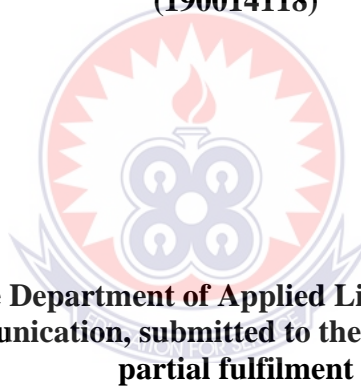


UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**CONCORD ERRORS IN THE WRITINGS OF JHS STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY
OF KUBEKRO KKMA JHS**

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(190014118)



**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign
Languages and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in
partial fulfilment**

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of
(Master of Education)
in the University of Education, Winneba.**

OCTOBER, 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....

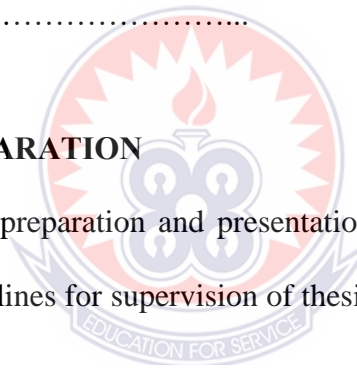
SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

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

Charlotte Fofu Lomotey (Ph.D.) (Principal Supervisor)

SIGNATURE.....

DATE.....



DEDICATION

To my father, Mr Albert Tse Kpedudo of blessed memory.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several key persons have contributed immensely to the successful completion of this study and are highly acknowledged for their invariable contributions. I am most grateful to my supervisor: Doctor Charlotte Fofu Lomotey for providing academic guidance in the completion of this study. I am also grateful to the J.H.S 2 students and teachers of Kubekro Kpone Katamanso Municipal Basic School who gracefully responded to the study by providing the relevant data. My heartfelt appreciation to the former circuit supervisor of Katamanso circuit, Mr Wilson Buameh, for his support and encouragement and also to every individual who directly or indirectly contributed to the completion of this study.



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ABSTRACT

A case study was conducted to explore concord errors in the writings of JHS students at the Kubekro KKMA JHS. The purpose of the study was to look into the causes of the errors in concord and adopt effective strategies that will help students to overcome their concord problems. The school has a student population of six hundred and ninety-eight (698). The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the sample made up of 33 boys and 27 girls in form two (2). The researcher conducted a test for the sixty (60) students to help her identify the problems they have in concord. The study found and concluded that the concord errors that students committed were; proximity, notional, grammatical and gender concord. It also found the causes to include teachers, old textbooks, students learning, teaching methods, and Inter-language and interlingual errors. It also found that concord could be improved using writing, games (role play), and improved teaching methods. Based on the conclusions the study made the following recommendations. 1. Schools and parents identify early warning signs in the use of agreement between the verb and the subject. 2. Government recruit teachers with professional English language background and motivate teachers. 3. Teachers adopt the consciousness-raising approach to the teaching of grammar through drills, grammar instruction, and other form-focused activities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

History has it that early medieval England is where the English language was first spoken, however, it is now a global lingua franca (Wardhaugh, 2010). Several persons globally speak English since being proficient in the language is required in most professions and occupations. Like most Sahara Africa countries, Ghana is blessed with many indigenous languages however the English language contributes to play a pivotal role in the daily communications of Ghanaians. Aside from the English language being a lingua franca in Ghana, it is an important means of inter-ethnic communication internally and a source of communication with the international community (Afful, 2007). Given the linguistic imperialism in Ghana coupled with the country's colonial history, English has been adopted as Ghana's official language. As such the Ministry of Education in the 1950s instituted a policy that the English language be taught from kindergarten to the university level. It has become the language of instruction in the teaching of many subjects from primary four, while it is also a subject on its own. It is also compulsory for students to have a credit in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) in the English language before entering either the senior high school or the university.

Yeboah (2014) argues that a student's performance in many other subjects could be closely linked to his or her command over the English language either in writing or speech. The teaching of the English language at the basic school helps students to be able to communicate effectively. Considering the position of English language in curriculum, the teaching syllabus for the basic school demands that teachers teach students how to

speak and write English well enough for the social, economic, and occupational development. The English language is full of rules and principles. One of such rules is the use of concord where the subject and the verb have to agree grammatically. According to Woods (2010), the verb is considered to be the heart of the sentence and it has the same grammatical forms as its controller, the subject.

Conceptually, grammatical concord is a grammatical relationship between two syntactic constituents of a sentence where the subject must agree with the verb (Quirk, Greenbaum, & Leech, 2005). Fundamentally, the use of grammatical concord has become an important communicative concept since it provides the rules for putting words into the right order to make the meaning clear. Therefore, the pedagogy of its teaching should offer practical discussions to students. Thus, for the English language to be taught and learnt properly, the basic grammatical rules should not be violated and since concord is an aspect of English grammar, English language teachers and students must adhere to the rules governing it to achieve effective communication (Klu, 2006).

The use of accurate grammatical concord in the writings of students reflects the effective use of semantics information. Conceptually, semantic relates to the meaning of words. In relating semantics to grammatical concord, Chomsky (2014) indicates that the semantic components of a sentence relate to a structure generated by the syntactic component. In this regard, the use of poor grammatical concord obstructs communication and therefore meaning in writings. Although Ghana is blessed with many indigenous languages, dominant linguistic imperialism exists where the English language continues to play a pivotal role in the day-to-day transactions of Ghanaians. Against this background, teaching the English language from the kindergarten to the university level

is compulsory since the language is the medium of instruction in almost all subjects (Afful, 2007). The teaching of grammatical concord in basic schools in Ghana starts from the upper primary to Junior High School.

Despite the importance of English language locally and internationally, there has generally been the poor quality of the language in Ghana among basic school pupils both in speech and writing. The 2013 National Education Assessment reports that at least 50 per cent of pupils could not pronounce a single English word correctly hence cannot write. The poor quality of the use of the language has been attributed to several factors including teachers' lack of the relevant pedagogical skills (Quagie, 2014). Nevertheless, the language is used extensively that teachers and students ought to be appreciably competent in its' use verbally as well as in writing.

Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning. JHS two students of Kubekro Kpone Katamanso Basic School seem to have negative attitudes towards the study of the English language. Through observation, it was realised that most students do not like the English language, especially grammar. Also, a good number of them absent themselves from English grammar lessons from time to time. Again, through exercises, assignments and exams, it was also realised that students do not like the concord aspect of grammar. Individual attitudes towards the language that they learn meet some needs since they satisfy certain functions such as achieving high grades in English language examination and also improving their speaking and writing skills (Gardener & Tremble, 1994).

Also, inadequate and unqualified teachers could be some of the reasons students perform poorly in English grammar. It is the teacher who sets the tone of learning

activities (Allen & Valette, 1997). Since to teach is to communicate, English teachers must have maximum communicative competence. Also, teachers must be knowledgeable in the language itself so that they can make useful decisions regarding what should be taught to whom and how the teaching should be done. Lastly, one of the factors which have affected the performance of the English language is inadequate facilities. Kapoli (2001) notes that authentic materials enable students to explore the language used in day to day life and which is tailored to their needs and interest. The school library is not well equipped with reading books. Reading many English books will make students take in models of correct grammar that will help them in speaking and writing. Krashen (1989) is of the view that we acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Under the Ministry of Education, there has been an improvement in enrolment for 2012/2013 academic year showing that progress has been made to increase access to basic education. Current statistics from the West Africa Examination Council, WAEC, shows that a total of 517,332 students sat for the BECE last year (WAEC, 2019). In 2018, the total number of 509,824 sat for the examination. In 2017, there were 468,060 students while in 2016, 460,930 students sat for the exams. In 2015, there were 6,812 students while in 2014 and 2013, 422,220 and 391,079 students sat for the exams respectively. These statistics suggest an increase in the enrolment of students at the basic school level in Ghana.

Despite the tremendous increase in numbers and the recognition attached to the English language in Ghana by the government, standards are still falling (Yeboah, 2014).

The WAEC, the main examination body in Ghana in charge of BECE, had on several occasions complained about the poor use of English by students. In 2016, the chief Examiner reported that the inability of candidates to express themselves well in the English language was evident in other subjects. This was seen in their writings. Specifically, expressions of students were inconsistent with what they were describing, while there was the wrong use of a sequence of tense making expressions clumsy (WAEC, 2016). One of the basic grammatical rules often abused is that regarding the use of grammatical concord. Observation and experience in the teaching profession in the Kpone Katamanso Municipality show that many Junior High School learners are challenged in the appropriate use of concord in their writings.

Students seem to have problems with concord when writing concord in different clauses, in the same clause when the normal word order is changed, and even when there are no intervening words between the subject and the verb. These violations of the rules of concord have resulted in students writing sentences that present different shades of meaning. In this instance, the reader is much affected since the written sentences show distinctive shades of meaning as a result of wrong tense concord. The inappropriate use of grammatical concord in the writings of students obstructs communication. Therefore, the inability of the students to apply the exceptions to grammatical concord rules leads to errors in the formation of plural and the past-tense pattern. The inappropriate use of grammatical concord remains unsurmountable to all stakeholders involved in the communication link. According to Quagie (2014), when teachers, students and other stakeholders are involved in the inappropriate use of concord in their writings, there is the loss of attention and concentration as well as interest from the recipients or readers.

Quagie (2014) further notes that generally, concord still bothers students because some teachers do not possess the requisite qualification to teach the concept.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study objectives sought to:

1. Examine the concord errors committed by students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School.
2. Identify the reasons why students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School commit errors in concord.
3. Prescribe effective methods of teaching concord at the Kubekro KKMA Basic School.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the errors committed by students in concord at the Kubekro KKMA Basic School?
2. What reasons account for the students' commission of errors in concord at the Kubekro KKMA Basic School?
3. What are the effective methods of dealing with the errors in concord at the Kubekro KKMA Basic School?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Fundamentally, the findings from this research help to determine if teachers are properly trained to teach the fundamentals of grammatical concord to meet the needs of students for students to minimize concord errors in their writings if not completely eradicated. Through the examination of instructional methods used in the teaching of concord among teachers, this study suggests efficient areas of their training to positively impact on their use of syntactical rules and principles. For policy formulation, the findings help to identify the factors that continue to influence the wrong use of concord among JHS students. This will further help the Ministry of Education through the Ghana Education Service to come out with initiatives to address the challenges. In academia, this study adds to the existing literature on concord to serve as a useful guide and reference material for researchers, scholars, and academicians.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

The English language syllabus in Ghana has aspects such as reading, grammar, writing composition and library. For this study, the focus was placed on the grammar aspect of the syllabus. Furthermore, although there are different types of concord errors, this study focused only on concord errors that would be found in the writings of students. Though grammatical concord is taught in both upper primary and JHS, this study focused on JHS only. This is based on the fact that by the time the students' transit to JHS, they would have at least been introduced to concord or grammatical concord hence should know the concord rules by now. In this regard, they could be more credible in responding to the study than those in the upper primary.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Geographically, this study is limited to students at the JHS level in Kubekro KKMA Basic School in the Kpone Katamanso Municipality. The findings can therefore not be generalized to all basic schools in Ghana. This implies that the study's external validity could be affected since external validity has to do with the extent to which a study's result can be generalized from samples to a population (Nunan, 1992). This notwithstanding, the findings of the study could provide insightful information regarding concord errors. It could also prompt further in-depth research into the issue at stake.

