord: the deductive approach and the inductive approach. The deductive approach involves presenting learners with rules,

followed by examples and practice. It is a teacher-centered approach aimed at introducing new content. In contrast, the inductive approach begins with examples and encourages learners to discover the rules themselves, making it a more learner-centered approach. The choice of using the deductive approach may be appropriate for lower-level learners who require a solid foundation when learning a new language concept or for learners who are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and may struggle to identify rules independently. The form two ((2) teacher opted for the deductive approach as it allows for a more memorable discovery process and tends to motivate students better compared to the inductive approach. In this approach, the teacher initially provided students with the grammatical rules, followed by examples. Consequently, students acquired knowledge of the rules without explicit presentation. Additionally, the form one (1) teacher also adopted the inductive approach, where students were tasked with identifying the grammatical rules themselves. In this scenario, the teacher presented examples first and prompted students to discover the violated rules.

The findings align with Norris and Ortega's (2000), assertion that, explicit teaching is slightly more effective than implicit teaching. However, it is suggested that, combining both explicit and implicit approaches can yield the best results. Andrews (2010), explains that, explicit instruction involves focused teaching of a chosen linguistic form, either by presenting rules followed by examples (deductive reasoning) or by providing examples and then eliciting the rules from students (inductive reasoning). In addition to using these inductive and deductive methods, teachers also encouraged students to make reference to their native language (L1) during lessons based on their experience, believing it can enhance the learning process. Some teachers also utilized grammatical terminology to provide explicit instructions in areas where they believed it would not

confuse the students. However, the pedagogical treatment of grammatical structures by teachers has shown limited effectiveness due to their inability to incorporate different techniques derived from various teaching models, instead of relying on a single fixed method. Nevertheless, Akinbode (2009), suggests that, English teachers should adopt a dynamic approach to instructional techniques.

Furthermore, in some cases where teachers attempted to engage students, they utilized simplistic and unrealistic examples. Consequently, students struggled to relate these examples to real linguistic contexts, making it nearly impossible for them to apply the concepts to their own writing. This aligns with Quagie's (2014), claim that, an inadequate pedagogical approach to language instruction has contributed to the challenges students face with grammatical concord. Thus, it becomes evident that, some of the difficulties students encounter in using grammatical concord stem primarily from flawed instructional materials and the pedagogical deficiencies of teachers. This supports Klu's (2014), assertion that, students' struggles with grammatical concord might be attributed to ineffective teaching methods employed by certain educators. Furthermore, classroom observations revealed that, students were less engaged, showing minimal participation and reluctance to speak up. This was primarily attributed to their low confidence levels, which in turn contributed to their lack of fluency in expressing themselves.

4.2.2 Student Factors

This section explores the student factors that influence their inability to accurately use grammatical concord. The major factors from the perspective of the students which were observed during the study are low confidence level, poor attitude towards the subject, lack of motivation to speak the English language regularly and little value attached to the language.

The lack of self-confidence on the part of the students has an effect on their attitude towards the use of concord. One of them affirmed:

“I does not want to speak English because I am not one hundred percent (100%) confident. I think I always makes mistakes”

Similar responses were noted from the teachers regarding the confidence level of the students. One of the Teachers indicated:

“I know that, my students need to speak more English in their classes. But the problem is that, they just haven’t got the confidence to speak in English.”

“I think the problem with them is because they are not confident in what they say since they make many mistakes”

The teacher’s statement indicates that, the students do not have the confidence to speak in English. This could be due to several reasons. Firstly, students might feel self-conscious about their pronunciation or accent, fearing that, they will be judged or misunderstood. Secondly, they might lack vocabulary or struggle with finding the right words to express themselves effectively. This fear of not being able to communicate fluently can deter students from attempting to speak in the first place. Similarly, the second problem mentioned by the teacher is that, his students are hesitant to speak because, they make many mistakes. This fear can be attributed to the pressure of perfectionism and the fear of being judged by peers or teachers. Students may worry

that, if they make too many mistakes, it will negatively impact their performance or be seen as a sign of incompetence. The fear of making mistakes often leads to avoidance strategies, such as remaining silent during class discussions or relying on their native language instead.

