UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

HELPING STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY THE VARIOUS SYNTACTIC SLOTS OF THE NOUN GROUP IN ENGLISH SENTENCES. A CASE STUDY IN CHIANA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, FORM TWO

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DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE: ……………………………………

DATE: ……………………………………………..

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is duly dedicated to the merciful God; my wife and children, Rev. Francis Kupoe, my father, my grandmother including my younger brother, Baani Bismark for their kind support and encouragement.
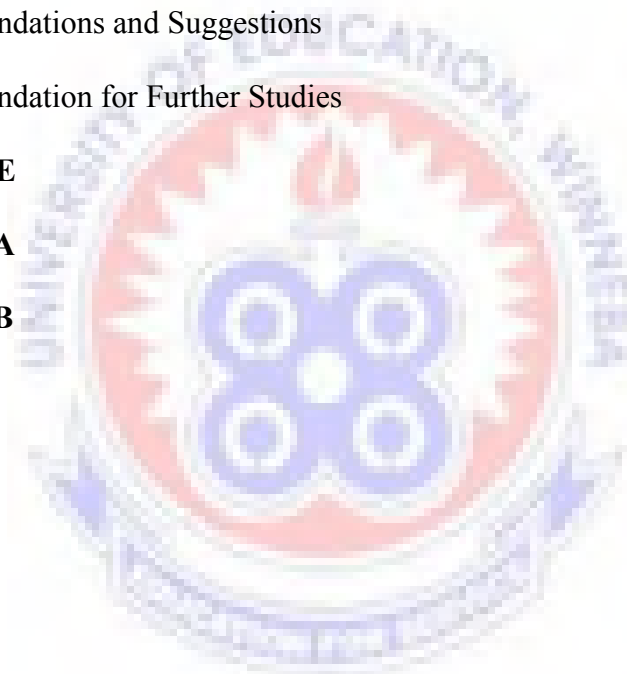
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the ability of students of Chiana Junior High School in identifying the concept of the noun group in English sentences as well as using the noun phrases correctly in written discourse. The researcher collected data from a sample population of 90 students out of the total of 270 students in the school (Chiana Junior High school). The descriptive research design was adopted for this research. The research instruments used in collecting the data included questionnaire, test and interview. Student's attitude towards the study of English grammar was found to be negative, traditional method of teaching grammar was the only method used by teachers to teach the students. The findings confirmed that students had difficulties in identifying the noun group in sentences as well as using the noun group correctly in sentences. The researcher used the syntactic method to teach the students the concept of the noun group. Students' improvement in the post-test justified that the syntactic approach of teaching English grammar is very reliable.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives an overview of the English language taught and learnt in the Junior High Schools in the West Zone Circuits of the Kassena Nankana West District in the Upper East Region. The researcher has endeavoured to examine the possible factors that account for the poor performance in the English language by the Junior High School students in the West Zone Circuits of the above mentioned District in terms of speech and written as indicated in their terminal report cards (found in the school's copy), for over a period of six years. A sample population from Chiana Junior High School in the central circuit has been selected and studied to unearth the possible causes of their abysmal performance in the English language for redress. However, the researcher has limited this study to the noun group or phrase which forms core, in the study of English grammar. Therefore this chapter will comprise the following: Background of the study, Statement of the problem, Purpose of the study, Significant of the study, Objectives and Research questions, Delimitations and Limitations of the study as well as the Organization of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

The teaching and learning of the English language in some places in Ghana has become problematic to which Chiana Junior High School and the surrounding schools in the circuit and the whole District at large are no exception. Though, English is a foreign language which Ghana has adopted from the British who colonized the country many centuries ago, it must be taught and learnt well since it is recognised as main, in terms of being official and core, in our educational system. The causes of the English learning deficiencies among the students of Chiana Junior High School are

discussed below. One, it has been revealed that the school lacks adequate and reliable English textbooks to enable both teachers and students carry on effective teaching and learning. The few English textbooks that are there do not also give the needed attention to the treatment of English grammar in particular. Meanwhile, textbooks are one of the most valuable materials that contribute to the realization of quality teaching and learning in school. According to Veriava (2015) a fall in the standards of education does not matter much on poor infrastructure or other basic necessities like furniture but rather the acute shortage of textbooks. Veriava made references to South African Judge ruling on a case concerning a particular ministry failure to provide textbooks to a school called Limpopo in South Africa. Tuchten in his judgment said: "*Textbooks have been part of the stock in trade of the educator for centuries. There is something special about a book. It has a very long life, far longer than that of the individual reader. It is low tech (nology) device. It is accessible to anyone who can read the language in which it has been written. During the hours in the daylight it can be read (accessed) without any other supporting technology at all. It needs no maintenance except the occasional strip of adhesive tape"*. Therefore the inadequate supply of English textbooks in Chiana Junior High School is a potential setback against the right acquisition of the language in both written and spoken form by students. Another problem which contributes to the falling standards of the English language teaching and learning in the school is lack of qualified English teachers in the school. All the six English teachers in the school have specialised in different fields of study such as Ghanaian language, Social studies and Science education, yet they are the ones who are teaching the English language in the school. It is my suspicion that the counterpart schools in the circuit encounter a similar challenge. The negative effects are not only about content problems but largely, the methodological

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deficit on the part of the unqualified English teacher in question. Davis (2016) made a remark that teaching English as a foreign language is highly challenging. He added that English as a second language teacher, you must adjust your teaching methodologies to constantly accommodate your students' needs in the English learning environment. Davis' suggestion is a reminder of the fact that the teaching of the English language should not be taken for granted and therefore allowed it in the hands of unqualified individuals. The methodologies employed in the teaching of the language must be involving and activity oriented. But what happens in Chiana Junior High School concerning the teaching of the language, especially the grammar aspect is very worrying. Students find it very difficult to construct faultless sentences on their own either in written or spoken form. Another factor that contributes largely to the poor performance of students in the English language in Chiana Junior High School is the absence of library in the school and the whole District at large. Library is an effective tool which facilitates the successful learning of the second language (English language) in any learning environment. Hence library helps in developing learners' interest in reading and thereby contributing to their vocabulary development. Therefore the absence of a library in the school is a great denial of students' opportunity to progress in the holistic acquisition of the English language through the practice of regular reading. Even though, the school's timetable allows for a library period, it is never observe by either the teachers or students due to the absence of a library in the school. Available records of passed students' performance in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) of Chiana Junior High School have pre-informed the researcher that the current students under study are likely to also perform abysmally in their pending BECE, if their poor performance in the English language persists. This is because the English language is key when it comes to the

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writing of exams, even in other subjects. As stated by Amua-Sekyi (2000) in her paper , *The status of English as a subject in English medium context: The Ghanaian situation,(the Oguaa Educator vol 12)*, "the inability of students and graduates of our educational institutions to express themselves correctly and creatively in speech and in writing, suggest that their proficiency level in English has seriously flawed''. This is an indication that the expected level of competence in the English language as required by students to enable them perform well in their final exam is lacking. What buttresses this assertion is the yearly Chief Examiner's report of the various examining bodies, both internal and external. One instance of such report from the West African Examination Council responsible for the examination of Basic and Senior High School states that, 'as usual, the poor performance of the majority of candidates was attributed to their inability to express themselves well in the English language''(WAEC 1999: VI).

Also in April 2000, the International Final Awards and Examiners Appointment Committee of WAEC reported that ''the poor performance in the English is particularly worrying because it would be impossible for any candidate to do well in examination if English language as a medium of expression is not mastered.'' This confirmed that students' incompetence in the English language can affect their performance in the other subjects in examination.

It is therefore worrying if unqualified teachers continue to mislead the poor students in some of these schools in the circuit. It was also realised that the teachers have ignored some sensitive aspects of the English language, that is the noun phrase structure and that has brought about students' faulty constructions.

As an English Teacher, my practical experiences informed me that students' inability to excel well in the English language usually stems from the intricate structure of the noun phrase which many teachers of the English language take for granted. The head reference (noun) occurs in almost every English sentence in a varied form with different complicated functions. As a principle the head reference in most cases assumes the principal role in a particular English sentences construction. But the understanding of the noun concept at the Junior High Level as taught by many teachers appeared to be so limited and too confined. Hence, the pupils do not appreciate the fact that the noun as a dynamic grammatical element belongs to the open class where new elements are admissible either by position or function. The Pupils are made to understand that the noun is a name of a person, place or anything. Those of such examples include, (i) boy, (ii) table, (iii) Kumasi, (iv) Aminah. This semantic explanation of the noun group is not enough to give a clear picture of the concept of the head referent. The appropriate approach instead, is the syntactic idea where the concept of the noun is treated in context formation. Here, a particular term or word is confirmed to be a noun after been used up in a particular context. Also, a particular word becomes a noun when it assumes a position in sentence to function as a subject, object or noun complement of the sentence. Consider the following few examples below:

  (a) **Walking throughout the night** is the only option.

  (b) **Sleeping late in the night** endangers one's life.

  (c) John **works** at the regional hospital.

The above statements contain nominal cases in each of the sentences but, not all of them will be easily identified by the traditional definition of the noun which says that,

the noun is a name of a person, place or anything. For instance, the statements in (a), and in (b) do not fall under the category of the traditional definition of the noun concept. In (a), the nominal phrase is, **walking throughout the night.** And in (b), **sleeping late in the night**, is the nominal phrase. 'Is' and 'endanger' serve as the verbs of the nominal phrases respectively. Hence, the nominal phrases in the two statements above can best be realized by the syntactic approach. To the best of my knowledge, students are only familiar with the noun 'John', found in the third statement with regards to the traditional concept of defining the noun. Therefore, until the true concept of the noun is established at the Junior High level by the syntactic formula, there will not be any hope of their grammatical improvement or progress.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

My interaction with the students in the classroom has revealed a lot of problems faced by students which l decided to investigate further for authentication and redress. One, students of Chiana Junior High School had a problem of identifying the noun group in English sentences, especially when the noun phrase structure is in complex form. Two, students cannot construct meaningful sentences especially where the noun have to relate well with the verbal elements in terms of number and in person. For example, the researcher found out from students' exercises and assignments on easy writing and concord and realised that their low scores are as a results of their inability to appreciate complex noun phrases and link them to agree with the counterpart verbs available. Lastly, students seem to portray an indifferent behaviour towards the study of the English language.

If we can think of any improvement on students' proficiency in the English language, then the problem must be tackled from the teacher level. This can be considered in

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three dimensions, one, the professional attribute of the teacher, two, the competence level of the teacher in the English language content and three, the method of presentation.

From my observation, it is apparent that teachers of the English language perform below expectation in terms of content competence and the method of presentation. The proper teaching of nouns, seem to have been lost and therefore creating understanding problems among students. For instance, some teachers have succeeded in programming the minds of the students that nouns are names of people, place or anything. It is therefore, a difficult task, to reverse this belief of the pupils. What both teachers and pupils have failed to realize is that the meaning of the noun or the noun group goes beyond the traditional notion where the noun has been given limited features in terms of structure and function.