1.8 Organization of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 presents the relevant literature on concord errors and their effect on the writings of students. Chapter 3 provides an in-depth explanation of the methodology of the study. It describes the methods and techniques to be used in exploring the research questions as well as the rationale for using such methods and techniques. The chapter includes the research paradigm that involves a description of the research approach used as the methodological framework of the study.

Chapter 4 which is the result and discussion presents the findings emanating from the data and involves the possible implications as well as the interpretations of the findings using logical deductions. In discussing the findings, an attempt is made to relate them to pertinent concepts and theories discussed in the literature review. Thus, the results of the study that was supported by literature was highlighted, while those that contradict the literature are also highlighted and with possible explanations. Chapter 5

shows the major findings and conclusions emanating from the study which are presented in this chapter with each research question. Following the conclusions, the relevant recommendations for policy formulation as well as further research are presented in this section. Based on the lessons learnt from the study as well as the major conclusions, the implications of the study for population studies practitioners are also discussed in this section.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews the relevant literature related to the study. The chapter analyses and discusses the relevant literature on concord errors. In reviewing the relevant literature for the study, the chapter draws on the previous works of researchers and practitioners to help enhance a unified conceptual and theoretical framework suitable for the rightful use of concord. Concord rules are taught at all levels of education in Ghana, but unfortunately, most junior high students have challenges making their sentences concordant. This situation is not different from what the researcher observed in the writings of students of Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School.

2.1 Concept of Concord

Here in this chapter, the researcher hopes to cite what other authorities say about “concord”.

A literature review will cover the topics below:

1. The concept of errors
2. Errors and mistakes
3. The notion of concord
4. Types of concord
5. Sources and causes of errors in writing
6. Teaching methods and strategies that can promote students writing skills about concord

2.1.1 The concept of errors

In linguistics, an error is a deviation from accepted rules of a language made by a learner of a second language. Such error results from learner's lack of knowledge of correct rules of the target language. Brown has defined linguistic errors as a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Hadley (1993) notes that the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill. It is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments. Writing skills must be practised and learned through experience. Writing also involves composing which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narrative or description or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. Perhaps, it is best seen as a continuation of activities that ranges from the more mechanical or formal aspect of "writing down" on the one hand to a more complex act of composing on the other hand.

Errors are the flawed side of learner speech or writing. They are those parts of speech or writing that deviate from some selected norm of mature language. Performance. Teachers and mothers who have waged long battles against their students or wards language errors have come to realize that making an error is an inevitable part of learning. People cannot learn a language without committing errors. Errors are not generally thought of as errors in the same sense as those produced by L2 learners. George and Ellis (1994) mentioned that whereas L2 learners' errors are generally viewed as unwanted forms, children's errors are seen as transitional forms' and adult native speakers' errors are seen as slip of the tongue.

Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) observe that studying learners' errors serve two major purposes: (1) they provide data from which inferences about how the nature of the language learning can be made, and (2) they indicate to teachers and curriculum developers which part of the target language students have the most difficulty in producing and which error type prevents students from the learner's ability to communicate effectively. In an early seminal article, Corder (cited in Ellis) notes that errors could be significant in three ways, thus, (1) they provide the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt, (2) they provide the researcher on how language was learnt, and (3) they served as devices by which the learner discovered the rules of the target language. Whereas (1) reflects the traditional role of error analysis, (2) provides a new role that is primary interest to the L2 researcher because it could shed light on (3) the process of L2 acquisition.

2.1.2 Errors and mistakes

It is essential here to make a distinction between mistakes and errors. According to Brown (1994), a mistake refers to a failure to utilize a known system correctly whereas errors concern "a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner". Two things need to be stated here: first, mistakes do not require special treatment assuming they are recognized. Secondly, errors here refer to structures only. Both Corder (1976) and Norrish (1983) reveal a criterion that helps to do so: A mistake can be self-corrected but an error cannot be. Errors are systematic, that is, it is likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the

learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them (Gass & Selinker, 1994).

Norrish (1983) makes a clear distinction between errors and mistakes and states that errors are systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong. He adds that when a learner makes an error systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form. Norrish defines a mistake as inconsistent deviation. When a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he uses one form sometimes, and at other times inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is called a mistake. It is in light of this that the researcher has chosen to focus on students' errors, not mistakes. An error, however, is considered more serious. In a contrastive analysis, the theoretical base on which was behaviourism, errors were seen as bad habits that had been formed. The response was based on the stimulus. It was assumed that interference of the mother tongue, (L1) was responsible for the errors made during the transition period of learning the target language.

In the cognitive approach, errors are seen as clues to what is happening in the mind. They are seen as a natural phenomenon that must occur as learning a first or second language takes place before correct grammar rules are completely internalized. Teachers are relieved to find a more realistic attitude towards errors. This may be because errors are no longer a reflection on their teaching methods, but are rather, indicators that learning is taking place. Errors are no longer "bad" but "good" or natural, just as errors that occur in learning a language for the first time. The insight that errors are a natural and important part of the learning process itself, and do not all come from mother-tongue interference is very important. There is variation in learner's performance depending on

the task. Learners may have more control over linguistic form for certain tasks, while for others, they may be more prone to errors.

2.2 The notion of concord

Concord can be defined as an agreement in gender, case, the number of persons between different words to share a referent. For instance, if a sentence contains a proper noun (Esi) and somewhat later a pronoun (she) and refers to the same person, we then say they agree in number, (for both are singular) and gender (for both are masculine). Concord is a very important aspect of grammar. Many authorities have tried to explain “concord” in different ways for easy and better understanding of the term. Brown (2002) defines concord as the grammatical relationship between a subject and a verb, or a pronoun and its verb or demonstrative adjective and the word it modifies. This indicates that the subject of a sentence can be a pronoun. The pronoun he, she, they, you and I can act as the subject in sentences. Demonstratives such as ‘this, that, these and those’ shows whether the noun, they refer to is far or near to the speaker. The noun always follows demonstrative adjective and therefore, there should be an agreement the demonstrative adjective and the noun. Students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School are not conversant with this concept hence some of them writes:

- 1) ‘She sings’, ‘This boy’, ‘This girl’, instead of ‘she sings’, ‘These boys’, and ‘These girls’.

Wiredu (1999) sees concord as the agreement relationship which exists between two grammatical units, so that when one unit displays a particular feature, the other units will also demonstrate a similar feature. Grammar, according Freeborn (1987), is the

traditional term for the system underlying the use of language. Quagie (2014) brings to light that the subject of a sentence and what the verb talks about. In English grammar, there is a rule that a singular subject must go with a singular verb. For example,

The cat scratches with its claws.

The sentence has a singular subject (the cat) hence the singular verb (scratches). Quirk, Greenbaum and Leech (2005) argue that concord is the relationship which exists between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature that accords with a displayed feature on the other. Swan (1984) agrees with Quirk (1985) that verb forms change according to whether the subject is singular or whether the subject is first person, second or third person. This is to say if the subject is plural singular or plural. (Thakur, 2002) agrees with the assertions discussed earlier concord indicating that an important rule of the English language is that the verb must agree with the subject in terms of number and person. He, however, admits that even get confused about some rules of the language. This statement, therefore, reinforces the need to expose learners to concord at the primary level and be taught in some interesting ways such as the use of substitution tables, drills, or rhymes. Yankson (1994) has argued that when second language learners commit grammatical errors, it reflects badly on their personality and that tells listeners something about their educational background and shows their inter-language as ‘developing grammar’ which borders on lack of proper linguistic awareness. Since students write what they speak, such errors in their speech are transferred into their writings.

2.3 Types of concord

The types of concord would be discussed under four broad categories. The rules of governing concord are many however, they have been consolidated under these for major categories. They are:

1. Grammatical concord
2. Proximity concord
3. Notional concord
4. Pronoun-Antecedent concord

According to Weaver (1979), the study of grammar will not only help people become better language users but also effective listeners, speakers and writers. Harmer (1994) is of the view that grammar is the rules that describe the structure of expression in the English language which relate to sounds and meaning. The meaning of a message conveyed by language has to be converted into word order according to grammatical rules. Given this, studying the grammar of a language means that we are studying what these are and how the rules work to produce correct sentences. Onuigbo (2005) observes that a structure of a sentence may be unacceptable not just because of the grammatical errors, but also because of the violation of general principles of grammatical co-occurrence. The rules of concord govern the relationships of the various parts of the English sentence. There are grammatical concord, notional concord, pronoun-antecedent agreement, coordinated subjects with and coordinating appositive, an agreement between personal adjectives and verb and other special forms of agreement not mentioned. For this study, the researcher will limit her discussion to the concord types listed below:

grammatical concord, proximity concord, notional concord and pronoun-antecedent concord.

2.3.1 Grammatical concord

Grammatical concord is defined as the formal agreement between different sentences of constituents. Quirk (1985) makes a distinction between three types of concord; grammatical, notional, and proximity concord. To Quirk (1985), the most important type of concord in English is subject-verb concord which involves, mainly, number and person. In English, grammatical concord is established between the central constituent of the noun phrase (subject) typically the noun head and the initial constituent of the verb phrase, predicator. Also, it involves a distinction between 3rd person singular number present tense verb forms and non-3rd person singular number present tense verb forms. As stated by Quirk et al, there is a basic rule to follow, thus a singular subject takes a singular verb. Hornby (2002) describes grammatical concord as the fact of having the same number, gender and person. He is of the view that it is important to note that the form of the verb required in a sentence depends on the nature of its' subject. He added that care should be taken not to break any grammatical rule that governs this requirement. He further indicates that the verb agrees with its' subject in number and person. For instance,

- i. The student jumps high.
- ii. The students jump high.
- iii. He dresses neatly.
- iv. They dress neatly.

The above examples have singular subjects hence accompanied by singular verbs. In the first two examples, the verbs agree with their subject in number while the rest of the verbs agree with the subject in person. The subject the student and he are singular and they took the verbs jumps and dresses. Again, the students and they are plural subjects and they take plural verbs hence they took jump and dress.

A clause that is in the position of a subject counts as singular for concord. Singular subjects followed by intervening expressions like ‘with’ or ‘together with’ are followed by singular verbs.

For example,

1. The teacher, together with her pupils has met the headteacher.

Finite and non-finite clauses generally count as singular. Prepositional phrases and adverbs functioning as a subject also count as singular phrases. The second part of grammatical concord states that a plural subject attracts a plural verb.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) define grammatical concord as the rule or principle that the verb matches its subject in number. Wiredu (1999) states that grammatical concord is the concord relation that exists between the subject of a clause and its accompanying verb. According to Blake (1988), the nominal rule for subject-verb agreement is that a singular subject requires the verb of the present tense in the -s form when a subject is a third-person one. The focus is on the fact that every verb must agree with its subject and number in a sentence. Quirk and Greenbaum (1973) are of the view that the most important type of concord in English is the concord of the number between subject and verb. This is elaborated by Crosby (2000 p. 223) who also states that “the most important type of concord in English is the concord of the number between subject

and verb”. Every verb must agree with its subject in person and number. Some authorities are of the view that the linking verb, ‘be’ is an exception, it changes form in both the present and the past tense.