The findings support Lihua's (2013), assertion that, many students refrain from using English in communication due to the cultural fear of losing face when making mistakes. This aversion to making mistakes contributes to a lack of interest in mastering grammatical concord. Additionally, the research revealed that, students tend to undervalue the English language because they do not perceive immediate career prospects associated with it.

4.2.3 Parental Factors

Another major factor identified as influencing the wrongful use of grammatical concord is parental involvement in students' use of the English language. Students with parents of higher educational backgrounds, seem to perform somehow better than those with parents with lower or no educational backgrounds. One of the students whose father is a teacher affirmed:

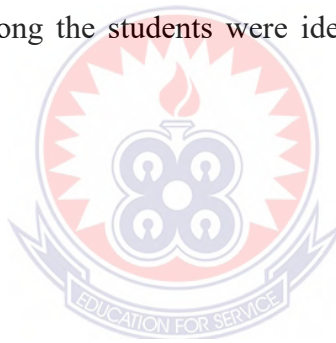
“My father always speaks English with me at home. So am forced to reply him in English Language. Though am not confident, he corrects me when am wrong”

However, largely, parents do not seem to have much attention for their students in doing English assignments. Additionally, the mother's tongue was identified as another significant parental factor that influences the incorrect use of grammatical concord. Many students expressed difficulties in distinguishing between their mother tongue and

the English language. This is consistent with Akinbode's (2006), observation that, when students are unfamiliar with the rules of the second language, they often rely on the rules of their mother tongue. Consequently, they resort to literal translations, lacking knowledge of the grammatical concord rules.

4.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the results of the qualitative analysis. The analyses were guided by the research questions formulated for the study. From the study, the students had very poor knowledge of general basic grammar, especially in the area of agreement (concord). Tenses used were particularly chaotic. The pedagogical treatment of grammatical structures by the teachers has been ineffective. The inappropriate use of grammatical concord among the students were identified from the essays and were discussed.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings from the study as well as the conclusions, recommendations, and directions for future research. The chapter focuses on the implications of the findings from the study for policy making.

5.1 Overview of the Study

The study was intended to examine the difficulties in the study and use of concord among students of Chansa Junior High School. The study sought to assess the types of English concord errors encountered by students and determine the factors influencing the wrong use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students. The study was a typical qualitative case study. The sample size was fifty-six (56) students and two (2) teachers. Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used to select the teachers and students respectively. Data collection for the study was done using interviews, observations and content analysis of the essays of students. Data analysis was done using thematic analysis.

5.2 Summary of Findings

The types of English concord errors that are most common among students was the focus of the first research question. The following key findings emerged: Subject-verb concord error and concord within tenses error were the major types of grammatical concord errors committed by the students.

1. Subject-verb concord error was the commonest error among the students as they mistakenly paired singular subjects with plural verbs and vice versa.

2. The students had much challenges in constructing sentences where the subject and verb are separated by an intervening word, or where the verb comes before the subject.
3. Errors related to the use of singular and plural subjects associated with the auxiliary verbs 'has' and 'have' were also common in the essays of the students.
4. Major concord within tenses errors that the students committed were related to past tenses, past perfect tenses and simple past tenses and the past perfect tenses.

The factors influencing the use of English concord among Chansa Junior High students were evaluated in the second research question with the following findings:

1. Three intervening factors; parental, teacher and student causal factors were the major factors influencing the wrong use of grammatical concord among the students.
2. Major among the teacher factors were limited pedagogical knowledge in grammatical concord, and poor attitude towards grammar.
3. The major student casual factors were low confidence level, poor attitude towards grammar, lack of motivation to regularly speak English and little value attached to the English language.
4. The mother tongue was the most influential parental casual factor affecting the appropriate use of grammatical concord.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Several violations of the rules of grammatical concord were committed by the students, resulting in their inability to accurately use concord in their communications.