As a result, the pupils are not able to construct meaningful sentences due to their inability to understand and identify the various structures of the noun element in any given construction. For instance, students found it very difficult to identify both simple and complex noun phrases in statements and this is due to the fact that, students of Chiana Junior High School have only committed to memory, the traditional definition of the noun as a name of a person, place or anything. Hence, anything beyond this negotiation does not contribute to their attention or convince them to transform either.

The other issue is that, once students are not familiar with some of the complex structures of the noun group, they found it very difficult to allocate the appropriate pronouns for them when necessary. They also found it very difficult to relate the head reference to the appropriate verb in a given construction. This is confirmed after l

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conducted an investigation to find out pupils difficulties to understand and use the noun in acceptable English sentences. The results indicated that Pupils knowledge on the concept of the noun element is very poor and much worrying. This is amply confirmed from the samples of students' essays during the study which are illustrated below. The topic of the essay was: ''Described how the people of your town or village celebrate their festival''. Below are examples of wrong usage of the noun phrases by the majority of pupils during the essay writing.

1. As soon as the festival begin every activity cease to operate.

2. The paramount chief of my place ask her sub-chiefs to attend the occasion in their numbers.

3. Because of the different types of drumming and dancing activities everybody arrive at the action grounds one hour before the start of the day's agenda.

4. The celebration of the festival help to bring a lot of native individual home.

5. They are also a period when our town experience new developments.

A careful study or evaluation of pupils' expresses are faulty and these deficiencies are usually realized where a noun is wrongly connected to a verb or a wrong substitution of pronouns. For example, the first example, that is number one. The student did not take into consideration the singular noun, 'festival' and therefore connected it wrongly to the plural form of the verb, 'begin'. Even within the same context, the student still failed to identify ''activity'' as a singular noun and that also resulted into the abuse of the principle of subject verb agreement between the noun ''activity'' and the verb ''cease''.

Also, the students still did not realize the fact that the noun ''chief'' is singular and hence, matched it wrongly with the verb ''ask''. Within the same context, the students could not relate the noun 'chief' as male gender to its pronoun counterpart 'he'.

 The student still repeated the same mistake by failing to singularize the verb 'arrive' to match with the singular noun 'everybody' which is also a singular noun.

The instance of abuse of subject-- verb agreement still persists, that is between the noun 'festival' and the plural verb 'help'.

Finally, in number five, the students committed a serious error where 'it' was supposed to be used as a pronoun to replace the noun 'festival', 'they' was used instead, making the whole sentence meaningless. According to Revised Summer (2012), one must be able to identify the subject and verb in each independent. This will help in choosing the right subject and verb that agree together in sentences.

But it is clear that the students do not understand the concept of the noun. In the above instances, the students difficulty is either their inability to realize the presence of the noun element in their constructions so that they would relate it well with the verb available or they do not even know the true concept of the noun and therefore made a wrong choice of a pronoun. It is therefore very important for the researcher to conduct this research to find out the real causes of students' limited knowledge in the noun group which has affected their knowledge in the other aspects of English including letter writing.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The motive behind this study is to help both students and teachers of Chiana Junior High School overcome their solely dependent on the traditional mode of explaining

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the concept of the noun element and encourage them to depend largely on the syntactic approach in teaching and learning the concept of the noun group and English grammar as a whole.

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is aimed that by the end of the study students of Chiana Junior High School will be provided with the relevant information about the concept of the noun in terms of structure and functioning by means of the syntactic approach. As part of the significances, the findings will also aim at inculcating the interest of students in studying grammar and nouns as well. It is also my wish that at the end of the study students of the targeted level will appreciate the syntactic method of teaching and learning the concept of the noun and other aspects of English grammar as well. More also, the study will be exposing the weakness of the traditional approach in teaching nouns and other aspects of English grammar at the Junior High Schools level and beyond. The study will, in effect, be a great help to teachers of the English language inasmuch as the teaching of grammar by the syntactic approach is concerned. It is realized that students' inability in writing better compositions emanates from their weakness in understanding the intricate structure of the noun as well as its functioning, hence, the study expects a positive turn in terms of good grammar in writing their compositions. It is also realized that the syllabuses which are most essential in giving guidelines to structure our daily lesson have a lot of deficiencies due to the failure of periodic review, the study will therefore prompt the syllabus designers to consider the task of periodic review or evaluation of the syllabus for the purpose of current grammatical authentication or update.

Finally, this will serve as a document of challenge to other Researchers to follow up with further research so as to unearth the hiding difficulty in changing students' erroneous perceptions about how the concept of the noun and other aspects of the English grammar should be taught. This is my concern because both teachers of the English language and students only appreciate the teaching and learning of English grammar by the traditional approach.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to;

1. Help students of Chiana Junior High School use the syntactic slot to identify the concept of the noun group in its structural form and function in sentences.

2. Help students of Chiana Junior High School use the noun phrase well in both written discourse as well as in oral communication.

3. Motivate students of Chiana Junior High School develop positive attitude towards the studying of the grammar aspect of English.

1.6 Research Questions

With respect to the above objectives, the researcher aims at answering the following questions at the end of the study.

1. Can students of Chiana Junior High School identify the noun group in English sentences, in terms of structure and function by means of the syntactic approach?

2. Can Students use simple and complex noun phrases correctly in both communication and in written discourse?

3. What is the attitude of students towards studying English grammar as against the other aspects of the English language?

1.7 Limitation of the Study

It is the wish of the researcher to investigate into how students of Chiana Junior High School understand the concept of the noun group and whether that is adequate enough to build on their future grammar to the acceptable standard.

Chiana Junior High School is situated in the West zone of the Kassenna - Nankana West district. Chiana Junior High School is countered part of the eight schools within the Chiana East, West and Central circuit of the Kassena- Nankana west District.

I wish time and resources had not been a militating factor to allow me conduct the research in all the eight schools, however my randomly selection of the 90 students in the form two class merit a fair representation of the population to make generalization. The study will not also delve into details to unearth the sources of problems that take away teachers interest in using the syntactic slot to teach English grammar as a whole. Finally, the study will not be extended to other grammatical aspects or parts of speeches to reveal the learning deficiencies as a result of students over realization on only the traditional approach in learning English grammar. However, my concentration on nouns can establish a rightful generalization or conclusion.

1.8 Delimitation

Specifically, the researcher will go into details of what confronts the Junior High School students from understanding the concept of the noun syntactically and the resultant negative effects on their verbal production as well as their writing

competence. The researcher selected 90 students, randomly from among the 270 students in Chiana Junior High School which is devoid of gender bias to help facilitate reliable results in terms of generalization or conclusion. The researcher is also mindful to bring to the notice of the English teachers, the need to rely much on the syntactic method of teaching grammar and nouns for that matter. Also the study aimed at resolving students' deficiency in identifying nouns in statements and their respective pronouns. Finally, the researcher will also find out what accounted for students difficulty in relating nouns correctly to agree with verbs in sentences.

1.9 Organisation of the Study

The study is outlined in five Chapters. Chapter 1 deals with the following: introduction to the study, background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study, objectives and research questions, delimitations and limitation of the study. Chapter 2 entails the review of related literature of the study. Chapter 3 stages the methodology used to conduct the study as well as the sampling technique to select the targeted population. In Chapter 4, I will be dealing with the collection and analysis of the data from the study. The final Chapter concerns itself with the findings of the study, recommendations and conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

RELATED LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Noun phrases are very much of importance in English language communication either in written form or spoken (Fontaine 2013). In every construction, there is always a noun head that is being referred to, in the sentence. In other words, the presence of the noun in a statement or in sentence makes that particular sentence meaningful. It therefore implies that a statement without a noun phrase or a noun will be regarded meaningless. Fontaine's (2013) assertion of the importance of the noun group in sentences adds a meaningful backing to my research work which aims at helping students to identify the noun group in English sentences. Hence, if students are aware that, the understanding of English sentences largely depends on their ability to make up or identify the noun phrase in sentences, it will add up to their efforts of learning the noun phrase well. English words can belong to the same class or category by function, Fontaine (2013). For instance, a noun could be generated from a verb depending on how it is used or its morphological adaptation. And this transformation process is termed as nominalization. Example; "I asked all teachers to **evaluate** their method of teaching at the end of teaching every topic". The word 'evaluate' is used as a verb in the above sentence.

"All teachers are carrying out an **evaluation** exercise this week". 'Evaluation' is used as a noun in this case.

Since the teaching of English grammar has longed been based on definition, a well and organized strategic methods have to be adopted to revise the situation. Nouns and verbs have a field day Robin (2011).

"Mr. Wright's class is enjoying a field day outside, and nouns and verbs don't want to miss out on the fun so they created their own field day. After dividing up on teams, the nouns and verbs soon realized they must work together to get anything done. Then when the students return to the class, they find a crazy letter that teaches them this lesson as well".

Robin (2011).This concept is obviously jovial and appears senseless but has a remarkably impact on helping students to realize that sentences need both nouns and verbs in order to make a sensible meaning. (Robin 2011).

My understanding is that nouns must be identified in sentences to enable the learner develops a consolidated understanding of the true concept of nouns. Better still, treating nouns in isolation and treating verbs too in isolation before bringing them together does not only waste time but it does not also encourage sentence cohesion.

Contrarily to Robin's (2011) idea, Blake (1988), referred to nouns as a name of a person, place or things. Blake (1988) mentioned that, nouns formed their plural by usually adding-s to the particular noun. In fact he concluded that before the noun in a sentence functions as a subject, it must come near or at the beginning of the sentence. Blake (1988) however agreed that the noun forms a membership of the open class of words.

Inasmuch as I do not disagree with Blake (1988), I do not also agree entirely with some of his submissions regarding the concept of the noun.

1. Blake understanding of the plural formation of nouns is not only limited, it is also considered bias as far as regular and irregular kinds of nouns are concern.

2. Also limiting the concept of the noun to names of persons, places or things is considered a substandard in terms of function and structure.

Ring (1998) established that, "we use a combination of three criteria for determining the word class of a word".

- ➢ The meaning of the word

- ➢ The form or ;shape' of the word

- ➢ The position or 'environment' of the word in a sentence.(syntactical).

In the first criteria, Ring (1998) mentioned that, words are traditionally been assigned certain features outside context yet can be classified to a particular class; and that is where nouns are considered names of person, place or a thing, and verbs as action words. He however rebuked that, determining the grammatical class of words by using the above approach has serious limitations. Ring (1998) maintained that, the definition of a noun as a word denoting a person, place or a thing is wholly inadequate since it excludes abstract nouns such as time, imagination repetition, wisdom and many others. To say that verbs are action words excludes verb like be, as in **I want to be happy**. Using be, in this sentence does not indicate any action.

"Although this criteria has certain validity when applied to some words, we need other more, stringent criteria as well" Ring (1998).

The Form or 'shape' of a Word

"Some words can be assigned to a word class on the basis of their form or shape" Ring (1998). He gave the following examples:

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Verbs	Nouns
Act	Action
Contemplate	Contemplation
Organize	Organization and many others

He mentioned many other classes of words such as adjective and adverbs that can be formed out of this criterion. Therefore, Ring's assertion is in line with this research which seeks to defeat the idea of relying solely on the traditional approach of teaching grammar.