Swan (1984) agrees with the above assertion that verb forms change according to whether the subject is first, second or third person. Hence a singular must be paired with a singular verb as a plural subject must be paired with a plural verb. Bas Aarts (2001) generalizes that subjects of sentences are usually nouns, noun phrases or pronouns. Subjects are obligatory and they determine the form of the verb. Careful teaching of how subjects are realized in English sentences will help students to select appropriate verbs for writing their sentences. Drennam (2003) enumerates the principle governing the subject-verb agreement. To her, the most basic is the grammatical concord, that is, a singular subject requires a singular verb. For example,

2. Manasseh washes dishes after each meal.

A plural subject requires a plural verb. For instance,

3. Manasseh and Godwin wash dishes after each meal.

If the subject is a noun phrase (a group of words functioning as a noun, but not a sentence), the number of verbs depends on the number of subjects (singular or plural) in the main phrase. A clause in apposition of a subject counts as singular for purposes of concord:

1. What they say is wrong
2. To write a dissertation is not an easy task

Prepositional phrases acting as a subject also count as singular:

1. Before you say ‘I do’ is the time to watch carefully

2. During the holidays is the time to travel

Nominal relative clauses on the other hand, since they are equivalent to noun phrases, may have singular and plural concord:

1. What was once prostitution is now fashion among celebrities.
2. Where we once queued to buy is now a free gift.

It should be noted that plural words and phrases usually count as singular if they are used as names, titles, quotations. For example,

1. Jack and Jill is the best private school in Ashaiman
2. K. Ofori and sons is the best construction firm in Ghana

Exceptions to the concord rule arise with singular nouns ending with an apparent plural-s such as statistics, shingles, measles or conversely plural nouns lacking the inflection such as cattle, sheep, people, and clergy. For example,

1. Statistics is his field of study
2. The cattle are sent to the field to graze

Kirkpatrick (2013) classifies grammatical concord as a verb agreement. According to her, verb agreement is also known as concord and refers to the fact that a verb must agree with the appropriate subject in number. Therefore, number agreement indicates that a singular noun is usually accompanied by a singular verb while a plural is usually accompanied by a plural verb. Quirk and Greenbaum (1990) also opine that in addition to number concord there is concord of person in the present tense.

Example:

1. I am going to school. (1st person singular concord)
2. You are a gem. (2nd person singular concord)

3. She is a teacher. (3rd person singular concord)

But in the past tense, only the verb 'be' has distinctions of person.

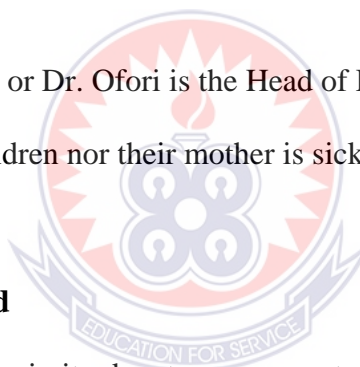
Example:

1. I was going to school (1st person singular concord)
2. You were a gem (2nd person singular concord)
3. She was a teacher (3rd person singular concord)

It is further explained that in a coordinate subject noun phrase where the coordinator is 'or' or 'nor', the last noun phrase determines the person of the verb by the principle of proximity.

Example:

1. Either Dr. Fofu or Dr. Ofori is the Head of Department.
2. Neither the children nor their mother is sick



2.3.2 Proximity concord

The principle of proximity denotes agreement of the verb with a closely preceding noun phrase in sentence to agreement with the noun phrases that functions as subject (Quirk, Greenbaum, & Leech, 2005). The proximity concord may be extended to mean that concord is determined by whatever immediately precedes the verb. In other words, it is the position of the subject which normally determines the concord. Wiredu (1999) hold the same view that proximity concord refers to agreement between the verb and its subject based not on notion but on the fact that there is nominal group which is immediately followed by a verb. That is, grammatical concord is established between

these elements instead of the normal agreement with the head of the noun phrase or subject. For example,

1. The teacher or his students come to the laboratory.
2. The man nor his friend works diligently.
3. Either Frank or Margaret is driving.
 - a. Neither the pastor nor the congregants have come.

The sentences show that the two verbs “come” “works” “is” and “have” which have four alternative subjects linked by “or” or “nor” and preceded by “either” or “neither”. These verbs agree with the subjects that precede them. Thus “come” and “works” agree with “his student” and “his friends” respectively. On the other hand, where the alternative subjects are of the same person and number, the verb can be to them. Quirk (1985) affirms that the principle of proximity denotes agreement of the verb with whatever noun or pronoun that closely precedes it and sometimes in preference to an agreement with the headword of the subject.

2.3.3 Notional concord

Notional concord is the agreement of verbs with their subjects and pronouns and their antecedents’ nouns based on meaning rather than grammatical forms. This implies that notional concord depends on the speaker’s idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker. Notional concord is focusing on the meaning of the whole entity (Crystal, 2004). Parrot (2000) explains that plural nouns lacking the inflection (-s) such as a collective noun are considered singular when it refers to a group. In this case, the noun takes a singular verb. For example,

1. The staff is having a meeting.
2. The army is part of the executives.

In the examples, staff and bouquet which are the subjects in the sentences refer to group but are treated as singular. On the other hand, when a collective noun is used to refer to individual members of a group, the noun is treated as plural. For instance,

1. The staff are having a meeting.
2. The army are part of the executives.

In the sentences, the subject staff and army are treated as plural because the individual members of the group. Greenbaum (1985) asserts that notional concord is the agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for the idea. This means that notional concord refers to the agreement between subject and verb not based on number and person, but on the speaker's perception. Therefore, the speaker chooses a singular or plural verb based on his or her own idea but number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker of the idea. Group or collective nouns such as staff, team, congregation, audience, public, family, government etc. fall into this category. One can therefore say:

1. The public is angry at the mob.
2. The public are angry at the mob.

The examples indicate that collective nouns notionally are plural but grammatically singular. Although plural and singular verbs are more or less unchangeable in these contexts, the choice is based, if on anything, on whether the group is being considered as a single undivided body, or as a collection of individuals.

According to Sidney (1990, p. 215), notional concord is “the agreement according to the idea of number rather than the presence of grammatical marker for the idea”. In British English for instance, collective nouns such as crowd is treated as plural. Sekyi-Baidoo (2000) also intimates that notional concord can be described as the agreement between the verb and the subject according to perception rather than the actual display or the presence of grammatical feature for the idea. This means that while we can distinguish between singular and plural form of some words, it is difficult to do for others.

2.4 Possible areas of concord errors

Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) note that the rules that the verb matches its subject in number may be called grammatical concord. Difficulties over concord arise through conflicts between these and two, notional and proximity concord. According to Woods (1999), different language teachers have different approaches to grammar in the classroom. Most people who have considered the definitions and overlooked it have found a tension between form and grammar as a source of meaning. He points out that the various approaches teachers use in the teaching of concord is the genesis of concord errors among the students. This problem arises since many people are uncertain about where parameters lie. Quirk & Greenbaum (1973) see the different concord types to be the likely areas where student’s concord problems lie. Sekyi-Baidoo (2003) asserts that rules govern the way grammatical items are put together. Violation of these rules makes sentence construction ungrammatical. In this sense, these scholars hold the same view on the possible areas where student’s concord problems lie. They attribute the problem to the

inability of learners to grasp the rules in the various concord types and they commit a lot of errors as a result.

There are cases where variations exist in subject-verb concord. Usually when subjects consist of two coordinate heads, (that is if the subject is a noun group with two heads joined together by ‘and’), the verb goes into the plural base form is thought to form a singular notional entity, then singular verb with the -s form is used. Again, a compound sentence that is joined by ‘and’ or ‘both’ is plural except when the joined words make a single unit or when they both refer to a person or thing. For example,

1. Yam and palaver sauce is my favourite
2. My lecturer and supervisor is Dr Fofu
 - a. My lecturer and supervisor is a gem
 - b. Both Dr. Fofu and Dr. Ofori are lecturers at Winneba.

Sentences of this nature pose problems to students since they do not get the concept very well. In the first sentence, the subject *used* refers to one entity (unit) and so should take a singular verb. However, in the fourth sentence, the subjects *used* are two individuals joined with a conjunction which makes it a compound subject so should take a plural verb. This has to do with notion rather than the form of sentence. Notional concord poses a lot of problems since it solely depends on the writer’s perception of numbers.

2.4.1 Pronoun–antecedent concord errors

A pronoun typically restates a noun, called its antecedent; it must agree with its antecedent in gender and number. Freeborn (1987) refers to pronouns as co-referential of nouns and when linked should agree with their antecedents so that it will be possible to associate them with the nouns in whose place they perform. To buttress the above point,

Sekyi-Baidoo (2003) proposed that since pronouns are pro-forms which are used in place of nouns, there is every reason they should agree with their antecedents so that it will be possible for us to associate them with these nouns in whose place they perform. For instance,

1. Adjoa caught fishes in her pond.
2. The players scored their opponent.

Quikpe (1981) comments on pronoun-antecedent agreement that a pronoun must agree in number, gender and case with its antecedent. By ‘**number**’, it means the subject can be singular or plural, while ‘**person**’ according to him, can be seen as a relationship between the speaker and what he is speaking about. If the speaker speaks to himself, we refer to it as the first person. The first person is associated with the pronoun ‘**I**’ and ‘**We**’. The person he speaks to is the second person which has a general meaning of ‘**you**’. The third person is the one talked about and it is associated with the pronouns ‘**he**’, ‘**she**’, ‘**it**’ and ‘**they**’. ‘**He**’, ‘**she**’, ‘**it**’ and ‘**I**’ have a singular reference. ‘**We**’ and ‘**they**’ have plural reference, while ‘**you**’ may refer to singular or plural.

2.4.2 Subject-verb agreement errors in writing

Many of the students seem to have difficulties with subject-verb agreement even though it is the first rule that students learn when they start learning English. In a phrase where the subject is a singular form, the verb should take a 3rd person singular (-s) ending and when the subject is in plural form, there should be no ending. This basic rule is most of the time violated. For example, the wrong use of the verb comes in the sentence:

1. *He come from Kubekro*.

It can be explained that the students could not identify the subject in the noun phrase. If they had learnt to identify the subject, they could easily avoid this type of errors.

2.4.3 Plural inflection concord error

Another source of grammatical error is the plural inflection error (Yankah, 1994). Most of these errors occurred with words that contain the /s/ sound at the end of the words, though the word is a singular noun. Students make mistakes and the /-s/ ending of these nouns as **news, measles, politics, athletics, etc.** for the plural inflection and accordingly assign them plural verbs. The students commit such errors like. The athletics seems more challenging (seems) politics have made him popular (**has**).

2.4.4 Omission of the /-s/ inflection

Learners of English can omit the /-s/ of verbs. This might partly be due to the fact that all grammatical persons, except the third person singular ((He/She) and the impersonal pronoun (it) do not take an /-s/ ending.

2.5 Causes of concord errors

At this stage, it is necessary to assign some explanations to why concord errors occur. It must be understood that learning a foreign language is a gradual process during which mistakes are expected in all stages of learning (Ellis, 1992). Linguists try to find out the cause of the problems and what can be done to minimize the problem. This section attempts to identify some sources of concord errors. Sekyi-Baidoo refers to the following unacceptable language structures of concord. Selinker (1972 cited in

McDough, 1986), Taylor (1975) and Brown (1980) have identified the following factors as common sources of errors: interlingual transfer, the learner's background, the context of learning including both teaching materials and methods adopted by teachers.

2.5.1 Inter-lingual Transfer

The transfer of features of one language to the foreign one results in inter-lingual error. Such transfer can be either positive or negative. Positive transfer leads to the facilitation or learning while negative transfer leads to error. Interference is the negative influence of the mother language on the performance of the target language learner. Brown (1980) and Yankson (1994) argue that it is committed by all learners, irrespective of their mother tongue hence transferring what they speak into writing.