2. Students had very poor knowledge of general basic grammar, especially in the area of agreement (concord). Thus, they did not have a good grasp of basic grammar such as tenses and concord, making most of their written scripts quite not readable.
3. Tenses used were particularly chaotic. Subject-verb error and concord within tenses error were the major grammatical concord errors committed by the students. Thus, the habit of employing the past in the main clause and the present in the subordinate clause runs through the essays of most of the students.
4. It is also clear that, the students were unable to correctly identify the subject of the sentence and to determine if the subject is singular or plural.
5. There was also a mismatch of a singular subject with a plural verb especially when the subject is a list of two or more nouns. In other words, the student had a major lack of understanding of the rules governing subject-verb agreement in sentences in which the subject is a list of two or more nouns, particularly those pertaining to compound subjects.
6. The appropriate use of grammatical concord was found to be contingent on a myriad of factors, and the teaching of grammatical concord cannot rely on incidental learning, but a concerted effort on the part of the teacher, students and their parents. The teacher causal factor seems to be the most significant factor affecting the attitude of the students towards the study of grammatical concord. The students had a relatively negative attitude towards the study of grammar; they lacked self-confidence and had low interest and desire in grammar.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the key findings emerging from the study, the following recommendations are made for policy formulation and direction for further research.

1. Firstly, the Ministry of Education together with the Ghana Education Service should design effective motivational schemes that could motivate teachers who have helped in enhancing the grammatical performance of students. The release of the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) results could be used as the basis for determining qualified teachers for such motivational schemes. However, it is important that, an equitable selection methodology is used in this regard to ensure that, the selection process is devoid of any favouritism and procedural injustice.
2. There is the need for the Curriculum Division of the Ghana Education Service to enhance pupils' syntactic and semantic capabilities by teachers' teaching from a hands-on perspective. In this regard, the Curriculum Division of Ghana Education Service (G.E.S) should perform a comprehensive review and assessment of the curriculum delivery standards in grammar. This would help identify the gaps that need to be addressed to make the delivering of grammar in schools much more interesting to students.
3. The mastering of grammar requires constant practice; hence students should be able to constantly practice lessons taught in class. This can be done by engaging in conversations with their friends. However, students should refrain from making fun of their colleagues when they make grammatical concord errors during conversations. This will eliminate their fears of errors and increase their confidence level.

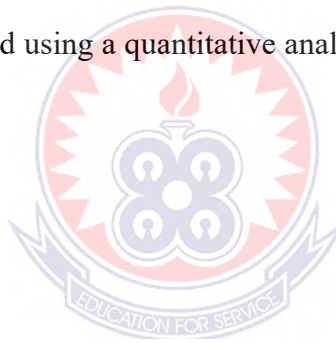
4. Furthermore, parents are also encouraged to supervise the communication of their children at home regarding the appropriateness of the grammar they use. This can be done by developing the habit of encouraging them to speak English with their peers and also with them at home if they are fluent in the English language. This will constantly help develop a positive attitude towards learning of the language.
5. Teachers are advised to use a more creative and simulation approach to the teaching of grammatical concord. This can be done by using grammatical concord teaching aid such as scales and simulations. However, the Ghana Education Service must provide adequate teaching/learning materials and equipment to ensure that, grammar is not taught in the abstract.
6. The Ghana Association of English Teachers is also encouraged to form a strong network of its members. This network could be used to exchange new instructional and grammatical pedagogical methodologies and ideas among members. Such exchange of information could be done using social media. This is essential in updating its members on new trends and effective ways of teaching grammar.
7. It is important that, teachers make students understand that, confidence is not about accuracy, but rather, attitude that helps them to get their point across, no matter the mistakes they make. To enhance students' confidence level in grammar, teachers should not correct them as much in free-speaking activities. Though, it is essential to correct students' mistakes, teachers should not interrupt them during performance activities, as this reduces their confidence level.
8. Finally, the teaching of grammar was done in the abstract. The Ghana Education Service is encouraged to procure flashcards, posters or graphic organizers for schools. This will help teachers to provide something students can lean on during

grammar lessons, since they could feel more confident if they have pictures they can follow along.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

A future study or research should be conducted with parents of Junior High School students to explore their perspectives regarding the support services provided at home to promote the performance of the students in English language, particularly in grammar.

Also, this study could be replicated in other jurisdictions across the country. Thus, students' difficulties in the study and use of grammatical concord studies could be replicated in other developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Future studies could be conducted using a quantitative analysis of students' difficulties in the study and use of concord.