The Position or 'Environment' of a Word in a Sentence

It should be made known and clear that there does not exist one to-one-word classes. Ring (1998). It could happen that the word, *cook* can be a verb or a noun. It all depends on how the word is used in a sentence. In fact, many words can belong to more than one word class in context. Consider the examples below.

a. She looks very pale (verb)

b. She is very proud of her looks (noun)

c. He drives a fast car (adjective)

d. He drives very fast on the motorway. (adverbs)

Also consider the following examples below

➢ Turn on the light. (noun)

➢ I am trying to light the fire. (verb)

➢ I usually have a light lunch. (adjective)

It is observed that one word can belong to more than one word class. However they only belong to one word class at a time, depending or how they are used. It is therefore quite wrong to say that "cook is a verb" instead we have to say 'cook' is a verb in a sentence like, 'I cook dinner every Sunday'.

Talking about the most reliable approach among the three criteria discussed, it is more convenient to resort to the last one that is, judging the meaning of a word as well as its grammatical class in sentential environment.

Ring's work has a direct link with my research exercise which takes the stand to advocate teaching of grammatical terms in sentences as against teaching them in isolation. Ring's (1998) went far beyond the noun phrase only to talk about other aspects of grammar and how convenient it is to treat them in context for better understanding and permanent retention of memory.

According to Peter (2007) both simple and complex English sentence structure can easily be comprehended through syntactic method of teaching grammar. It therefore implies that Students ability to understand a given sentence depends on their ability to make up the various parts of speech in that particular sentence, especially the noun group which mostly serves as **the head** in the given sentence. Jog and Peter (2007), gave the following two examples to back their claim.

a. The recent **strike** by Pilots have cost the country a great deal of money.
b. The average **age** at which people begin to need eyeglasses vary considerably.

Peter (2007) gave these examples to defend the fact that students have difficulties in locating the right noun which must agree with the verb in the sentence. In (a), the noun is misunderstood to be 'Pilots' instead of **strike'** and in (b), the noun is

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misunderstood to be eyeglasses instead of **'age'**. In effect, Pilots and eyeglasses appear familiar to students as nouns in isolation than '**strike'** and '**age.**' And this misleading teaching of nouns in isolation by most English teachers has accounted for this.

Also Shelley (2010) maintains that, it is mostly syntactic rules that can monitor English sentences transformation and yet maintain the grammatical meaning of the sentence. Shelley (2010) gave the following examples

a. He is not a good student

b. Is he a good student?

c. Is he not a good student?

This is to emphasise that the syntactic rule which concerns with word order in English sentences must be on the fingertips of students. Students will find it very difficult to appreciate this rule if they have issues in identifying the various parts of speech especially the noun group in English sentences. Syntactically, it is only the operator can undergo this kind of inversion processes.

Robert (2014) proposed the view that, the features of gerunds can best be realised by the syntactic approach. This assertion wins my endorsement for the fact that teaching and learning of nouns as names of persons, places or a thing is limited in nature to establish gerunds and verbal-nouns as noun. The worse would be to treat gerunds and verbal nouns in isolation as nouns. Take for instance, the following sentence into consideration, **shooting is the final option.**

Morphologically, the word shooting with the 'ing' inflexion classifies it as a verb but syntactically, that is, the functioning of the word in context assigned it a noun

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features. Hence, **shooting** as used in the above sentence is the **noun head**. Hence, Robert (1998), assertion of how gerunds should be taught is in line with my research target, which aims at discouraging the teaching of nouns or noun phrases by means of sub-standard definitions.

Hope (2003) also argued that there are three ways of identifying noun phrases. Below are the details of his conclusion.

a. Nouns cannot be deleted

b. They can usually be replaced by pronouns.

c. They can usually be made plural and singular even though proper nouns are exceptional.

He however mentioned that, only test one, holds for all nouns but the results in test two (2) and three (3) depend on the type of head reference (noun) in question. The details of Hope's (2003) argument in test one is that noun phrase cannot be deleted or take off from a sentence and yet, maintain a meaningful sentence. This therefore implies that learners can identify noun group in sentences by the deletion method. Hence, if the deletion of a particular word or phrase in a sentence renders that sentence meaningless, then that grammatical element tends to be the **subject** or the **noun phrases.** Compare the meaningfulness of the following two sentences below:

a. The speaker refused to expose the details of the case. Meaningful sentence.

b. Refused to expose the details of the case. Meaningless sentence.

It is realized that after taken away the noun phrase, (the Speaker) from the sentence in B, the meaning of the sentence has destabilized, indicating the critical rule nouns play

in English sentences. This therefore goes to consolidate the idea of treating nouns in context instead of in isolation.

It would be very difficult to convince people or learners who depend only on traditional grammar to appreciate that some determiners can function as nouns. According to Young (2017), some determiners can function as nouns in sentences. Hence, this realization of determiners been used as nouns only make sense, when expressed in sentences. Consider the following examples.

  a. Some have arrived this morning for the training workshop.
  b. I have never seen many.

In the above instances, especially, the first instance, under no circumstance could one consider "some" as a noun in the context of traditional grammar. But once it has fitted and functioned well in the position of a noun, syntactically, nobody can question its attributes as a noun. This goes to defeat the idea of teaching nouns by mere definitions, because that will not give a general picture of the noun element in terms of structure and function.

Also, Quirk & Greenbaum (1985) suggested that gerund nouns, that is, classes of nouns in the 'ing' form can best be taught and understood in context rather than in isolation. However, it has been established that some teachers and students limited the categories of nouns to names of persons, places or things.

This is due to their failure to considered nouns as part of the open class of words. It is therefore obvious that if they have not been introduced to the syntactic principles of learning grammar and for that matter the true concept of the noun element, then the construction of correct English sentences will forever remain faulty.

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a. His firing at Williams is a mistake.

b. Running is a difficult task for cripples.

Firing and Running, in the two sentences are functioning as nouns instead of verbs.

Taking into consideration their analysis, the most reliable method of teaching and identifying the noun group in English sentences is the syntactic procedure.

According to Vajda (2005) words of different syntactic classes can have the same concrete meaning and differ only in their ability to combine with other works.

Vajda (2005) gave the following examples in respect of his view. Vajda (2005) used the word 'dark' in different morphological forms in context to establish his case.

a. A **dark** sky.

b. The **darkness** has reduced.

c. The sky **darkened.**

d. **The darkness of the sky** is caused by the rainfall.

In 'a', the word 'dark' is used as an adjective in describing the noun sky. In 'b', it has taken or functioned as a 'noun'. Also, in 'c' it has functioned as a verb in the form S.V. finally, in 'd', it has functioned as a whole noun phrase.

This therefore suggests that the class of a word as well as it meaning depends on its usage in context. The word 'dark' has undergone several grammatical operations and functioned differently in five separate sentences. In some cases the word had to undergo morphological changes in order to be accepted in a particular class or grammatical category. Vajda (2005) assertion does not deviate from the research I am

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embarking upon to enable Chiana Junior High School students familiarise themselves better with the noun group in English sentences.

Butter (2003) stated that syntax is the set of rules for combining words into sentences. In otherwise, syntactic rules guide the combination of words into meaningful sentences. For instance, the words like 'dogs' and 'bark', Syntax rule in simple sentence states that nouns generally follow or precede verbs especially when the verb is lexical. So 'bark' and 'dogs' will form sentence like this, Dogs bark but not bark dogs. So if nouns are taught in context it will help students understand and therefore identify the noun group better in sentences. Butter (2003) stand is that, it is too misleading to justify the grammatical class of a word outside context. He is also concerned about words order in English sentences to facilitate meaning. If Butter's idea is considered and applied in our teaching of grammar and for that matter the noun phrases, there would be remarkably progress in the students' acquisition of language.

Again Andrew (1997) maintains the view that, the syntactic evidence for assigning words to categories, essentially relates to the fact that different categories of works have different distribution in sentence. In otherwise, Andrew's concern has to do with the fact that a particular word may have several distributions in terms of its grammatical class or category in different English sentence construction. Take into consideration, the word "walking". In isolation, the word 'walking', may be considered a verb morphologically, however that may not be conclusive unless this is justified in context. Hence, let's operationalize it in different sentences and determine its class of speech.

   a. He is **walking** away. (verb)

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  b. **Walking** is not easy for the aged. (noun)

  c. **Walking** sticks are sold in market these days. (adjective)

It is realized that the word "walking' has three distributions in terms of grammatical class in the three sentences above.

In 'a' it is used as verb

In 'b' it is used as noun and

In 'c' as an adjective

Lubin (1997) also argued that most Adults native English speakers have no clue on how to define syntax. It is however, an important skill to teach young learners grammar using the syntactic concept. If Lubin's (1997) suggestion is to be treated with the necessity it desires, than teachers must familiarise themselves with how to use syntactic rules in teaching grammatical concepts and for that matter the noun group.

The outstanding benefit is that students will be used to it and hence enable them identify the noun group and other grammatical items in context. It is important that students recognise word classes in sentence structure at the earlier stage of their learning, as they get older and progress, it becomes more difficult to correct syntax problem, Lubin (1997). "Studies have revealed that older students translate their native language directly into English without considering the word order that changes between languages" Lubin (1997).

For example, a common mistake among Spanish speakers is to place nouns before adjectives and that mistake became more difficult to solve with older students.

Therefore if the structure is reinforced at a younger age, ESL students will be able to develop a natural insinuation to used correct syntax.

Syntax helps us to construct clear sentences that sound right, where words, phrases and clauses each serves their functions and correctly ordered to form and communicate a complete sentence with meaning. Fillmore & Snow (2009). For example, the happy boy jumped swiftly over the rock by the pond.

Teachers of English language must appreciate the fact that language society progresses alongside with language. Hence, there are some words which have been introduced into the English speaking community. And most of these words fall in the category of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. The above mentioned class of words are referred to as open class words, meaning, they admit new words into their group. "it is presuppose that we conceive of a language as an organism that grows, changes and sometimes dies". Boooij (2005). He however proposed that when language acquires new words through the activities of its users, it would be better to speak of construction and innovation of language instead of change. It is therefore apparent that the teaching of nouns or noun group cannot be limited to a name of a person, place or a thing as suggested by the Proponents of traditional grammar.

It is now recognized that students face challenges in coping with the language that is typical of school based test. The text students read become progressively more abstract and densely packed with information as students move from pre-school to elementary and then on to secondary. As Rose (1990) noted:

''In order to master vocational and professional discourses, learners must first master the re-contextualized discourses of schooling. These discourses are realized in types

of written texts and classroom interactions that become progressively more complex and abstract from early primary to senior secondary school''. (Rose, 1990:224).

Often referred to as academic, these texts have their own sets of discourse conventions that shape and are shaped by disciplinary practices and that defined specialised modes of reading, writing thinking and reasoning Bazerman (1988). Lack of experience with the school-based language in meaningful contexts has been cited as a major source of academic failure of students. (Rose 1999, Snow, Burns and Griffin 1998). Because academic language draws on re-contextualised versions of vocational and professional discourses, it evokes contexts beyond the walls of the classroom and construes knowledge that is often not familiarly available (Christie 1998) to students.