2.5.2 Intra-lingual Transfer

Intra-lingual transfer errors are those that occur due to incomplete application of the rules and failure to learn conditions for rule application. Intra-lingual errors belong to the language being learned, independent of the native language. As such, the foreign language can be a source of error as learners transfer negatively some rules within the foreign language, the learners learn some new rules and then use them wrongly with other different cases. For example, the learner already knows that the plural of "cat" is cats. In the same way, he thinks that "waters" is the plural for the singular noun "water". Richard (1974) affirms this that, they are items produced by the learner which reflect not the structure of the mother tongue, but generations based on partial exposure to the foreign language. The two preceding types of sources of errors can lead to other grammatical errors such as concord. In other words, linguistic items, rules and structures

are transferred wrongly through a comparison that make learners make believing that such a procedure is possible and correct.

2.5.3 Context of learning

Teaching methods and materials within the classroom can also be a source of error in the writing of students. (Taylor,1975) thinks that the faulty presentation of structure or words in a textbook, improper contextualization of pattern and teacher's ignorance might lead to error. Brown (1987) explains that students make errors because of misleading explanation from the teacher, faulty presentation of a structure or word in a textbook or even because of a patent that was solely memorized in a drill but not properly contextualized. James (1998) divides induced errors into the subcategories: Material – induced errors, Teacher–talk induced errors, and Exercise-based induced errors. All these are factors that can promote errors in learning. Ultimately, the teacher's faulty teaching and usage of inappropriate teaching-learning materials will never get the learners to participate in the teaching and learning process.

2.5.4 Learners Background

The background of a learner could be another cause of grammatical concord error. Leech et al (1982) affirm this view by saying that the decline in student's standard of speaking and writing of the English language can be attributed to the background of the average learner. The learner's socio-economic background, the fact that the parents are supportive in providing learning materials, books, computers, television at home for their children can also affect the learners concord usage. It can also be said that the authors succeeded in outlining the problems and causes of second language learning but failed to come out with the techniques that will help the students to overcome their inhibition in

language usage and writing. The researcher is set to find out how concord problems in English can be overcome using some teaching methods and strategies.

2.6 Teaching methods and strategies that can promote students' grammar skills

Grammar is said to be the body of rules which underline a language. It is a body of knowledge that teachers can use judiciously to help learners gain insights into the language. Maduekwe (2007) explains grammar as a way of learning the rules of a language is seen as a rule-governed behaviour. She further says that this process involves the breaking down of sentences into clauses and phrases, detain parts of speech, translation and recitation with little active use of the target audience. Many theorists argue that we all learned our first language without any grammar introduction by writing it in natural communication (Thornbury, 1999). As such, there is no need for second learners to have grammar instruction as a learner can easily acquire to form real communication. On the contrary, some researchers argue that to reach a higher level of grammatical knowledge and be able to produce complex grammatical construction, second language learners have to acquire a closer grammar instruction first (Ellis, 1997).

There are advantages and disadvantages in both approaches but overall, achieve higher results and progress faster than those who do not get the same grammatical instruction (Ellis, 2006). This second approach which is seen as formal learning often takes place in the classroom with a specific aim to teach a second language and with clear instructions. Thornbury (1999) agrees and suggest that L2 without learning grammar is “at the risk of fossilizing sooner than those who receive”. Allwright and Bailey (1991) express the view that when teachers attempt to improve the performance of learners in the language classroom, they focus more on what happens in the classroom, not just what

happens to the plans they make, but what happens anyway, independent of our design. This means that teachers need to focus on classroom activities and strategies that bring about effective language skill development. Various methods abound in the art of teaching (Talabi, 2001). The teacher is implored to employ whatever methods he wants to use with a lot of practical work. This study discusses some of the instrumental methods that can be used for presenting grammar skills to pupils. These methods include language games, inductive-deductive, grammar-translation; the structural approach and the communicative approach.

Hadfield (1990) believe that grammar should be included in the curriculum, not in the sense of traditional ways of grammar teaching. Hadfield says that games should not be only included in the syllabus for amusement but should be taken as “integral” part of student syllabus to reinforce and introduce grammatical forms or structures instead of just using the traditional way of teaching. Educational games aim to lead students to learn through play. In such games, there are specific rules to guide the participants. The teachers act as a referee and judge. The awards mark to the participant or group. Games help to motivate learners to learn. Among several strategies used to improve students’ proficiency such as visual aids, drama, role play, etc. “games” are another useful strategy to promote student’s language proficiency (Richard, 1996). His assertion reinforces Thakur’s that grammar and indeed, concord should be taught in innovative and interesting ways to get students involved to practice and internalize grammar and structure extensively. The inductive-Deductive method can be used conveniently by teachers to make grammar teaching effective.

This method leads pupils to formulate rules, a formula, law or principle and then apply the rule or formula discovered to particular cases (Rutherford, 1987 cited in Sysoyev, 1999). In the inductive aspect of this method, the teacher leads for pupils to examine several cases which eventually lead to the establishment of a rule or formula. And so, in this, pupils proceed from the particular to the general. In the deductive phase (application step) the pupils apply the rule or the formula discovered or established to particular cases not used in the inductive step. And so, in this, pupils proceed from the general to the particular. The procedure of this method must show the following steps;

2. Leading students to write series to examples in grammatical concord.
3. Helping students to discover common elements in the examples written.
4. The establishment or statement of a rule out of the discovery.
5. Students apply the rules established to deal with particular cases not already used.

With the grammar-translation method, the structure was taught directly by explaining and rules in the L1. The structured lesson begins with a rule illustrated with sample sentences and followed by exercises. It emphasizes reading and writing skills rather than listening and speaking skills.

Errors are used to show that the learner does not know the rules properly. This approach represents a more traditional style of teaching in that the grammatical structure rules are dictated to the student first. Rivers and Temperley (1978) and Hubbard et al (1983 cited in Madueke, 2007) observe that this method consists of bombarding the student with samples of the target language spoken by the native speaker and encouraging them. The teacher imitates, responds and gradually participates as a speaker.

Learners are encouraged to think in the target language and to translate into or out of it. Thus, the students learn the rules and apply it only after they have been introduced to the rule. The structural approach (audio-lingual approach) is a direct reaction to the grammar-translation approach.

The approach emphasizes the listening and speaking skills as the first and important of the four language skills. It forbids the use of the L1. This approach which is behaviourist ideology implies listening to the language and then trying to speak in through imitation and repetition. The structure lessons put strong emphasis on prevention of errors in pronunciation and grammar. Today, grammar is viewed as essential communication tool. Pattern practice has now been replaced by a practical discussion of effective communication. This calls for the communicative language teaching grammar (concord) in our classroom. Savvidou (2008) believes that communication cannot take place with structure or grammar. The communicative approach is the approach for teaching structures. It has the features of both grammar translation and structural approach to the study of grammar. It emphasizes learning to use the language in real-life situation. Errors are regarded as a natural part of language learning and the student learns from making errors as they communicate in the L2. The communicative approach does not oppose the use of the L1 provided it emphasizes understanding but does not support its use in explanation of structures and rules.

Previous research on subject-verb concord problems among Ghanaian learners at the basic, secondary and tertiary levels of education is briefly accounted from essays of research by students of English at the University of Education, Winneba. Agbedam (2007) carried out an extensive study on the falling standards in spoken English at St.

Paul's Methodist School, Winneba through the application of dialogue as a panacea of solving the problem. His finding among others was that such constant practice helps student's competence in self-expression. Before the researcher's departure, students were asked to share their impression of the lesson. Students were happy to mention that they would be delighted to go through this practice daily to enhance their spoken English and eventually transfer it into writing. Owusu (2001) investigated the problem of subject-verb agreement among students at the basic level of education. His aim is to identify student's errors and explain what causes the error to be made. He used matching word game as a strategy to overcome the problems. He recommends that prospective teachers in training be taught the use of matching word card game in teaching subject-verb agreement in school.

2.6.1 Pre-Intervention

Students were given a test (Appendix A) organized by the researcher to find out how well the students understood concord. The test had ten questions covering the areas of concord under study. The researcher constructed a marking scheme and went ahead to mark the test. The results are presented in chapter four of this study.

2.6.2 Intervention

According to Kumar (2005), intervention is a set of strategies planned and implemented to solve a specific problem or improve educational practice. It involves a step-by-step process which is constantly monitored over varying periods and by a variety of mechanisms. Through the pre-intervention test, the researcher realized that the students he had sampled do not understand the concept of concord. It was therefore

deemed appropriate for the researcher to adopt effective strategies and methods to teach concord effectively.

2.6.3 Intervention Activities

The researcher used three weeks to carry out the intervention process. The time allocated for subjects at Junior High School is 35 minutes per period.

WEEK ONE

Method of Teaching Concord to Beginners

1. The **pages** (subject) **is** (verb) held together by a staple.

2. The **pages** (subject) **are** (verb) held together by a staple.

Number 2 is correct, because the subject, 'pages', and the verb, 'are', are both plurals. They agree.

It's easy, yes? Let's gear up and try something more difficult.

A phrase in between the subject and the verb

Look at these examples:

3. The message between the lines **is** that we need to finish before Monday.

4. The message between the lines **are** that we need to finish before Monday.

The temptation here is to look at the word in front of the verb (the plural 'lines') and choose the verb that agrees with it (the plural 'are'). This is wrong. The subject of the sentence is not 'lines'. It's 'message'. So, because the subject, 'message', is singular, we use the singular verb 'is'. The phrase 'between the lines' is a prepositional phrase (starting with a preposition), which is why it's not the subject of the sentence.

Try your hand at these:

5. The case of champagne bottles **are** for the year-end party.

6. The case of champagne bottles **is** for the year-end party.

The correct answer is number 6. 'Case' is singular, so use the singular verb 'is'.

7. The sentiment in our offices **is** that our bonuses were measly this year.

8. The sentiment in our offices **are** that our bonuses were measly this year.

The correct answer is number 7. 'Sentiment' is singular, and the singular verb 'is' agrees with it.

WEEK TWO

Two subjects connected by either/or, or neither/nor

If you have two singular subjects that are connected by either/or, or neither/nor, use the singular verb. Look at this:

9. Neither Frank nor Ted **has** the keys to the stationery cupboard.

10. Either Mary or Musah **is** manning the info desk at the conference.

Even though you're discussing two people, only one of them (singular) is taking action, so the verb is singular.

What do you do when one of the subjects is plural and the other isn't? Look at these examples:

11. Neither Sibongile (singular) nor the personal assistants (plural) **have** the keys to the stationery cupboard.

12. Either the stewards (plural) or Mary (singular) **is** manning the info desk at the conference.

Do you see how the verb agrees with the subject closest to it? However, the second sentence sounds awkward, so rather write sentences like this with the second subject being plural, and then make the verb plural. Sentence number 12 should rather be rewritten as:

13. Either Mary or the stewards **are** manning the info desk at the conference.

Two subjects connected by ‘and’

When you have two subjects connected by ‘and’, use the plural form of the verb.

14. Kwame and Kofi **are** responsible for the exchange card.

15. Elize and Kushan **are** our new form masters.

There are two exceptions to the rule. The first (see number 13) is when a compound subject connected with ‘and’ is seen as a singular subject due to popular use. The second is when the subjects connected by ‘and’ are the same person or entity (see number 14).

16. Banku and Appapransa **is** my favourite meal.

17. The creator and distributor of the software **is** Brax Ltd.

Plural subjects that call for singular verbs

Use a singular verb when you have a subject that conveys a single unit of distance, time, or money.