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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS**

Introduction

This study seeks to explore the semantic problems associated with the wrong use of grammatical concord among Junior High School students in the Builsa South District. You are kindly requested to volunteer information by responding to this interview. You are however assured that, information provided to complete this interview would be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender of respondent: a. Male () b. Female ()
2. Form: a. Form One () b. Form Two ()
3. Age of student?
4. What was your highest scored mark in English exams taken at the JHS level?
.....

PART B: USE OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD AMONG STUDENTS

5. What is your understanding of grammatical concord?
.....
6. How would you rate your confidence level in the use of grammatical concord?
.....
7. How would you describe your accurate use of grammatical concord?
.....

8. How would you describe your level of awareness of the rules and structures governing the use of grammatical concord?

.....
.....

SECTION C: TYPES OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD ERRORS MOST COMMON AMONG STUDENTS

9. How often do you commit grammatical concord errors?

.....

10. What type (s) of grammatical concord errors do you usually commit?

.....

11. What specific grammatical concord errors do you make with regards to:

- a. Describing past events?
- b. The use of singular and plural subjects?
- c. The use of simple past tenses and the past perfect tenses.....

PART D: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WRONG USE OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD AMONG STUDENTS

12. What factors influence your inability to accurately use grammatical concord?

.....

13. In what specific ways can the factors affecting your inaccurate use of grammatical concord be addressed?

APPENDIX B

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ENGLISH TEACHERS**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Introduction

This study seeks to explore the semantic problems associated with the wrong use of grammatical concord among Junior High School students in the Builsa South District. You are kindly requested to volunteer information by responding to this interview. You are however, assured that, information provided to complete this interview would be treated with the strictest confidentiality.

PART A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender of Respondent: a. Male () b. Female ()
2. Educational Background: a. Cert A () b. Diploma () c. Degree ()
e. Masters () f. Other(s)
3. How long have you been a teacher in this school?
4. How long have you been teaching the English Language in this school?
.....

PART B: USE OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD AMONG STUDENTS

5. Generally, how will you describe the use of grammatical concord among your Junior High School students?
.....

6. To what extent do students adhere to the rules and structures surrounding the use of grammatical concord?
.....

7. What is your students' understanding of the meanings of grammar and concord?
.....

SECTION C: TYPES OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD ERRORS MOST COMMON AMONG STUDENTS

8. How will you describe the knowledge of your students with regard to the use of the rules governing grammatical concord of the various types?
.....

9. What are the common grammatical concord errors among your students?
.....

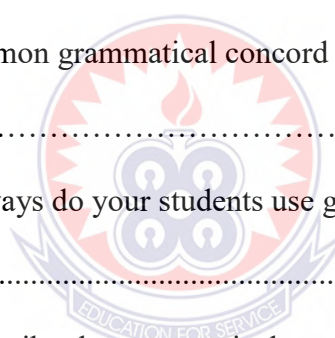
10. In what specific ways do your students use grammatical concord wrongly?
.....

11. How will you describe the grammatical concord errors make by your students with regard to:

a. Describing past events?

b. The use of singular and plural subjects?
.....

c. The use of simple past tenses and the past perfect tenses?
.....



PART D: FACTORS INFLUENCING THE WRONG USE OF GRAMMATICAL CONCORD AMONG STUDENTS

12. What key challenges do you encounter in adhering to the accurate teaching of grammatical concord?

13. What are the reasons for the wrong use of grammatical concord among:

a. **English teachers?**

.....

b. **Students?**

.....

14. How would you relate the following factors in influencing the wrong use of grammatical concord both among:

Teachers:

a. Application of grammatical rules and principles?

b. Use of instructional materials and techniques?

c. Skills and competence in the teaching of grammatical concord?

.....

d. Interest by teachers in teaching grammar?

Students

a. Language transfer (Mother tongue's influence)?

.....

b. Students' perception

15. What are the key interventions that can be instituted to promote the accurate use of grammatical concord among students?

.....

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

1. How accurate are students able to express themselves well in the English language?
2. Are students' expressions consistent with what they are describing?
3. How do students express subject-verb concord when they occur in:
 - a. Different clauses?
 - b. In the same clauses?
 - c. when the normal word order is changed?
4. What instructional materials are used in the teaching of grammatical concord?
5. Are these instructional materials used accurately?
6. How confident are teachers in the teaching of grammatical concord.
7. What pedagogical techniques do teachers use in the teaching of grammatical concord?