Due to the inevitable importance of academic language acquisition by students the attention of the researcher, of the current study is focused on students' used of one key feature of academic language, which is the role of the noun in English sentences and how can students learn how to identify it in sentences. The focus on nouns is informed by the theoretical perspective of Haliday. (Haliday and Matthiessen 2004) who demonstrated the functions of nominal elements.

Also the efforts of Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Svartvik (1985) based on coarse-grained comparison of some 1,700 noun phrase in a variety of genres and registers (e.g. Scientific writing, fiction, informal speech, serious talk) concluded that nouns are sensitive index of register, responsive to the purpose and subject matters in varying types of discourse that is, nouns and nominal groups (noun phrases) are a key resources for constructing text; they are all grammatical "participants' in a text:

Presenting the actors, sayers, thinkers and other semantic roles in the processes constructed by each clause.

Hendriks (2003) used an extremely limited transition model to study whether learners studying a variety of L_2 could be said to use overtly explicit noun phrases. They only transition she classified was maintenance, which she defined as "all linguistic expressions referred to a protagonist after the act of referring to that particular protagonist Hendriks (2003). This definition ignores distance between references as a factor in reference maintenance, but even with this limited view, Hendriks found significant differences in the production of L_2 German, French or English by adult native speakers of Chinese. Hendriks' final conclusion was that the over-explicitness noted in other research studies in actuality depends on the native-target language pair. Hendriks (2003). This conclusion may be debatable but such results imply that issues of selecting lexical forms for reference may not be related to the L_1 transfer of discourse rules but rather to the target language.

In other words Hendriks implies that the transfer of noun phrases from L_1 to L_2 is negative and that its overall discourse proficiency found to affect the L_2 nominal reference is questionable. In summary, she found that the target language leads to difference in discourse construction ability by learners from the same L_1 at the same L_2 position.

2.1 The Use of Non-standard English by Students and its Effect on the Ability to Realize the Noun Phrase in English Sentences

According to Forson (1996), the use of non-standard English by students of Ghanaians schools is not an accidental happening. It is a theoretical legitimacy in sociolinguistics which is related to the school, as a speech community. This, in the

final analysis, goes a long way to affect Standard English usage both in written discourses and communication by students.

The above assertion is in line with my views in this research. The non-standard English does not always contain noun phrases. Even if it does, the noun phrases therein are in very wind forms, for instance, "Ibi mi de come" instead of "he is the one coming" since students write in much the same way as they speak, it will do them a lot of good to use proper noun phrases, in their oral communication so that their writing will contain good noun phrases, and the structure of their constructions will be acceptable.

2.2 The Concord Error Analysis

Agor (2003) in his bid to investigate the proper use of noun phrases by teacher trainees conducted a research in three selected colleges in Ghana in which he analysed the concord errors of the participants involved. He chose the written text or essays of the participants as the corpus. His finding showed that teacher trainees did not have any explicit knowledge about concord rules. This meant the teacher trainees were ignorant of the noun phrase structures and their suitable verb forms. Agor (2003) therefore concluded by recommending that more attention for the teaching English grammar, most especially noun phrase, at the teacher training colleges should be intensified. The concord errors analysis by Agor (2003) enabled him to detect teacher trainees' deficiency in the area of concord (which is an issue that goes inevitably with noun phrases' because there can be no concord if a noun group or phrase is not being referred to, in a sentence). This therefore indicates that errors analysis is of a vital significance to language studies.

My claim is that the ability of students to determine that a given noun phrase is either singular or plural in nature will undoubtedly help them to use either a singular or plural verb respectively for those noun phrases. That will always enhance good and acceptable constructions in their writing and ultimately solve their concord problems. And if students can construct good and acceptable English sentences then it implies that they can easily identify noun phrases in other sentences constructed by various individuals in the form of comprehension or otherwise.

Error analysis has refocused attention on error from a language processing and language acquisition perspective Lenon (1991). And, since the issue of the problem of inappropriate use and improper handling of concord and noun phrases or noun group still persists and since it is an area that poses the greatest difficulties to students, the researcher of this study, like Agor (2003), is still trying to find out the usage of noun phrases among students of Chiana Junior High school. That is, to find out whether the students are able to use the noun phrases given them with appropriate verbs or not; Whether they can detect the gender to which given nouns phrase belong and consequently apply the appropriate pronouns to replace them or not; and lastly, whether they can determine the function a given noun phrase is performing in a given sentence or not.

2.3 Conclusion

The chapter has reviewed the available literature related to the study. The various opinions of different authors have been sought and analysed alongside the objectives of this study. The relevance of the reviewed work has been indicated.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter accounts for the type of research method used in carrying out the study. The researcher tackled the following components in this chapter; overview of the research design adopted, the sources of the data collected or obtained, the population, sample of the study as well as the type of sampling method used. It further explains the methods, the techniques and instruments of investigation employed for the study.

3.1 The Research Design

Research design refers to the overall strategy that you choose to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring you will effectively address the research problem. Labaree (2009). "It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data" (Labaree 2009). The type of research design that is adopted for this research study is the descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a study designed to depict the participants in an accurate way.

In a similar manner, descriptive research design involves gathering data that describes events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. (Gall and Hopkins 1984).

It is primarily concerned with finding out "what is" of a topic, might be applied to investigate the following questions;

Do teachers hold favourable attitudes towards using computers in school? What kind of activities that involve technology occurs in six-grade classroom and how frequently

do that occur? (Borg & Gall 2001).Borg and Gall gave this example to illustrate how descriptive research design asks specific questions for specific answers. Hence, if descriptive research design is employed in this research it will enable the researcher asks specific and answerable questions.

Descriptive research is an innovative tool for research. It presents an opportunity to fuse both quantitative and qualitative data as a means of construct the "what is" of a topic. (Janine 2001).

Lastly, descriptive studies do not test specific relationships between factors; however, they provide information about behaviours and attributes with the goal of reaching a better understanding of a given topic.

Hence, the demands of a descriptive research design is in tune with the purpose of this study since the researcher aims at examining (finding out) as well as justifying whether students of Chiana Junior High schools can identify the noun phrase in English sentences as well as finding out whether students of the mentioned Junior High School have interest in studying English grammar in general and the noun group in particular.

3.2 Sources of Data

The research was conducted in Chiana Junior High School in the Kassena-Nankana West District. Chiana Junior High is the oldest school in the West District and currently operates as a double stream.The school as a double stream is having six classrooms with each classroom containing forty- five (45) students each.

3.3 The Population of the Study

The target population was to pick any one class from the three classes through random selection to represent the whole school. That is, Chiana Junior High School. The school is a double stream facility with the total population of two hundred and seventy students (270). Each of the six classrooms accommodates forty -five (45) students with the female Students population dominating every class. This is because an 'NGO' known as CAMFED (Campaign for Female Education) captures the school under its programme with the aim of improving the girl child enrolment in the Kassena Nankana West District. The class that was considered for the study through the random selection will be 90 students because each of the streams is having 45 students in number. Also, the teacher population of the school is fifteen (15) trained teachers and three teacher trainees and one volunteer. Out of the total of the nineteen teachers in the school, six are English teachers.

 The researcher's intention for considering the Junior High level for this study was to find out whether the students of Chiana Junior High school understand the true concept of the noun group, before they may enter into the Senior High Schools or not? And also to alert teachers of Chiana Junior High school on the need to use varied methods of teaching the English grammar in case they have a deficit of information on modern day grammar and usage.

3.4 Sampling and the Sample Technique

Sampling is concerned with choosing a subset of individuals from a statistical population to estimate characteristics of a whole population and the sample group is the subset of the target population that is chosen for the study. Kennedy (2008) commented that one of the most essential factors that determines the accuracy and

reliability of one's research results is the sample group and how that group is selected. This has therefore guided the researcher in his sampling processes so as to enable him arrive at accuracy and reliable results.

3.5 Sampling Technique Employed

The researcher adopted the Simple Random Sampling technique to select both teachers and students for the study. The classes, that is, form '2A' and form "2B" students were considered for the study. This sampling technique was chosen because it gives equal probability of the participants to be selected. It is considered a fair way of selecting a sample from a given population since every member is given equal opportunities of being selected. (Depersio 2015). The researcher conducted the selection at two levels. The first one took place in the various forms or classes, where each of the streams, that is "Form 1A" and "Form 1B" combined together to select one student to represent them at the main selection level which will be used for the study. And the same selection exercise took place in the other classes that is, Form '2A' and '2B,' and Form '3A' and '2B'. With this, the researcher wrote one "YES" on a piece of paper and wrote "NO" on the others. So, the student who picked the "YES" represented that class for the next selection processes. In all, three students were selected to represent their respective classes in the final sampling process. This is the sampling results for the first selection: Form '1B' Student was selected to represent the '1A' and the '1B', A student from '2A' and one from '3B' were also selected to represent their various classes. In the final sampling exercise, the researcher wrote one even number and two odd numbers on three sheets of paper so that the student who picked the even number qualified for his or her class to be considered for the study. At the end, the Form 2A Representative, qualified for her two classes, that is, Form 2A and Form 2B.

3.6 Research Instruments

The data from the study was obtained from questionnaires, interviews, test items and written scripts. These instruments were chosen in line with Janine's (2001) assertion that descriptive research design lends itself to questionnaires and interviews to unearth the opinion, attitudes, preferences and perception of persons. Questionnaires and interviews were appropriate as far as the present study aimed at finding the perceptions, attitudes and preferences of students of Junior High Schools in respect of the study of the concept of the noun group/noun phrases and English grammar in general.

3.7 Questionnaire

The researcher used questionnaire to elicit information on the attitudes of students concerning the study of the English language. According to Lambert et al (1960), attitudes are attributed to three kinds of predispositions; the cognitive, the affective and the conative. The cognitive component is about "the individual's believe structure". The affective is about the emotional reactions. The conative aspect "comprehends the tendency to behave in certain way towards the attitude". The Business Dictionary.com, explanation of 'connate' or 'connative' is 'conventionally united' or 'to be bound together'. Hence, the conative component of attitude represents inherent reactions towards our own attitudes as well as those of others. For the purpose of this study, the first two predispositions of attitudes are considered, namely, the cognitive and the affective that is, in a bid to investigate the attitudes of students towards the English language study in general, and grammar of which the noun group/phrase plays an integral part in particular. The questions are designed to test both the cognitive and affective components that are to find out from students

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what function they believe the English language plays in their live, what they feel about the language in general, and grammar in particular.

In all, fifteen questions were captured in the questionnaire. For the questions on the cognitive components students were required to indicate that, they; Agree, Disagree, or are uncertain. An example of such questions was: "I can pass my examination without being good in English", and students expressed the beliefs they held about this and the other concomitant statements. For the affective, the general question was, "if you had a choice which aspect of English would you not rather do? Then the aspects are listed like 'speech work', 'grammar' etc. this is, for the students to indicate how they feel about the respective aspect of the English language.