18. Ninety-five cedis **is** a great bargain for a SIM card.

19. One hundred Kilometres **is** a gruelling daily commute.

20. Twenty minutes **is** all I have to prepare for the meeting.

WEEK THREE

Other subjects that call for singular verbs

The following words need singular verbs: each, everyone, everybody, anyone, anybody, somebody, nobody, someone, none, and no-one. Look at these examples:

21. Each of our staff members **has** to fill in an evaluation form.
22. Anyone who **wants** a day off instead of overtime must still fill out a leave form.
23. Someone **has** left a coffee cup on the glass of the photocopy machine.
24. None of us **wants** to admit to being behind on filing.

Subjects that are collective nouns

Look at these examples:

25. The board **wants** to make the decision by next Thursday.
26. The staff **is** in a meeting.
27. The team **is** due to fly out today.

The board, staff, and team are made up of many individual members, but each forms a collective, singular subject. Thus, a singular verb is used. Be careful not to make this mistake, though:

28. The staff **is** in a meeting to discuss their appraisals.

Now, you have a singular subject (staff), a singular verb (is), and a plural pronoun (their) in the same sentence. To improve concord, rather rewrite the sentence in one of the following ways:

29. The **staff is** in a meeting to discuss appraisals.
30. The staff **members are** in a meeting to discuss **their** appraisals.

2.6.4 Post Intervention Test

A post-test conducted was after the main intervention implemented. Questions set were from the English textbook and the students were given the required time to answer them. The post-test tested the importance of the intervention strategy. The questions are in (Appendix B) based on the topic selected by the researcher and the results presented in chapter four.

2.7 Conclusion

In Osman, & Bakar (2012) study, role play and language game were considered by the researcher as efficient ways of getting students to step out of their inhibition in the English language to fluency in the language. The study demonstrates that most subject-verb concord errors occur in speech and in writing. From the analysis above it would be realized that the problem of subject-verb concord coupled with student's inability to use the English language well is the concord of all educationist, though each of these have tackled solving the problem from a different perspective as found in their works cited. To sum up the discussion, it can be concluded that some of the teaching techniques strategies and activities the authorities mentioned, that the teacher can lay hands on include using a classroom situation which should be relevant to the learners and putting these structures is use (using dialogue, drills and substitution tables) among others.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design, population and sampling techniques, sample size, the research site, data collection, data analysis and data presentation.

3.1 Research Approach

The researchers approached the study from a qualitative perspective by engaging in a form of inquiry that honours an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation simple. Qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Yin, 2014). Per its justification, this approach in research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting and analysed inductively by building from particular to general themes, with the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. It thus means that qualitative research methodologies are to explore why or how a phenomenon occurs, such as developing theories and describing the nature of individual experiences (Fetters, Curry, and Creswell 2013).

3.2 Research Design

This study is a case study utilising an action research approach as it identified an existing problem of students and prescribed an intervention strategy to address concord errors in the writing of J.H.S two students of Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School. To ensure the success of the investigation, this design was appropriate as it facilitated the researcher's arrival at valid conclusions. The research design refers to the

overall plan the researcher employs to collect data to answer the research questions and the research data analysis techniques or methods. This is done to address or solve the problem in question. As mentioned earlier, a qualitative research method was adopted to analyze concord problems in the writings of students at Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School. Test (a pre and post-intervention) were handy instruments in the conduct of the study. The study results were used by all concerned to help the student's to correctly use concord in their writings.

3.3 Population of the Study

The researchers focused on Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The school has a student population of six hundred and ninety-eight (698) and a teaching staff of sixteen (16) out of which four were English teachers.

3.4 Sampling technique and sample size

The simple random sampling procedure was used to select the sample made up of boys and girls in Form 2. The total population could not be used because of time constraints and limited resources. A total of sixty (60) students were selected. The teachers of English Language in the school were the sample for the problems they faced in the delivery of their lessons, considering the high level of failure in the English Language. The researcher conducted a test for the sixty students to help her identify the problems they have in concord.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The research instrument comprises the strategies used by the researcher to obtain information. Here, those strategies are discussed. Questions were structured using the recommended text for students. The testing instrument was constructed in line with the syllabus of the Junior High School. This was to ensure that the test items were within the competence level of the students. This type of instrument was important because it hinges especially on the academic performance of the students and the data needed should reflect learning.

3.5.1 Observation

Observation, as the name implies, is a way of collecting data through observing. Observing students as they solve problems, model skills to others, think aloud during a sequence of activities or interact with different learning situations provides insight into student learning and growth (Alberta Assessment Consortium [AAC], 2005). The teacher finds out under what conditions success is most likely, what individual students do when they encounter difficulty, how interaction with others affects their learning and concentration, and what students need to learn. Observations may be informal or scheduled over different periods in different learning contexts. Observation checklists allow teachers to record information quickly about how students perform concerning specific outcomes from the programme of studies. Observation checklists are written in a yes or no format used to assist in observing students' performance relative to specific criteria (AAC, 2005). They are directed towards observations of an individual or group. These tools can also include spaces for brief comments, which provide additional information not captured in the checklists.

3.5.2 Test

A test is the representation of a series of questions given to the student to answer. It is also a set of standard questions, problems, or tasks designed to elicit responses for use in measuring the traits, capacity, or achievement of an individual. In other words, one of the most common devices used to obtain in education is a test. The researcher employed a test as the second instrument to collect data on the topic. Two different types of test were administered to the students. The exercise covered seven main areas of grammatical concord, namely, subject-verb concord, determiner noun concord, coordinated subject concord.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

Since tests were conducted, it became necessary for quantitative data to be generated. The data was analysed using statistical techniques. The data analysis done was on the pre and post-test scores generated and presented on tables with frequency counts and percentages related to the frequencies. Sixty (60) pupils were involved in the tests just as the sample size of the study. The researcher used the Microsoft Excel function to analyse the data hence graphs were drawn to illustrate the results acquired in the pre-test and post-test based on the percentages generated from the comparison of the data generated for purposes of discussion.

3.7 Validity of Research Data

Validity was achieved through a review and critique by fellow researchers before administration of the instruments. Such alternative explanations sought to ensure that the questionnaire measured what in intended to measure. Creswell (2012) summarizes that

validity is the extent to which all of the indicators point to the projected interpretation of test scores for the anticipated purpose.

3.8 Reliability of Research Data

The researcher ensured reliability by using an inter-rater reliability test where other researchers observed the research instruments which were consistent in their judgement. Barbie (2007) defines the reliability of a study as the excellence of a measurement technique that proves that similar data was gathered each time in the continual interpretation of the same phenomenon.

3.9 Ethical Considerations.

The researcher ensured that participants are protected from any form of harm in the conduct of the study in the following ways. The respondents were made aware of the ethical principles the researcher is bound to keep. Since issues about domestic violence are sensitive, the interviews conducted were on an individual basis. As much as possible, the discussions considered the respondents' right to self-determination, devoid of prejudice and subjective judgement. Participation in the study was voluntary and measures were put in place to allow participants the opportunity to opt-out if need be. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly observed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The researcher presented the data obtained from the respondents that were analysed in chapter three and made the necessary discussions. The researcher conducted a pre-test to corroborate the evidence at the time the problem was diagnosed. After effectively implementing the intervention, the researcher conducted another test (post-test) to ascertain whether the intervention strategy worked. The data collected was presented using tables that has frequencies and corresponding percentages and graphs to illustrate the information gathered.

Table 4.0: Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Boys	33	55%
Girls	27	45%
Total	60	100

Table 4.0 presents the gender distribution of the respondents involved in the study. The sample size required in the study was 60. Out of this number, 33 representing 55% were boys, and 27 representing 45% are girls. The formal resources of the state and the formal market is limited in developing countries and this coupled with a patriarchal structure have led to a perception among some parents that it is wiser to invest into boys than girls (Palmer, 2009). It could perhaps explain why there may exist more males in some schools than female. According to a study by Nordensvard (2014) on gender and education policy

in Ghana, there seems to be a rather bleak outlook for girls in both formal schooling and the formal economy in Ghana. It is nothing specific for Ghana but a rather typical low-income country problem. The gender gap in school explored by Appleton et al (1996) and that boys tend to be favoured over girls since as projected to generate more investment returns than girls (Appleton, 1996; Avotri, 2000; Hertz, 1991).

4.1 Description of Performances

The performances of the respondents in the pre-test and post-test were described using a rating scale. The scoring scale used had 0 – 30 marks rated as below average, from 40 – 60 was rated average, and 70 – 100 was rated above average as shown in Table 4.0.1

Table 4.0.1: Description of Performances

Scores	Remarks
0 - 30	Below Average
40 - 60	Average
70 - 100	Above Average

4.2 Pre-Test Results

Table 4.0.2 shows the results obtained from the pre-test conducted by the researcher. Sixty (60) respondents took part in the test conducted.

Table 4.0.2: Pre-Test Results (Before Intervention)

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 - 30	38	64%
40 - 60	17	29%
70 - 100	05	7%
Total	60	100

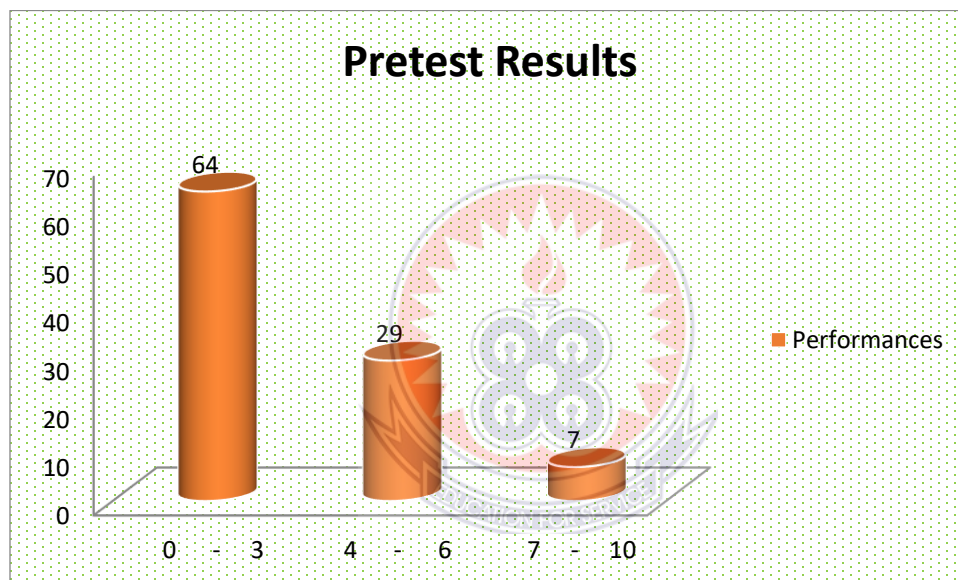
**Figure 4.0.2: Bar Graph Showing the Pre-Test Results**

Table 4.0.2 and Figure 4.0.2 shows that out of 38 (64%) respondents scored between 0 – 3 in the pre-test. About 17 (29%), scored between 4 and 6 marks. Only 5 (7%) of the respondents scored between 7 and 10 marks in the pre-test, which is the indication that there exists a problem. The majority of the respondents failed in the pre-test since 0-30 marks remarked as performing below average. The performance below average also confirmed the existence of the problem at the beginning of the study. The average

performances in the pre-test were not encouraging, as only 29% recorded. Only 7% scoring above average indicates the need for an intervention to enhance better performances.

Fullan (2007) identifies the school as a community of active people where teachers in a classroom environment convey formal education to learners. A school, therefore, facilitates learning. Schools, whether government-aided or private sponsored, have stakeholders who undertake various activities. The data shows that students' academic performances has been low as manifested in the pre-test. This made the researcher and stakeholders to believe that there is need for topics that bother on the grasp of the languages used as the medium of instruction be taught effectively in schools as indicated in table 4.3. It has resulted in finger-pointing among stakeholders as indicated by the researcher at the start of the study.