3.8 The Two Classes and Students' Age Distribution

A total of ninety (90) students were provided with the questionnaires. Each class has a total of forty five (45) students. The classes are labelled 'A' and 'B'. Below is the detailed analysis of the age distribution of the students.

Block 'A'

Nine (9) students fall within the ages of fourteen (14) and fifteen (15) years. Also, eleven (11) students were within the age ranges of sixteen (16) and seventeen (17) years, while the remaining (20) twenty were confirmed to be within the ages of eighteen (18) to nineteen (19).

Block 'B'

There is only a slight difference between the age distribution in block 'A' and that of block 'B'.

In block 'B' eleven (11) students were found to be within the ages of fourteen (14) and fifteen(15) and thirteen(13) students fell on sixteen(16) and seventeen(17) years of ages, while the rest of the twenty-one (21) were between the ages of eighteen (18) and nineteen (19).

3.9 Interview

Interview was used as part of the data collection procedure because it "permits" open ended exploration of the topics as well as elicited responses that were couched in unique works of respondents" (Gall et al 1996:290). The English Language teachers, who were six (6) in number, were all allowed to participate in the interview in order to find out from them, their general perception of the English language, especially the teaching of nouns.

They were asked about their views on how they considered nouns as indispensable grammatical tools in the teaching of the English language, and whether the way nouns are treated in textbooks is adequate or not. They were also interviewed on the reactions of their students to the teaching of nouns and English grammar in general.

Table 1:The Number of Years Taught in the School and the Academic Qualification of the Six English Teachers

Name	Qualification	Number of Years Taught English in the School
Teacher 'A'	D.B.E	4
Teacher 'B'	B.E.D (Social Studies)	5
Teacher 'C'	B.E.D(Science)	5
Teacher 'D'	D.B.E	3
Teacher 'E'	B.E.D(Kasem)	6
Teacher 'F'	D.B.E	5

3.10 Test

The test was organized in two phases, that is, pre-test item and post –test.

Fifteen questions were designed to cover the different structures of the noun group, both simple and complex. The questions required students to identify the noun group in the various sentences and underline them. The same test item was conducted in the post test. The purpose was to compare performance or results of the two tests written by the students. The details of these questions are provided in appendix A.

3.11 Written Script

The researcher also conducted a written test in the two classes that is, (Form 2A and Form 2B) so forty-five (45) essays were randomly selected, for the study. The intention was to find out whether students of Chiana Junior High schools can used the noun group in constructing acceptable English sentences in written discourse or not. Samples of students' marked scripts are included in appendix B.

3.12 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought permission from the school authorities and thereby briefed the selected students on the purpose of the study before the questionnaires and test items were administered to them. All the students were made to write their responses in the presence of the researcher and every material was collected after completion to ensure 100% retrieval rate.

Concerning the written scripts students were asked to write on two topics where certain noun phrases are supposed to or expected to be used correctly, after which forty-five (45) essays were randomly selected for the analysis.

The Two Essay Questions

1. Narrate how the people of your locality celebrated their festival.

2. Describe how your favourite or best food is prepared.

With your knowledge in simple and complex noun phrase, write these essays using not more than hundred words.

An interview guide prepared by the researcher was used to elicit information from the six (6) English teachers concerning their experience in teaching the English language.

3.13 Conclusion

The study has attempted to find out how students of Chiana Junior High School understand the concept of the noun group in both simple and complex forms in constructions and whether students can identify the noun group in English sentence or not. The study has also exposed possible contributory factors that accounted for the poor performance of Chiana Junior High School which attitudinal is suspected to be one of the lot. This will however be confirmed in the data analysis where the students will be allowed to choose their prefer choice of the aspects of the English language. These aspects include the comprehension aspect of the language, the grammar aspect, the literature aspect, oral production, and composition. Also, the two tests which sought to evaluate the students' ability in identifying the noun phrases in English sentences as well as their knowledge in using the noun phrases well in sentence construction will be analysed in the fourth chapter ahead. Furthermore, the research instruments such as the questionnaire, interview, the test among others will enable the researcher find answers to the research questions raised in the first chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH, ANALYSIS AND

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data obtained from the two classes, form "2A and form 2B". The attitude of students towards the study of English grammar was first put into consideration in the data analysis. This is to verify whether the students have interest in studying the English language or not? The next is the analysis of the data from the text items of the selected students.

The analysis of the written scripts of the two classes is third. Forty-five (45) scripts were selected out of the ninety scripts for this analysis. Finally, analysis on the views of the English teachers through an interview sum up the chapter.

4.1 Brief Explanation of Attitude and Attitude Models

This part of the research is devoted to look at the attitude students of Chiana Junior High School have developed, towards the study of English language in general and in grammar with specific emphasis on the noun group. The aim is to find out whether students are grammatically knowledgeable to detect the occurrence of the noun group in English sentences as well as use the noun group correctly in the construction of English sentences and find out some of the factors which contribute to that effect.

According to the *Business Dictionary*.com "attitude refers to the predisposition or a tendency to respond positively or negatively towards a certain idea, object, person, or situation" it included that an attitude influences the individual's choice of action and responses to challenges, incentives, and rewards (together called stimuli).

The views of Hogg, and Vaughan (2005: 150) are that "an attitude is a relatively enduring organization of beliefs, feelings, and behavioral tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbol". Also, Gal and Ginsburg (1994) stated that attitude is the sum of all the emotions and feelings experiences during the learning phases of the studied subject. Indeed attitude is essential to carry out the teaching and learning process. Different studies show that its development is important to teach and learn any subject. It would therefore be inappropriate to ignore the attitudinal impact of students on the acquisition of the second language as far as the teaching and of the English language is concerned. One of the basic principles in teaching is that one should be able to control and capture his or her students' interest in the classroom since this will ensure full participation of the students in the lesson. Therefore if students are motivated to learn the English language they will portray a positive attitude towards it and that will also make them ready to learn any aspect of the language, be it grammar, comprehension, literature or the oral production.

4.2 Attitude Models

A lot of attitude models have been put forward by many proponents but Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) model has been considered for this study.

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) suggested that "attitudes are constructed around three components". They include the following:

   i.   A cognitive component (beliefs)

   ii. An affective component (feelings) and

   iii. A conative component (behavioral).

Figure 1: C A C model
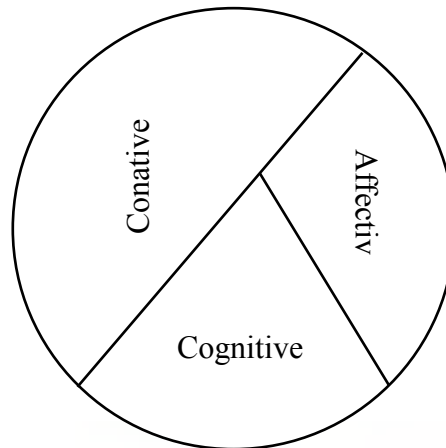
For the purpose of this analysis, the affective component is considered for further explanation. The affective component is the emotional response (liking or disliking) of the individual towards a situation, thing or an object. Most researchers place much emphasis on the importance of the affective component. An individual's attitude towards an object cannot be determined by simply identifying its beliefs about it because emotions work simultaneously with the cognitive process about an attitude. It is therefore very important to place emphasis on the emotional feelings of the student that may have an indirect negative effect on the acquisition of the English language or grammar in particular.

Agarwal and Malhotra (2005) expressed that the affect (feelings/ emotions) and attitude (evaluative judgment based on brand beliefs) are streams of research combined to propose an integrated model of attitude and choice.

The affective domain of a human aspect of life counts a lot in terms of career determination. Hence the affective domain as a component of attitude plays a major role in determining whether students will perform well in the English language or not.

Therefore it is important for teachers to be aware of the students' perceptions or how students view the English language to be, so that the necessary assistance can be offered.

Detailed analysis of Chiana Junior High School, students' attitude towards the learning of the English language has been illustrated in table 2.

From the age distribution analysis in chapter three, table 1, it is realized that majority of the students fell within the age range of eighteen (18) and nineteen (19).It is therefore presumed that the students could give responses that reflect their true thoughts or feelings.

4.3 Data Analyses on Students, Attitude Towards the Study of the English Language

The table below shows the responses given by students of the two blocks, thus block 'A' and block 'B' reflecting their perceptions about the relevance or otherwise of the English Language.

Table 2: Responses on the Affective Domain

Aspect of English	Block 'A' Highly preferred	Least preferred	Block 'B' Highly preferred	Least preferred
Comprehension	13	10	8	12
Grammar	7	15	6	15
Literature	9	8	8	9
Oral production	7	5	9	6
Composition	9	8	14	3
Total	**45**	**45**	**45**	**45**

Block 'A'

In block 'A' when they students were asked to indicate their preference to the various aspects of English, 13 students expressed their interest in comprehension while 10 of them indicated their dislike for comprehension work. For English grammar, 7 students wished to study grammar instead, but 15 students ticked against the study of grammar as an aspect of English. 9 students wished to do literature work but 8 students wanted to avoid the study of English literature. On oral production, 7 students expressed their interest in studying it but 5 students would not also do the oral aspect. 9 also chose composition while 8 students shunned on composition writing or study.

Block 'B'

The results in block 'B' differ a little bit from that of block 'A'. In block 'B' 12 students dislike comprehension but only 8 students are committed to study English comprehension.

Also, 6 students would like to study grammar while as many as 15 students maintained to stay away from the study of the English grammar. 8 students also ticked and preferred to do literature but 9 students said no to the study of literature in English.

For the oral production, 9 students are ready to study it, while 6 of them expressed their dislike for it. The study of English composition has rather attracted a high number of 14 students in this chart but only 3 students said they will not do composition. From the analysis in table 1 above English grammar suffered the most reduced preference by students. It could therefore be established that attitude is a strong factor which determines ones success in doing something or otherwise.

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The next pages discuss the two test items been conducted for the students to verify whether attitude is actual one of the challenges to students' second language acquisition.

4.4 Responses from Pre-Test

Table 2 below gives information on the raw scores of students' answers given to the questions of the test on the noun group. They are fifteen questions in number with simple and somehow complex noun structures. Each question is in a statement form and students are expected to underline the noun group in each statement. Below is the full list of the questions:

Pre- Test Assessment

15/06/2017

Chiana Junior High School

FORM TWO 'A' AND 'B'

Read the sentences below carefully and underline all the noun phrases in each case.

The noun phrases can be in subject, object or in complement. (15 marks)

1. The angry youth stoned the thief to death.

2. Sleeping is natural, and cannot be avoided.

3. All the talkative students in the class must be punished severely.

4. Mathematics is a practical subject.

5. Learning is sometimes difficult and tiring.

6. The three year old child put on the TV.

7. Armed robbery is very rampant these days.

8. The teacher postponed the English lesson again.

9. For the lack of knowledge my people perish.

10. The light has been off since yesterday.

11. Eating and sleeping immediately causes constipation.

12. This book belongs to Mr. John.

13. He books a flight to London every Friday.

14. Two students were sacked immediately.

15. Two persons were penciled down for the ministerial position.

Excerptions from Students' Writing

When students were asked to underline the noun group in each of the sentences above they did not find it easy, especially in a statement where a noun is used as a verb. Example; *"The angry youth stoned the thief to death."* Most of the students included 'stoned' as part of the noun group. Another instance is question number 13, *"He books a flight to London every Friday"*. The word 'books' was also underlined as part of the noun group. In a related manner, students did not have knowledge on gerunds, they simply treated them as verbs despite their usage as nouns in sentences. Example, *"sleeping is natural, and cannot be avoided*;" *"Learning is sometimes difficult and tiring"*. Students did not consider 'sleeping' and 'learning' as nouns in those cases. All these errors committed by students emanated from the traditional notion where the concept of the noun is understood to be names of person, place or a thing. Though, 'books' and 'stoned' were used as verbs, the students still referred to them as nouns and 'sleeping' and 'learning' were used as nouns, the students referred to them as verbs.

Table 3: Detailed Pre-Test Results Analysis

Awarded Marks	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Block 'A'				1	3	2	3	2	3	5	9	7	6	1	3	
Block 'B'					1	2	3	6	4	4	5	9	6	4	1	

Block 'A' Scores

From the table of analysis for block 'A' the number of students who got 12 out of 15 was 1, 3 students got 11 out of 15, 2 got 10, 3 students scored 9, 2 got 8, 3 got 7, 5 also got 6, 9 got 5 marks, 7 students scored 4, 6 got 3, 1 student got 2 marks and 3 students got a single 1 mark out of the total of 15 marks. Samples of the marked scripts of students who scored the following marks can be found in appendix 'A' 12, 8, 3, 2 and 1.

Block 'B' Scores

In block 'B' the highest score was 11 marks out of the total of 15 marks and it was only a single student who scored that mark. 2 got 10, 3 students also scored 9 marks, 6 got 8, 4 students got 7, 4 got 6 marks, 5 students got 5 marks, as many as 9 students scored 4 marks, 6 students got 3, 4 students got 2 and 1 student got 1 mark. Samples of students' marked scripts can be found in appendix 'B'. These include the scripts of student who scored 11 marks, 5, 4, 2 and 1mark.

4.5 Detailed Analysis of Students' Performance in the Pre- Test Item and Their Implications

The scores obtained by the students in the various classes indicated that students' knowledge in the noun group in sentences is very defective. In block 'A' 11 out of 45

students had the pass mark, which represents 24.4%. A single student scored 12 out of the total score of 15 marks. No student got 15, which is the highest mark. But, 34 students fell below the average score, which represents 75.6% failure. The number of students who had worse performance (that is those who got 5 marks and below) are 24, (53.3%), doubling the number of those who had the pass mark as well as outnumbering the total number of students who took part in the test. The results therefore justified the students' defective knowledge in the noun group. This analysis testifies to the fact that, students ability in constructing acceptable English sentences will continue to be problematic if teachers continue to over rely on only the traditional method of teaching grammar. The results in block 'B' were not also encouraging. The number of students who had the average score was not something to ride home about. Only 12 students out of 45 students had the pass mark, which represents 26.7%. The rest of the 33 (73.3%) fell below the average score. Also, the majority of students had the lowest marks in this block. As many as twenty (25) students, representing 55.6% have performed worst in the test administration. This is more than half of the total test participants put together. It is therefore worth concluding that, students' knowledge in the true identity of the noun group falls below expected standards.

4.6 Pre-Test Analysis on Students' Written Scripts

Questions

1. Narrate how the people of your locality celebrate their festival.

2. Describe how your favourite or best food is prepared.

These two essay questions carry fifteen (15) marks each. Only forty-fives (45) scripts were randomly selected from the two classes for the study .The total marks for the two questions put together will be 30.

Table 4: Students' Scores from the Written Test

	Marks		
Number of students	**1st Essay**	**2nd Essay**	**Total (%)**
4	7	6	13%
7	6	6	12%
10	5	4	9%
15	4	4	8%
6	2	2	5%
3	1	1	2%

Those two essay questions which were marked over fifteen (15), sought to test students' ability to use the noun group appropriately in written discourse. From table 3 above, four (4) students got seven (7) marks in essay 1 but they got six (6) marks each in essay 2. Ten (10) students also got five (5) marks from essay 1 and four (4) marks in essay 1. A total of fifteen students scored four (4) marks each in essay 1 and in essay 2. Also six (6) students got two (2) marks each in both essays and finally, three (3) students got one (1) mark each in both essays.

The table 2 above gives a detailed picture on students' ability or inability in using the noun group in constructing acceptable English sentences. The results showed that, students have numerous challenges to be resolved inasmuch as constructing acceptable English sentences is concerned. From the table, only four students out of forty-five fall near the average pass mark of 15. Here are some few examples of students' faulty constructions which confirmed that they really have problems in using the noun phrase in sentences. *'No festival are good than my festival'. After that, the community people will come together and be playing his drums.* The noun phrase,

'No festivals' was supposed to be in singular form (festival) in order to go with the singular form of the verb 'is' instead of 'are'. And in the second instance, the student could not realize that *the community people* is the noun phrase and therefore substituted it wrongly for a wrong pronoun *his* instead of *their*. It can therefore be established that the students' knowledge in the noun phrase is problematic therefore it has affected the student's choice of verb as well as the right pronoun to match with the right noun phrase. Some samples of students' marked scripts are provided in appendix 'B' as evidence.

Also during the marking of students' scripts it was realized that students had other grammatical issues aside the noun group. These include capitalization, the use of right tenses, spellings, subject-verb agreement, and lastly, lack of vocabulary. For example, many students used the article 'the' instead of the pronoun 'they'. Almost all the students who participated in the essay written test made this mistake. Students did not also take notice of capitalization in the essay written test, there were many instances where students failed to capitalize the first letter of a word that begins a sentence and other proper nouns that needed to be capitalized. For example, a student started a sentence like this: *beans* is very *delcious* food and how to prepare it, is very *essy* and faster. The above instances are combined issues of faulty capitalization and wrong spellings. Also, another example of students' bad spellings is, thank you for *likeing* my festival. So the word 'liking' is wrongly spelt by the student as 'likeing'. Another serious problem that was realized during the marking of students' scripts is their poor punctuation. Some students did not even use a single punctuation in their letters. All these grammatical errors emanated from the limited knowledge students have in the concept of the noun group. Because if students can make up the noun group in terms of singular and plural then they would be able to deal with the issue of subject- verb

agreement. Their spellings are also affected because they have difficulty in identifying what constitute a noun or a noun phrase. Some few samples of the marked scripts are provided in appendix 'B' to support all these claims.

4.7 The Concept of the Noun Group, Using the Syntactic Approach

Due to the poor performance of students in the two test items given above, the researcher sought permission from the headmaster and taught the students the true concept of the noun group. The researcher used the syntactic approach to teach the participants of the study.

Below is the detailed of how the researcher used the syntactic approach to teach the test participants

The researcher based his teaching on the following objectives: Hence the researcher wants the students to achieve the following:

1. explain what constitute the noun group;

2. identify the noun group or phrase in English sentence;

3. use the noun group or phrase well in English sentences.

The researcher introduced students to the syntactic approach of teaching the concept of the noun group through the following procedure; students were made to understand that the head referent (noun) comes in varied forms and it is only syntactic rule that can help identify it. Taking for instance, the lexeme 'phone', the standards of traditional grammar would have concluded that 'phone' is forever remained a noun and nothing else. But when the lexeme 'phone' is syntactically analyzed, it may fall

into other grammatical categorizes. Consider the used of 'phone' in the following sentences below:

  a. I bought a phone for my daughter; (noun)

  b. The phone is mine; (noun)

  c. They decided to phone their boss this morning; (verb)

  d. Phone calls can be deceptive. (adjective)

It is therefore clear from the above examples that the traditional approach of teaching English grammar needs a serious review. It is therefore the syntactic rule that outlines the best approach in understanding the various grammatical categories. Therefore it would be inaccurate to conclude by the traditional standard that phone is an example of a noun wherever you encounter it.

The researcher also explained to students that it is only the syntactic approach that can enable you understand the concept of gerunds. Therefore the positioning of words in sentences is very cue syntactically to determine the grammatical class of a word. The researcher gave some few examples below to illustrate how a word positioning in sentence matters to determine its grammatical class, especially in the case of gerunds.

  (a) *Writing* is a basic skill acquisition in English;

  (b) Sleeping is an involuntary action.

  (c) *Driving* in the night is dangerous.

The researcher placed much emphases on the point that all the words in italics in each of the sentences above constitute the noun group or the noun phrase since they occupied the noun position as either subject or object. The researcher also included

that anything that occupies the subject position and performs the functions of the subject in a sentence is a noun or noun phrase. I also discouraged students from relying solely on definitions to learn English grammar.

The researcher conducted another test for the students after teaching them to verify whether students have understood the true concept of the noun group or not. The results of this test will inform the researcher whether there is an improvement on students' knowledge on the concept of the noun group or not? Below is the full list of the questions in the post test items for the final analysis.

Post- Test Assessment

15/11/2017

CHIANA Junior High School

FORM TWO 'A' AND 'B'

Read the sentences below carefully and underline all the noun phrases in each case.

The noun phrases can be in subject, object or in complement. (15 marks)

1. Just offer me a cup of water.

2. More than five students wrote the exam.

3. Our plan to relocate is still in mind.

4. Kwame and John have arrived.

5. Decent dressing among the youth must be encouraged.

6. Teaching is a noble profession.

7. The Free Senior High program has been implemented.

8. A bag of groundnuts is not expensive.

9. The market is too busy.

10. Edna and l turned down the offer.

11. Peace must be restored.

12. Disobedient students usually perform poorly.

13. Prayer is the key.

14. The black pen is mine.

15. Knowledge is power.

4.8 Post Test Analysis

After using the syntactic method to teach students the noun concept, the researcher conducted another test item of the same number (15 questions) to test whether students' understanding of the noun group has improved. The questions in the second test item are of the same standard with those in the first test items. Student's dramatic improvement in the post test conducted by the researcher marked the evidence of a successful lesson. Below is the detailed analysis of students' results of the post- test items.

Table 5: Post -Test Results

Awarded Marks	15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Block A		9	10	5	9	5	2	3	1	1					
Block B	3	7	8	6	8	4	3	2	1	2	1				

Table 4 above indicates students' scores in the test items for the two blocks. The results in   each block have further been analysed below.

Block 'A'

In block 'A' even though, nobody has scored 15 over 15, but as many as 9 students scored 14 marks out of the total 15 marks. Also 10 students were able to score 13 marks. 5 also got 12 marks, 9 got 11 marks , 5 students also got 10 marks , 2 got 9, 3 got 8 marks, 1 student scored 7 marks and 1 also got the lowest mark which is 6.