4.3 Post-Test Results

After the successful implementation of the intervention strategy, the researcher conducted a second test (post-test) with the same sample size of 60 pupils with some questions that the pupils were not able to answer during the pre-test. The result of the post-test is presented in table 4.0.3.

Table 4.0.3: Post-Test Results (After Intervention)

Scores	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0 - 3	6	10%
4 - 6	9	15%
7 - 10	45	75%
Total	60	100

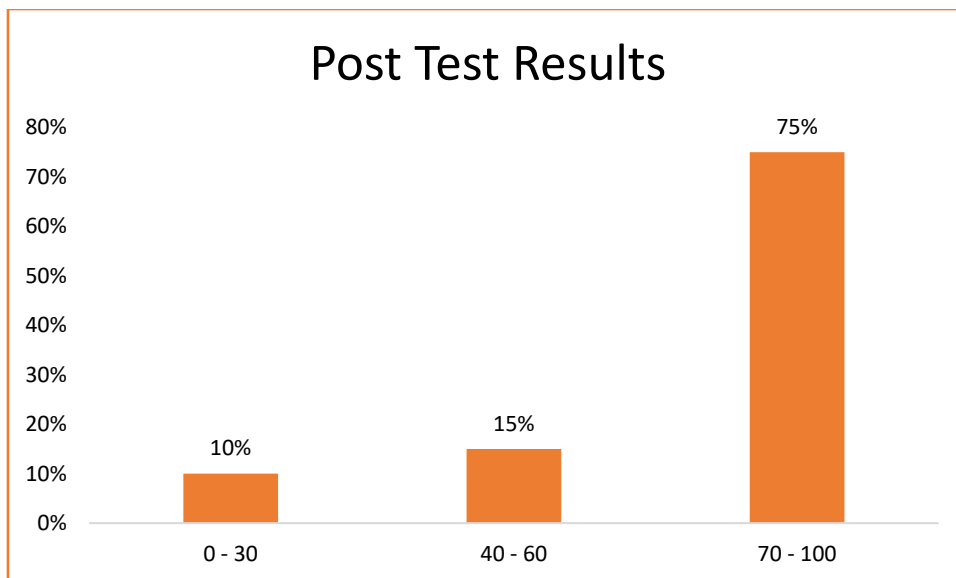


Figure 4.0.3: Bar Graph Showing the Post-Test Results

The scores after the post-test, presented in Table 4.0.3 and Figure 4.0.3, show an improved performance against the performances in the pre-test. The data shows that only six (6) students representing 10% scored below average (0 - 30) in the post-test. Out of the sample, nine (9), representing 15% of the respondents scored between 40 and 60. Forty-five (45) students representing 75% scored between 70 and 100 marks. It therefore implies that the intervention strategy has worked after the implementation.

Kaggwa (2003) explained academic performance as the quality and quantity of knowledge, skills, techniques and positive attitudes, behaviours and philosophy that students achieve through appropriate interventions by teachers. The World Bank (2002) further observes that the mark or grade evaluates this achievement or improvement that students obtained in tests or examinations conducted at the end of the term or year or education cycle. It, therefore, stands to reason that the quality of the grades and the number of students that pass in various grades or test, as shown in Table 4.4 determine the level of academic performance. Academic performance is a concern of people who

have a stake in schools. They include parents, students, teachers, proprietors, and the entire society.

4.4 Comparisons of Pre and Post-Test Results

A comparison of the pre-test and post-test was for purposes of emphasis. It indicated the overall performance of the pupils as a result of the intervention strategy the researcher implemented. Table 4.0.4 and Figure 4.0.4 show the results of the comparison made.

Table 4.0.4: Comparison of Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Marks	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (%)
0 - 3	64%	10%
4 - 6	29%	15%
7 - 10	07%	75%
Total	100	100

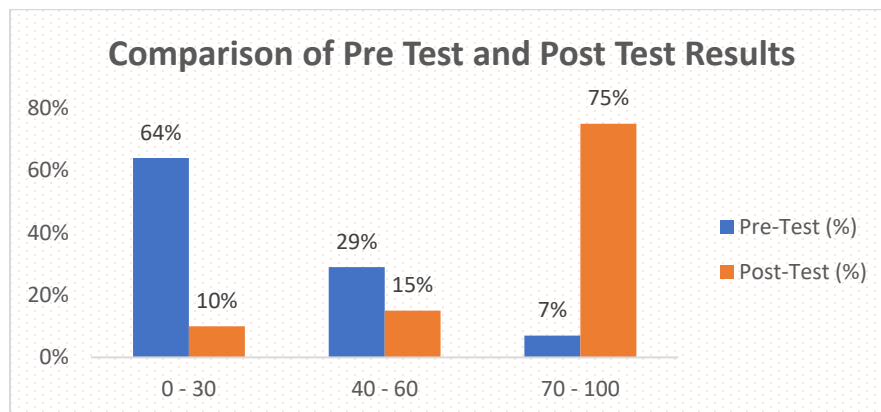


Figure 4.0.4: Bar Graph Comparing the Pre and Post-Test Results

Results of the pre-test and post-test conducted by the researcher compared were to give meaning to the need for the intervention strategy implemented and indicated in Figure 4.0.4 and Table 4.0.4. The difference between the performances of students who obtained a score between 0-30 (below average) was decreased by 54% after implementing the intervention strategy. The average (40 - 60) performances also decreased by 14% between the pre-test and post-test. The pupils who scored above average (70-100) however, increased from 7% to 75%. The score is a percentage increase of 68% on the performance rating scale, after implementing the intervention. In effect, the performances of the pupils' improved after the intervention indicating that the intervention significantly improve how students learn and understand concepts in social studies.

An intervention, according to Kagawa (2003), is the systematic and explicit instruction provided to accelerate growth in an area of identified need. Every student has the potential to learn and become a responsible citizen if given a conducive environment with the appropriate interventions. For any intervention to be effective, the programmes designed should be based on clearly defined objectives, as stated at the beginning of the study and the program monitored and evaluated (Kagawa, 2003). More particularly, students' needs should be analysed, and programs designed to address these needs. Approaches to interventions will vary according to the school context. Student support programmes, behaviour modification, life skills programmes, parental involvement, and capacity building are some intervention strategies to enhance students' performance (Kagawa, 2003).

4.5 Discussion of Results

Research Question One

Examine the concord errors committed by students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School.

The concord errors that students committed were proximity concord, notional concord, grammatical concord, gender concord.

Proximity concord

Proximity concord is a situation where a verb agrees with the nearest noun, rather than with the sentences more distant subject. Yankson (1994) also sees proximity concord as ‘the verb agreeing with the noun immediately preceding it in a sentence. For example, the reasons for its fall in these areas are not known’. This is an example of proximity concord because the verb is agreeing with the plural noun ‘areas’ which are closer to it not with the less-proximate singular subject reason. The right sentence should read like; ‘the reasons for its fall in these areas is not known’. This is because reason is the headword of the subject which is also singular. That gives the reason why the singular verb is selected to agree with the subject. Most students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School do commit proximity concord errors because they usually match the plural noun with the plural verb neglecting the headword as the subject. There are other examples like:

1. neither the ring nor the bracelets was/were expensive.

With this example, students are likely to choose ‘was’ rather than ‘were’ because they are likely to match the singular subject ‘ring’ to the singular verb ‘was’. The sentence would have been:

1. Neither the ring nor the bracelets was expensive.

The correct answer is neither the ring nor the bracelets were expensive.

Proximity concord agrees with the nearest noun. If the sentence is turned the other way around and the verb would have to agree with the noun near to it. Neither the ring nor the bracelet was / were expensive. The correct answer is; neither the rings nor the bracelet was expensive. Students committed the following proximity errors.

- a) Either the headmaster or the teacher is attending the meeting

Notional concord

According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2000), notional concord can be described as the agreement between the verb and the subject according to perception (that is the idea of number) rather than the actual display or the presence of a grammatical feature for the idea. Thus, while we can distinguish between singular and plural form of **bird** as birds, others like man with its plural men, it is very difficult for students to tell their plural. Other examples can be seen in the sentences that follow:

1. The head office has been resisting changes in the company.

In the sentence above, the head office is a singular noun phrase or subject but was with “have been” which is plural. This emphasizes the fact that students who perceived the subject as plural because it is made up of a group of people used ‘have been’. The notion is one of the groups of individuals acting individually and therefore is plural. The verb is also therefore plural. Notional concord normally deals with collective nouns acting as subjects.

Examples:

- The army have a lot of logistical problems
- The army has a lot of logistical problems.

- The staff receives their salary monthly
- The staff receive their salary monthly

The army has a lot of logistical problems (as an entity) singular

The army have a lot of logistical problems (the individual soldiers) plural

- The public is angry at the government's remarks.
- The public are angry at the government's remarks
- The police is preparing for an arrest
- The police are preparing for an arrest.

The government has to fulfil their promises. In this sentence 'has' is used instead of 'have'

The government have provided enough facilities to ensure that its citizens are satisfied.

Also, in the sentence above, 'have' is used instead of 'has'.

Grammatical concord

Subject-verb agreement is a common phenomenon in the English Language used by L2 speakers. Such errors show that the learners inter language structures have not yet developed to the level of L2 speakers. Bernard (1995) argues that the fossilization of inter language concord structures sets in during the early stages of English L2 tuition. (Makalela,1998) contends that errors on agreement marking show that learner's interlanguage has not yet developed to the target language has not yet developed to the target language standards. Ngara (1983) holds the view that concord errors may be a result of incomplete learning. For example,

1. The colour of the dress1 look dim.

In this sentence above, the subject is singular and should go with a singular verb, hence the sentence should rather read:

The colour of the dress looks dim.

Grammatical concord can also be defined as the grammatical agreement of a sentence's number, person and gender with the sentence's subject. For example,

1. One of your friends is here.

With the example, the third person singular pronoun 'yours' agrees with the subject one. More so, the verb 'is' is in proper agreement with the subject one because both are singular. In a test item constructed for students. Students wrote the sentence that follows:

1. One of the peoples comes here every day instead of

In this sentence, the student thinks that, the subject is 'people' which to her is plural.

Other examples include:

2. Each of the sisters is clever.
3. None of the students is to blame.

Pronoun and its antecedent concord

Pronoun and its antecedent concord mean matching of parts of speech in a sentence according to gender. In the English Language gender concord only occurs with personal and possessive pronouns. For example,

1. He injured hisself in both legs

He injured himself in both legs

2. She bought sheself a book

She bought herself a book

3. I haven't been meself for a week

I haven't been myself for a week

4. One of the issues that (was / were) discussed at our last meeting was on discipline.

In the above sentence too, students taught 'one' was the subject and for that matter they selected 'was' (instead of were) as the correct answer.

5. Many is one of the girls who (sing / sings) in the school choir. All the students chose 'sing' the reason they gave was that relative pronoun 'who' referring to one, while on was referring to Mary, who they said was the subjects.

Pronouns are another problematic area in L2 learning. Pronouns in English are not always distinguished by gender. This explains why student's English language often confuses the use of 'he' and 'she'. Personal pronouns tend to be used indiscriminately whereas in Standard English they are marked for gender in the third person singular. These are some of the concord errors students committed:

Wrong – Either he or me am mistaken

Right – Either he or I am mistaken

Wrong – Neither you nor him is to blame.

Right – Neither you nor he is to blame

Wrong – Neither Margaret nor Mary felt that they had been treated fairly.

Right – Neither Margaret nor Mary felt she had been treated fairly.