Looking at the performances in block 'A' in the post test analysis, there is a remarkably improvement as against their performance in the pre-test items. For example, in the pre-test items, no student scored 14 marks, the highest score was 12 and it was only 1 student who got that mark. In short, the number of students who scored from 12 to 8 marks in the pre-test administration was only 12, representing 24.4% passed. In the post test administration, the number of students who scored from 14 to 8 marks is overwhelming, and that is forty- three (43) students, representing 95.5% , whilst only 2 students fell below the average mark representing only 4.4%. Samples of marked scripts are included in appendix 'B' to authenticate this claim.

Implications

The implication here is that students are not solely to be blamed for their poor performance in the English Grammar, because when the right method was used to teach them the concept of the noun group, they understood the lesson and could now answer questions of similar standard in the post test items.

Block 'B'

The results in block 'B' are also quite good. In block 'B', 3 students were able to score 15 over 15. Also, 7 students got 14 marks and 8 students also scored 13 marks. 6 students got 12 marks , 8 got 11 marks, 4 students also got 10 marks , 3 scored 9 marks ,2 also got 8 marks but 1 student got 7 marks and 2 got 6 marks and lastly 1

student scored 5 marks as the lowest in the test. Samples of marked scripts of this test are included in the appendix B to provide concrete evidence.

Implications

As in 'A' the results in 'B' also justifies that, students would appreciate English Grammar very well if the right methods are employed in teaching grammar. Like block A, the number of students who performed well in the pre-test items are incomparable to those in the post test items.

As many as forty-one (41) students scored from 15 to 8 marks in block B, representing 91.1% as against 26.7% in the pre-test items. This therefore gives the indication that if the right methods were used in teaching students the true concept of the noun group or grammar in general, students would have understood it well. Therefore attitude as the prime factor which contributes to students' massive poor performance in the English language as indicated earlier in this research cannot further be over emphasised even though it cannot totally be ruled out.

Interviewing of Teachers

It was realized from the table 1, in chapter three that, none of the six teachers has the requisite qualification to teach the English Language in the school. Therefore, this could also be a contributory factor to the poor performance of students in the English Language in Chiana Junior High School and beyond. However, the researcher proceeded to interview the teachers on the following issues. Below is the full list of the interview questions and their accompanying responses from the six teachers interviewed

1. How many times does the English Language appear on the school's timetable?

2. What is the minimum period for the English Language on the timetable? 35 minutes

3. What is the maximum period for the English Language on the timetable? 70 minutes

4. How many minimum periods do you have for English in a week? 3 periods

5. How many maximum periods do you have for English in a week? 1 period

6. Are the periods allotted for teaching the English Language enough?

    Teachers' responses.   Yes   No

                                  1   5

7. Which subject has the maximum number of periods on the school timetable? Mathematics

8. Followed by which subject? Science

9. Has the school's timetable ever been reviewed? Yes No   can't remember

                                                                      6

10. Did you complain about the limited periods for English on the school's timetable to the headmaster?

    Teachers' responses   Once   Severally   Not at all

                                 4   2

11. Has he acted? No.

12. Does the school have a library? No

13. Does the school have story books? No.

14. Does the school have enough textbooks? No

15. How many English textbooks are available for each level?

        JHS 1   JHS 2   JHS 3

         10   8   9

16. How many students do you have in each class?

JHS 1'A'   JHS 2 'A'   JHS 3 'A'   JHS 1'B'   JHS2'B'   JHS 3'B'

  45   45   45   45   45   45

17. Did you do reading in class?

   Yes   No   Occasionally

                      6

18. What is the students' reading ability?

                     Good   Poor   Very poor

 Teachers' responses.   4   2

19. How do students behave towards the learning of English language during teaching?

    Positive   Negative   can't tell

             5   1

20. How do you see the English language?

   Difficult   Somehow difficult   Not difficult

     4   2

21. Which aspect of English do you find more difficult to teach?

Teachers responses:	comprehension	grammar	composition	literature
	0	3	2	1

4.9 Analysis and Implications

During the interview with the six teachers the researcher realized that students' poor performance in the English language does not rest only on the students' poor attitude towards the learning of the English language. For example, the teachers revealed that the school lacks the required number of reading materials to enable students practice reading since regular reading is the key to new vocabulary acquisition. Also the inadequate supply of textbooks in the school as indicated by the teachers is also a source of setback against the proper acquisition of the second language by the students. According to the teachers, the various classes rarely observe reading as required. Even though, the majority of the teachers indicated that students portray negative attitude towards learning the English language, they themselves admitted that English language especially, the grammar aspect is difficult. Therefore if teachers themselves view English to be a difficult subject then you can be sure that they will not be in any motivational mood to motivate students to learn the language. The teachers also complained about the limited time for the English language on the school's timetable but the headmaster would not listen. For whatever reasons, authorities do not realize that the child's acquisition of the English language marks the beginning of his or her academic success. It is therefore necessary to allot enough time for the English language on the school's timetable as well as getting enough textbooks to enable both teachers and students observe reading in the classroom. Detailed discussions and recommendations of the above issues will be discussed further in chapter five.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This chapter marks the end of the study. The chapter focuses on conclusions from the analysis of students' attitudes towards the learning of the English language especially, the noun phrase in English grammar as the focal point. The chapter will also discuss and draw conclusions on the poor performance by the students on the two test items and their implications, including the post- test items and their implications, review of interview with the English teachers, the issue of textbooks and the importance of library to effective learning, while suggestions and recommendations based on the study will end the chapter.

5.1 The Effects of Students' Attitude on Learning English Grammar

The study examined the attitude of students towards the learning of English language in general and that of grammar in particular, with the noun group being the centre of focus. The essence of attitude as a major determining factor to the acquisition of proficiency in the English language cannot be down-played. It was realized from the investigations of the study that the attitude of students of Chiana Junior high school towards the learning of grammar is an undeniably contributory factor of students' poor performance in the English language in particular, and that of the other subjects in general in terminal exams, for the fact that the English language is used to teach the other subjects. From the students' responses in chapter four, table 1, (the affective domain), it was revealed clearly that majority of the students expressed their dislike towards the study of grammar. For example, from the table of analysis it is very apparent that the students do not like grammar. Out of the total of 90 students, 18

students representing as low as 14% of the total selected population who showed their preference for the study of grammar. On the contrary, as many as 30 students representing 33% of those who do not like English grammar at all. Therefore, this is a serious issue that calls for thorough investigation into all the contributory factors of students' cold attitude towards grammar.

Inasmuch as negative attitude of students is a contributory factor against their holistic acquisition of the English language, there are other factors which also share similar blames. For example, when the researcher enquired for the qualifications of the six English teachers (table 5, chapter four), it was realized that none of them had acquired the requisite qualification to teach the language as expected. Those teachers would rather function well in their respective fields of qualification other than teaching English. Therefore wrongful allocation of the English language to teachers is one of the causes, aside students' negative attitude towards the subject. It was also detected that the number of teaching periods allowed for the English language on the school's timetable as compared to other subjects is woefully inadequate. It is an undeniable fact that the English language comprises a lot of aspects such as grammar, comprehension, orals or pronunciation, as well as composition. Therefore, the English language needs enough time or periods to cover all these aspects. Another issue, worthy of mentioning is the fact that the English teachers of Chiana Junior High School, admitted that the English language is a difficult subject. The implication is that, if the masters of the subject themselves considered it as difficult then you can be sure that the students will be left to their faith and hence, increase their frustrations. For example, Philips (1994) and Agnes, Greenwood and Miller (1994) prove that the relationship between attitude and beliefs of the teacher as well as performance, beliefs and attitude of students are either positively or negatively, depending on the

predisposition they both have- teacher and student-towards the subject. Therefore if teachers see the English language as a difficult subject, and present it as difficult to the students then the students will also consider it as a difficult subject and become demotivated in learning the subject. So all these and many other factors made the students to develop an unfriendly attitude towards grammar, and consider it as inimical to their course of study.

5.2 Students' Performance in the Pre-Test and the Post- Test and their Implications

The researcher conducted two phases of test to help him obtain reliable information for the data analysis. They included the pre-test items and the post -test items. The results were analysed, block after block in chapter four. For instance, in block 'A' of the pre-test item, 11 out of 45 students had the pass mark, representing 24.4%. Only a single student was able to score 12 marks out of the total score of 15 marks. No student got the highest mark which was 15. Meanwhile, 34 students fell below the average score, representing 75.6% failure. The number of students who had worse performance (that is those who got 5 marks and below) were 24, (53.3%), which doubled the number of those who had the pass mark as well as outnumbering the total number of students who took part in the test. These results therefore serve as a signal of justification that, the students' knowledge in the noun group is highly defective. The analysis testifies to the fact that, students ability in constructing acceptable English sentences will continue to be problematic if teachers continue to over rely on only the traditional method of teaching grammar. The results in block 'B' were not also different. Because in block B' also, only 12 students out of 45 students had the pass mark, which represents 26.7%. The rest of the 33 (73.3%) fell below the average score. Also the majority of students had the lowest marks in this block. As many as

twenty five (25) students, representing 55.6% performed worst in the test administration. This is more than half of the total test participants put together. And on the written test which required students to use noun phrase acceptably in English sentences, students' performance had not improved either. The scores obtained by the various blocks appeared very discouraging. Each of the essays contained fifteen (15) marks, therefore the average score was expected to be fifteen (15), that is, by putting the two together. None of the forty-five (45) students who were randomly selected for the test analysis crossed the average mark of fifteen. Based on these two tests analysis, one can conclude that students of Chiana Junior High School have much difficulty in identifying the noun group in English sentences as well as using them correctly in the constructions of English sentences. The researcher's in-depth investigation in the matter goes beyond the negative attitude of students towards the learning of the English language as the main cause. The researcher realized among other things that teachers do not have the requisite qualification to teach the English language and that led to the use of only the traditional method (definitions) in teaching grammar. This is justified in the researcher's post-test administration. Before the researcher conducted the second test, he sought permission from the headmaster of the school and used the syntactic method to teach the students the true concept of the noun group. In short, the syntactic approach of teaching grammar is based on context or treating grammatical class of words by using them up in sentences. There was an improvement in the post -test administration indicating that the syntactic procedure of teaching grammar is more effective as compare to the traditional method. For example, in block 'A', 43 students out of the total test participants of 45 students got the pass mark, but in the pre-test analysis, only 11 students got the pass mark. Also in block "B", 41 students scored the pass mark in the post- test

administration as against 12 students who had the pass mark in the pre-test administration. The above results in the post test administration portray a clear indication of remarkable improvement. It would therefore be unfair to conclude that students' poor performance in the pre-test administration is only based on attitude. Hence, issues of teacher qualification, use of the right method of teaching, number of teaching periods allotted for the English language among others things are also potential factors.

5.3 Review of Interview with Teachers

The six English teachers who were interviewed also brought up a lot of concerns inasmuch as the poor performance of students of Chiana Junior High School in the English language is concerned. However, none of the six teachers of the School had the needed qualification to teach the English language. three teachers had Bachelor of Arts in Social studies, Science and Ghanaian language (Kasem) and the remaining three had Diploma in Basic Education but specialized in Mathematics and Science. Their qualifications and the number of years taught in the school are captured in chapter four, table 5. The situation in Chiana Junior High School has given me an insight that the English language has been taken for granted by some other schools in terms of getting the right people to teach it as well as allotting enough time or periods for it on the school's timetable. Nobody can deny the fact that specializing in a particular course or field of study but rather teaches a different subject does not contribute to any excellence. Therefore the English language needs qualified teachers who are enlightened with the modern day methods of teaching English grammar. Aside the requisite qualification needed by teachers to teach the language, the six interviewees revealed that the school lacks the required quantity of teaching aids especially textbooks to teach the English language. Due to this, private individuals

take advantage of the situation and flooded the system with sub-standard English pamphlets. Textbooks are very remarkable teaching materials in the teaching and learning process. Textbooks serve as a guide to teachers in respect to the preparation of lesson notes as they are designed in accordance with what the syllabi contain at the various stages of our educational system. According to Veriava (2015), a fall in the standards of education does not matter much on poor infrastructure or other basic necessities like furniture but rather the acute shortage of textbooks. It is therefore a basic priority to make sure that textbooks exist in adequate quantity to facilitate teaching and learning. It is one thing ensuring the availability of textbooks in the schools for teaching and learning, and maintaining their quality especially the grammar aspect is another. The researcher has found out that the textbooks and the syllabuses are not in line with one another in terms of content. That is, the grammar topics, the textbook requires you to treat after reading a comprehension passage is totally different from what the syllabus of the day demands from you. This chaotic situation therefore makes the teacher indecisive and hence compels him/her to resort to the selection of what he/she can teach. For example, Junior Secondary School English, pupil's book 2, page number 19, treats the concept of auxiliary verbs whilst the Teaching syllabus for Junior High School, form 2, page 1, handles pronunciation. This serious conflicting, couple with the inexperience of the English teachers contribute to students low performance in the English language in terms of spoken and written. If the right or experienced teachers were allocated to handle the subject they could have known how to arrange the system despite the disorder. The researcher also detected from some of the students' notebooks (grammar), that the noun has been given shallow attention as a name of a person place or anything but nothing else. When the researcher wanted to find out from teachers they all indicated

that, that is how the textbooks presented the concept of the noun group. The researcher made an enquired into this claim and realized that the textbooks did not actually give much attention to the noun group. Example, page 3 of English book 1, only treats count nouns with articles. There is no any noun topic in the whole of English book 2. Also in English book 3, page 81, the textbook only treated plural nouns with the 's' inflection. But page 48 of form 2 English syllabus treats noun phrases. Therefore, it is very important for the textbooks in the system to be reviewed.

5.4 The Impact of Library

According to Keith (2004), a school library is an academic library that supports school's programs as well as the teaching and learning process. School libraries serve students by providing materials to meet their various needs and encourage their reading. Therefore the absence of library in Chiana Junior High School also contributes to the lingual acquisition problem of the students. Even though on the school's timetable, library period is allowed for 45 minutes, both teachers and students do not observe it. According to the teachers, the library period is almost becoming a free period. Meanwhile, Clark (1999) and Martin (2000) concluded based on research results that the reading scores for students in schools that focus on improving their library programs are on the average of eight to twenty-one percent higher than similar schools with no such development. But the researcher further investigations revealed that the whole district does not even have a single public or private library. There is no doubt that a situation like this, is a threat to students' learning progress.

5.5 Conclusion

I resolved to conduct a research into the knowledge of Chiana Junior High School students on the concept of the noun group in terms of their ability to use it in construction as well as identifying it in sentences. My investigations unearthed a lot of issues which accounted for the inability of students to identify the noun phrases in English sentences as well as using the noun phrases well in sentence constructions.

Therefore the issue of students' attitude towards the study of English language particularly, English grammar was tackled under this study due to the important role attitudes play in determining ones readiness for learning the second language.

The study was able to reveal authentically that an overwhelming majority of the students did not have interest in studying grammar and all the other parts treated under grammar. The students wish to avoid English grammar if they had the choice to do so. In order to prove this claim the researcher conducted two phases of tests for the students. That is, the pre-test items and the post- test items administrations. The pre-test included both written and underlining of answers in statements whilst the post-test items was only underlining of answers in statements.

In the pre-test administration, students' difficulties with regard to the use of noun phrases in sentences were made manifest in both their written scripts and the test items. Samples of students' marked scripts are in appendix 'A' to provide concrete evidence. Before the students write the post-test item, the researcher conducted two lessons for the students to justify whether students' abysmal performance in the pre-test administration was based solely on attitude or otherwise. The researcher realized from the improved performance of students in the post test administration that the factors which cause students' inability to identify the noun group in English sentences

as well as using the noun phrases well in sentences construction go beyond attitudinal. That has further intensified the researcher's curiosity to find out from the six English teachers through an interview on the remaining possible causes. Even though the six English teachers who were interviewed also admitted that students did not find grammar and all grammatical issues a pleasant aspect to learn, but the teachers of the English language themselves in Chiana Junior High School boldly admitted that the English language is a difficult subject especially, the grammar aspect. This perception by the English teachers could have an indirect negative effect on the students' attitude towards the English language, particularly the grammar aspect. Investigations also revealed that Chiana Junior High School faces an acute shortage of textbooks which affects quality teaching and learning in the school. Even the textbooks that exist in the school and any other school in the circuit or the district at large do not treat English grammar into details. Also the grammar topics in the syllabi do not conform well with those in the textbooks. Another revelation that was highly disheartening is the fact that all the six English teachers of the school do not have the needed qualification to be able to teach the English language. This makes some of them skip the teaching of noun phrases and other grammatical topics they had faint ideas in, if the textbooks failed to give them enough information on those topics. Further blames were also directed to the English teachers for discouraging students to use complex noun phrases but limited themselves to simple noun phrase for fear of making mistakes in their writing. Libraries which are very crucial in our lingual career development cannot be found in the whole of Kassena Nankana West District where Chiana Junior High is a victim. The researcher therefore wishes to conclude that if all the above mentioned issues are properly resolved then the acquisition of the English language by students could easily be realized.

5.6 Recommendations and Suggestions

Below are suggestions and recommendations on the implications for policy makers. Policy makers should make sure the right material for teaching and learning are produced and supplied equitably to all the schools in the country. Also, the acquisition of these materials should not suffer any political influence, rather, the authority should contact the headmasters and subject teachers and other experts before they come out with any textbook or the teaching syllabus. It is also the duty of authorities to make sure that libraries are provided in all the basic schools including rural ones without any discrimination.

Implications for Teachers

The researcher revealed among other things that, for the student's performance to be improved, teachers of the English language must be more proactive in finding out the problems of students, as well as finding solutions to them.

The research has also revealed that students' abysmal Performance was partly due to their poor or negative attitude towards the subject. Hence it is the teachers' responsibility to help the innocent child to erase the negative and often times baseless attitudes they adopt towards certain subjects and aspects of their studies. The teachers need to encourage and motivate the students to embrace all the aspects of the English language without any reservation. But as the saying goes, 'one cannot give what he or she does not have'. This then suggests that teachers must be very resourceful, contact more and relevant materials regarding their subject matter, in order to always appear confident before their students.

As role models, teachers must demonstrate a positive attitude themselves towards the teaching of the English language, more especially the grammar aspect of the subject.

The positive implication is that if teachers have confidence in the subject they teach, that confidence and interest will be transferred to the ones they teach.

Then also, it is necessary for the various authorities of the schools including the district directorate to conduct in-service training or school based in-service training for the teachers on regular bases. This type of training should give priority to difficult topics which most teachers do dodge during teaching. Therefore it is necessary to contract resource personnel to enable teachers sharpen or enhance their competency in the handling of those said difficult topics which remain a headache to some English teachers. These trainings at the long round will benefit both teachers and students. Lastly, the right caliber of teachers should always be made to teach the subject of their specialization.

5.7 Recommendation for Further Studies

The researcher wants to suggest that, it is important for more English teachers to undertake further research that seek to explain the use of English language by students in the Junior High Schools as this research mainly dwelt on the students' ability to identify or use noun phrase in sentence construction. The researcher thought that, there is the need to include lesson observation as one of the instruments for data collection so that the techniques used by teachers to teach grammar in general and noun phrases in particular, could be assessed in a bid to find out how far teachers teaching contribute to the acquisition of the concept of the noun group and their usage in sentences. This study does not constitute a conclusive document regarding the challenges encountered by students in the usage of the noun phrases in sentences. It is therefore, the cherished dream of the researcher that further studies or research be conducted in likewise manner so as to unravel all the other problems associated with

the use of the noun phrase for the purpose of eradicating the difficulties regarding the

complexities of the noun group structure.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS FOR THE PRE-TEST ITEM

Instructions: Read the sentences below carefully and underline all the noun phrases in each case.

The noun phrases can be in subject, object or in complement. (15 marks)

1. The angry youth stoned the thief to death.

2. Sleeping is natural, and cannot be avoided.

3. All the talkative students in the class must be punished severely.

4. Mathematics is a practical subject.

5. Learning is sometimes difficult and tiring.

6. The three year old child put on the TV.

7. Armed robbery is very rampant these days.

8. The teacher postponed the English lesson again.

9. For the lack of knowledge my people perish.

10. The light has been off since yesterday.

11. Eating and sleeping immediately causes constipation.

12. This book belongs to Mr. John.

13. He books a flight to London every Friday.

14. Two students were sacked immediately.

15. Two persons were penciled down for the ministerial position.

QUESTIONS ON THE WRITTEN TEST

3. Narrate how the people of your locality celebrate their festival.

4. Describe how your favorite or best food is prepared

Excerptions from students' writing.

Everybody are doing this activities in their place before the day itself come. The statement above is full of grammatical errors due to the student's lack of knowledge in the noun group. She matched wrong verb, *are* (plural) to the singular subject *everybody*. This has also affected her choice of pronoun (she used *their* instead of *his\her*) for the subject, *everybody*. Also the linkage between the determiner, *this* and the noun *activities* is faulty. The student did not realize that *activities,* is a noun which is plural and therefore matched it wrongly with the singular determiner *this* instead of *these.*In the same statement, the noun phrase, *the day itself* is singular but the student chose a plural verb, (*come* instead of *comes*).

APPENDIX B

POST- TEST ASSESSMENT

15/11/2017

CHIANA Junior High School

FORM TWO 'A' AND 'B'

Read the sentences below carefully and underline all the noun phrases in each case.

The noun phrases can be in subject, object or in complement (15 marks)

1. Just offer me a cup of water.

2. More than five students wrote the exam.

3. Our plan to relocate is still in mind.

4. Kwame and John have arrived.

5. Decent dressing among the youth must be encouraged.

6. Teaching is a noble profession.

7. The Free Senior High program has been implemented.

8. A bag of groundnuts is not expensive.

9. The market is too busy.

10. Edna and l turned down the offer.

11. Peace must be restored.

12. Disobedient students usually perform poor.

13. Prayer is the key.

14. The black pen is mine.

15. Knowledge is power.

In the post item, there are some repeated cases of same mistakes made by students but that is at a minimal rate. These are some few samples of marked scripts for evidence of improvement.