Wrong – The team frequently changed its positions to get varied experiences.

Right – The team frequently changed their positions to get varied experience.

Research Question Two

Identify the reasons why students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School commit errors in concord.

From the teachers' point of view, there are lot of reasons why students face concord problems. The following were found to be the factors mitigating the proper use of concord among the students:

The school

The researcher interviewed the headmaster to find out the academic background of teachers of English. To her dismay, 70% of teachers of Kubekro Basic School do not have any language background. They either studied the social science related courses, French or better still Ghanaian language. The headteacher gave reasons for engaging such teachers to teach the English language among which is inadequate number of English language teachers. To be able to teach English language not only demands how to read. Many think that, one's ability to read qualifies them to teach English language should have knowledge in phonology, semantics, syntax and morphology of the language. The teachers themselves have problems with language making it obvious that students will face many concord problems.

Again, the headmaster lamented on the fact that English teachers posted to the school do not accept posting and that is the reason for lack of teachers of English in the school. Looking at teacher problems faced by the school, it is not surprising that students do not perform when it comes to concord. Teachers should make conscious efforts to teach grammar rules that are similar and those that are different to enable students to grasp the concepts in time. Teachers' knowledge of grammar was inadequate in

transferring knowledge effectively to a higher level of awareness of the properties and functions of language on the part of teachers. Some teachers of English do not teach their students the grammar of the English language, which is very pathetic. Some students cannot read and understand examination questions as a result of this menace which is disheartening. I had a couple of students in my class who could neither read nor write one sentence devoid of error. Teachers wonder how they passed their promotion to the next class. Some other teachers associated the poor performance of students in the language to lack of reading on the part of students, students being lazy. These reasons given by teacher portray English as just about reading and so students have the notion 'English is not learnt. This is accounting for the poor performance in the English Language in Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School. According to the teachers, students cannot just comprehend why in English, 's' is added to a verb to make it singular but 's' is added to a noun and it is plural. These are complaining from language teachers.

In-service trainings (INSET) are not organized for English Language teachers simply because there is no money to employ the service of an expert to train language teachers. The teachers do not also attend one single workshop did not auger well for the school. Time allotted for grammar is woefully inadequate. There are little teachers can do to help students overcome their concord problems taken into consideration the time factor. The researcher disagreed with the teachers in the sense that teachers should not wait for grammar lessons before they teach grammar.

The researcher interviewed the headmaster to verify whether the Ghana Education Service has been providing books in English Language teachers. The answer indicated that teachers have to get their own books to teach students. Teachers are not supplied

with textbooks either. The only textbook available is the students' handbook that teachers use to teach. This is a problem because teachers should be able to read ahead of their students in order to help them overcome their difficulties in the English language.

Students did not take English language seriously in the sense that they refuse to do exercise and home works. As it is said that 'practice makes a man perfect', as second language learners we need to make conscious effort to learn the English language. The majority of the students have admitted that most of their errors are due to various factors other than their linguistic competence. The anxiety was the main factor behind their errors. They have claimed that worrying about the test results has dominated their thinking. Consequently, they have produced these 'silly' errors, as students have described them. Their concentration on content rather than form is another reason of their errors. Students have said that what was important to them was to answer the content examination questions. They think that it is not necessary getting the rules of the language of study. The most important thing is to pass examination. The third reason of their errors is the limited time allocated to the test which prevents them from going over their performance to correct whatever errors or mistakes students have made. The students' justification of their errors is indicative for two reasons. First, all students have expressed their surprise at making these errors simply because as they govern the use of the language hence making such mistakes is a matter of carelessness, that is evident that the students claim is acceptable, since they have produced structures similar to those deviant ones in other part of their answer sheets. This tells that some grammatical errors committed by students can be resolved through recalling the distinction between receptive competences, the grammatical rules by which the learners employ the correct

grammatical rules to perceive others written or verbal production. However, when it comes to production, they face some difficulties although these same rules are available to them, their use becomes optional.

Students find it difficult to identify the various categories of the noun in English grammar in order to write or use them correctly in their essays and day to day transactions, then we cannot rule out the teaching of English grammar in English second language classrooms. Take the case where the use of the regular verbs often poses a challenge to some students of English second language, especially in written communication. There are many students who cannot correctly use tense and its aspects in English language. In fact, our experiences as teachers of English for several years have exposed us to student's problems with the use of tense and its aspects in English. Students usually try to translate word by word from their mother tongue (language) as the most popular and mostly adopted teaching method in schools in grammar.

These issues can be resolved through recalling the differences between receptive competence, the grammatical rules by which the learner understands others oral and written production and the productive competence the rules he uses to produce utterances in the target language. It is argued that second language learners employ the correct grammatical rules to perceive others written or verbal production. However, when it comes to production they face some difficulties, although these same rules are available to them, their use becomes optional. Students find it difficult to identify the various categories of the noun in English grammar in order to write or use them correctly in their essays and day to day interactions. For this reason, we cannot rule out the teaching of English grammar in English second language classrooms. In the case where the use of

regular verbs often poses challenges to some students of English second language, especially in written communication. There are many students who cannot correctly use tense and its aspects in English language. In fact, our experience as teachers of English for the few years have exposed us to student problems with the use of tense and its aspects in English. Students usually try to translate word by word from their mother tongue (local language). As the most popular and mostly adopted teaching method in the grammar.

Research Question Three

Prescribe effective methods of teaching concord at the Kubekro KKMA Basic School.

Translation method: The students develop a habit of literal and word by word translation from Ghanaian languages into English and from English in the Ghanaian languages. The structures of sentences in our Ghanaian languages are quite different from the English language. The result of using grammar translation method in teaching of English is that students do not think directly in the English language. They think in their mother tongue. They transfer and translate their thoughts in English, hence the structures of the mother tongue influence the target language.

Inter language and inter lingual transfer

Richards (1974) classifies errors into two types: inter language errors and intralingual developmental errors. Richards (1971) addresses that overgeneralization, ignorance of the restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concepts hypothesized are major causes of inter lingual errors. These errors appear when L2

learners are developing L2 structure knowledge. Spada and Lightbown (2006) further explain over generalization, which L2 learners overly apply L2 structure rules while producing the language. For instance, learners apply the 's' ending or 'ed' ending the verb in 'I' runs or I raned'. Also, L2 learners leave out number, tense or preposition and have all verbs in the same form (Spada & Lightbown, 2006). Errors in this category reflect general characteristics of rules of learning, for example, overgeneralization or faulty application of rules, thereby producing incorrect forms of analogy. Learners make inductive generalizations, about the target language system based on the data to which they are exposed. As a result of the restriction based on the data, learners who are ignorant of the exceptions to certain rules of grammar generalize and produce incorrect forms by analogy.

Using students' writings

Research suggested that most beneficial way of helping students improve their command of grammar in writing is to use students writing as the basis for discussing grammatical concepts. Researchers agree that it is more effective to teach punctuation, sentence variety, and usage in the context of writing that to approach the topic by teaching isolated skills (Calkins, 1980). As students revise and edit their writing, teachers can provide grammar instructions that guide students in their attempt to identify and correct problems in sentence structure and usage. For example, a teacher who sees that many students are writing sentences containing misplaced modifies can present a mini lesson on his concept, using examples from students writing styles, sentences combining is effective methods for helping students develop fluency and variety in their own writing style. Students can explore sentence variety, length, and other syntactic devices by

comparing their sentences with sentences for other writers. They also discover the decisions writers make in revising for style and effect.

Teachers can design their own sentence combining activities by using short sentences from students writing or other appropriate sources. For example, teachers who notice many grammatical errors in students writing can place these sentences on an overhead for all their students to read. Teachers can then ask different students to combine short sentences in a different way orally. Combining oral and written sentences activities helps students understand the ways in which sentence structure use and punctuation affect meaning. When presented as a revising strategy, sentence combining-activities help students identify short, choppy sentences in their writings, leading them to combine their ideas more appropriately. As students generate more complex sentences from simple ones, they discover how the arrangement of phrases and clauses affect meaning and its impact on their reading. As English Language teachers, it is required that we teach writing instead of merely assigning it. It has become increasingly obvious that engaging and guiding student in the writing process instead of having them perform countless grammar exercises is more effective way to teach writing. The research clearly shows what most students do not transfer 'skill and drill' into vivid, imaginative or persuasive writing that contains specific and precise vocabulary.

Language games

The teacher paired students to form groups in which students are and given roles to play. One of the pairs holds the names of countries and their capitals, the other holds names of tourist sites and where they are located. They will exchange the information and find out which towns have been wrongly paired with their capitals. The teacher assigns

an incomplete writing task and asks them to complete it using some clue words and the simple past tenses. For examples, you did not perform well in the end of first term examination and your father wants you to stop schooling and learn a trade. Write a letter to your father, using the clues that follow telling him why you did not do well.

Effectiveness of teaching in the school, your attitude towards learning, your punctuality at school, your chores at home before going to school, what you wish to be in future. Grammar is the sound, structure, and meaning system of language. All languages have grammar. People who speak the same language are able to communicate because they intuitively know the grammar system of that language that is, the rules of making meaning. Students who are native speakers of English already know words, the meaning of those words and the different words of putting words together to make meaningful sentences.

However, while students may be effective speakers of English, they need guidance to become effective writers. They need how to transfer their knowledge of grammatical concepts from oral language to written languages. Effective grammar instruction begins with what students already know about grammar, and it helps them use this knowledge as they write. By connecting their knowledge of oral language to written languages, teachers can demystify abstract grammatical terminology so that students can read and write with greater competence and confidence. Teachers need to compile a list of fossilized inter language structures and then provide remedial teaching or feedback which should focus on students' attention on these structures.

Improving Teaching Methods

Teachers attend workshops to update their knowledge on the English Language because it is dynamic. They can also look for more information on the internet to update themselves. Teachers should not stick to the old things they learnt years back but should constantly read widely. Teachers upgrade their knowledge and qualification in English and avail themselves for in-service training for teachers at regular bases especially newly trained teachers in the service. Teachers encourage students to read a lot of story books. Reading books should be provided in basic schools. Students should be encouraged to do intensive and extensive readings to help check their concord errors. Teachers can adopt the consciousness-raising approach to the teaching of grammar in which instruction in grammar (through drills, grammar instruction and other form-focused activities) is viewed as a way of raising learners' awareness of grammatical features of the language. Teachers give students maximum exposure to correct forms of the English language in the classroom especially because L2 students' access to English is limited to the classroom environment. This means that teachers should be good models to students. Teachers must also motivate students to listen to English programs on the radio, to watch English Language Television programs and to read English journals and magazines. Students also need to read slightly challenging prose. This will facilitate L2 acquisition. Teachers need to use integrated approach to language teaching by focusing on the four language skills namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. Practicing writing can help reduce students' concord errors. Writing can be a tool that teachers use to correct students' errors.

Teachers can write correct sentences for students have problems. Teachers should improve their teaching and guide students to edit their works or exercise before submission. If they are made to carefully read their work before submission they would be careful in their writing and will reduce the number of errors committed by students. To ensure effective writing devoid of errors, we need to guide our students in the writing process, including the phases of revising and editing their sentences and words. It would also be helpful to avoid correcting the kinds of construction. To avoid stunting students' growth as writers, teachers need to guide our students in the writing process including the phase of revising and editing their sentences and words. It would also be helpful to avoid correcting the constructions that published writers use with impurity and indeed with good effects. We need to respond positively to the new kinds of errors that reflect syntactic risk of growth. We have enough time to help students correct these errors when they have their ideas on paper, experimenting with language in the process. In a nut shell, error is to be welcomed and tamed not slain.

It came up in the interview that while teachers consider their students' errors as a manifestation of their poor linguistic competence, students consider them as slips of tongue or pen. To solve this problem, teachers should consider the distinction between the errors and accordingly tell their students in advance which errors will be considered slips of the tongue and which will be considered competent ones. Consequently, teachers' correction will be based on that classification of errors. Also, to reduce students' failure and to orient them for success, teachers can tell their students that unless the errors hinder their intended meaning, they will not be penalized for them. Through such understanding

between teachers and students, it is hoped that the students will be able to overcome their test anxiety and in turn, reduce their errors.

It should also be known to the teachers that error analysis has been employed to draw a picture of the learners' learning strategies and never meant to eliminate or even reduce the students' error rather it intends to help teachers adjust their teaching methods and understand their students learning strategies. However, errors, regardless of the teaching methods employed in the classroom, are there and will stay as long as foreign language teaching is practiced. Therefore, teachers should not be so worried about them. Much has been about the teaching methods and materials which are based on contrastive analysis. However, the students' perception of their errors urges a new visit to that issues. Since most of the students' errors involve the subject-verb agreement structure which, in part, is due to native language interference, those teaching methods which are based on contrastive analysis should be revised and made less dependent on that analysis.

It appears more advantageous to employ authentic materials and when need be teachers can draw their students' attention to the differences between the native and foreign languages. In this case, second or foreign language learners' sensitivity and awareness of these differences will be raised and that might help students reduce their interference errors. The last indicative point of this study involves the grammatical drills and exercises used in the English language classroom. Excessive drills and exercises which are based on aspects of the target language that are different from those of the native language, as is the case in most of our schools, will make the students' oversensitive concerning these structures. The oversensitivity will increase the students' tension when they attempt to use the target language in either their communication or

writing production and intentionally produce interference errors. This indication appears to contradict the previous on which states that teachers can draw their students' attention to some difference between the two languages might ease and reduce the students, tension, while oversensitivity may complicate things and lead the students to make unintentional and unnecessary errors. Based on the students' perception of their errors, the following implications might be helpful to the second language teachers.

Error analysis has been criticized as being an inefficient tool for studying the way second language learners develop their target language. It is argued that error analysis deals with the learner's productive competence rather than the receptive one and it is also an imperfect instrument for categorizing errors and explaining them. English as a foreign language teachers and researchers cannot ignore error analysis as an important tool by which they can learn more about the psycholinguistic processes involved in the teaching to second language. Furthermore, EFL teachers observe these errors whenever they read or listen to their students' performance, consequently, they have to deal with and analyze these errors and accordingly, improve their teaching methods. Errors analysis is important to the English language teachers, SLA researcher, and English as a foreign language student as well. This study attempts to tackle and reduce students' concord errors and them from the students' perspective in order to clarify the learning strategies, English language learners employ when they learn a second language. The teaching of grammar in English second language classrooms would enhance our students understanding of the verb system, and by so doing, they would be able to use verbs effectively in both written and verbal communications.

4.4 Conclusion

The evidence as presented in this chapter shows that students improved upon their performances after the intervention strategy was implemented. It stands to reason that proximity, notional, grammatical and gender concord were part of the concord errors that students were found to have committed. Causes of concord problems were found to include teachers, old textbooks, students learning, teaching methods, and interlingual errors. Teachers were advised to adopt the consciousness-raising approach to the teaching of grammar through drills, grammar instruction, and other form-focused activities.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations made by the researcher.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to look into the causes of the errors in concord and adopt effective strategies that will help students to overcome their concord problems. That being the case, an action Research was the research design adopted. The researcher focused on Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The school has a student population of six hundred and ninety-eight (698). The simple random sampling procedure was used to select a sample made up of 33 boys and 27 girls in form two (2). The researcher conducted a test for the sixty students to help her identify the problems they have in concord. The total population could not be used because of time constraints and limited resources. The testing instrument was constructed in line with the syllabus of the Junior High School. Finally, method of data analysis was frequency table, percentage, and bar charts.

5.1.1 Concord errors in students' writings

The study found that the concord errors that students committed were; Proximity concord (a situation where a verb agrees with the nearest noun, rather than with the sentences more distant subject., Notional concord (described as the agreement between the verb and the subject according to perception rather than the actual display or the

presence of a grammatical feature for the idea, Grammatical concord (described as the grammatical agreement of a sentences number, person and gender with the sentence's subject) and gender concord indicating Pronouns and their antecedent concord and the ability to match parts of speech in a sentence according to gender.

5.1.2 Causes of concord errors

The study also found that the causes of concord errors stem from the following sources:

5.1.2.1 The school

Most teachers do not have an English language professional background but accepted to teach the subject because English teachers posted to the school do not accept posting and that is the reason for lack of teachers of English in the school. In this light, Teachers' should make conscious efforts to teach grammar rules that are similar and those that are different to enable students to grasp the concepts in time. Teachers' knowledge of grammar was inadequate in transferring knowledge effectively to a higher level of awareness of the properties and functions of language on the part of teachers. Teachers are not supplied with textbooks either. The only textbook available is the students' handbook that teachers use to teach. This is a problem because teachers should be able to read ahead of their students in order to help them overcome their difficulties in the English language. Students did not take English language seriously in the sense that they refuse to do exercise and home works. As it is said that 'practice makes a man perfect', as second language learners we need to make conscious effect to learn the English language. The majority of the students have admitted that most of their errors are due to various factors other than their linguistic competence.

Anxiety was the main factor behind their errors. They have claimed that worrying about the test results has dominated their thinking. Also, the limited time allocated to the test which prevents them from going over their performance to correct whatever errors students have made. The students' justification of their errors is indicative for two reasons. First, all students have expressed their surprise at making these errors simply because as they rule that govern the use of the language hence making such mistakes is a matter of carelessness, that is evident that the students claim is acceptable, since they have produced structures similar to those deviant ones in other parts of their answer sheets.

5.1.2.2 Methods of Teaching

Due to the methods of teaching, the students develop a habit of literal and word by word translation from Ghanaian languages into English and from English in the Ghanaian languages. The structures of sentences in our Ghanaian languages are quite different from the English language. The result of using the grammar-translation method in the teaching of English is that students do not think directly in the English language. They think in their mother tongue. They transfer and translate their thoughts in English, hence the structures of the mother tongue influence the target language.

5.1.2.3 Inter language and interlingual errors

Errors in this category reflect general characteristics of rules of learning, eg. Overgeneralization or faulty application of rules, thereby producing incorrect forms of analogy such as Transfer Error: caused by interference from mother tongue. Mother tongue interference: errors are produced in the learners' attempt to discover the structure of the target language and literal translation because a student translates his first language

sentence or idiomatic expression in to the target language word by word. Learners make inductive generalizations, about the target language system based on the data to which they are exposed. As a result of the restriction based on the data, learners who are ignorant of the exceptions to certain rules of grammar generalize and produce incorrect forms by analogy.

5.1.3 Effective methods to improve students' concord errors.

5.1.3.1 Improving concord using writing

When students are made to revise and edit their writing, teachers can provide grammar instructions that guide students in their attempt to identify and correct problems in sentence structure and usage. Through this method, teachers who see that many students are writing sentences containing misplaced modifies can present a mini lesson on his concept, using examples from students writing styles, sentences combining is effective methods for helping students develop fluency and variety in their writing style. Also, students can explore sentence variety, length, and other syntactic devices by comparing their sentences with sentences for other writers. They also discover the decisions writers make in revising for style and effect. Teachers can design their own sentence combining activities by using short sentences from students writing or other appropriate sources. When presented as a revising strategy, sentence combining-activities help students identify short, choppy sentences in their writings, leading them to combine their ideas more appropriately.

5.1.3.3 Improved Teaching Methods

Teachers attend workshops to update their knowledge on the English Language because it is dynamic. They can also look for more information on the internet to update themselves. Teachers should not stick to the old things they learnt years back but should constantly read widely. Teachers upgrade their knowledge and qualification in English and avail themselves for in-service training for teachers at regular bases especially newly trained teachers in the service. Teachers encourage students to read many storybooks. Reading books should be provided in basic schools. Students should be encouraged to do intensive and extensive readings to help check their concord errors.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the analysis, discussions, and findings made, the study concluded on the following:

1. Students in the Kubekro JHS form two committed four types of concord errors namely: grammatical concord, notional concord, proximity concord and gender concord in the use of English language as a medium of communication and instruction in the school.
2. The causes of concord errors among students of Kubekro form two JHS is attributed to the type of teachers who teach the English Language, the content of textbooks, the use of the English Language by students themselves, methods of teaching used by teachers and the inter-language and interlingual errors.
3. There exist effective methods identified as the panacea to improve students' concord errors including the use of constant writing including editing and revision of content, use of language games such as role-play where students are paired and

given roles to play and improved teaching methods through workshops, information search on the internet, use of revised books, teachers embarking on further studies in the English language as medium-term solutions, encouraging reading among students and the adoption of a conscious approach to the teaching of grammar through drills, grammar instruction and other form-focused activities.

5.3 Pedagogical Implications

The findings of this research revealed that students have problems with concord rules. The study was also to find a solution to address the learner's problems with concord. The solution has pedagogical implications for curriculum designers, textbook writers, teachers of English language and students of Kubekro Kpone Katamanso Basic School and other schools. Curriculum designers in the Ghana Education Service should consider the introduction of topics that could suit the level of children in the basic schools in the country. A starting point will be to contract experts to organize workshops for teachers of the language especially on grammar lessons to enhance effective delivery in the classroom. Since the only category of concord to be taught in the Junior High School syllabus relates to the grammatical concord, the researcher suggests that syllabus designers endeavor to include all the categories or types of concord in the syllabus. These categories can spread throughout the three years program. Textbook writers should not limit their contents in textbooks they write to the principles to the grammatical concord. They should emphasize the other categories. Secondly, they should include sufficient exercises that will help both teachers and students to understand and gain both implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of concord thereby improving the proficiency of these teachers of English and their students.

Teachers of English especially those at the Junior High must do well to understand all the rules of concord so that in their teaching, they can explain the rules of concord with competence for the students to understand the various aspects of the broader concepts of concord such as noun-pronoun, verb-verb, determiner noun and many more. If teachers of English can tell which rule may be applicable in a particular context, they can help to clarify a concord rule that perhaps was misunderstood or partially learned by their students. Teachers of English should feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the student they teach. Students should develop positive attitude towards the study of English language. They should change their mindset that English is automatic and it is mere of speech subject and be prepared to be committed to the study of it. Students should gradually move from lexical intuitive and offer erratic use of third person -s towards more conscious and systematic sort of mapping and deployment of the underlying system when it comes to the study of concord rules. Finally, students should revise their notes on concord regularly to avoid deviations associated with concord.

5.4 Suggestions for Future Research

This study did not cover all the issues concerning the causes of concord errors among J.H.S two students of Kubekro KKMA Basic School. It is suggested that further research is conducted into the following areas.

1. The attitude of students and teachers in the teaching and learning of other aspects of English language Grammar.
2. Elements that influence student's acquisition of language and its structures at the junior high school level.

5.5 Conclusion

The purpose of the study is to explore the causes of errors in concord and to adopt effective strategies to help students deal with coherent problems. The study design which was an action research is research focused on the Kubekro Kpone-Katamanso Municipal Basic School in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. The school has a student population of six hundred and ninety-eight (698). Simple random sampling procedure was used to select a sample consisting of 33 boys and 27 girls in Form Two (2). The study found and concluded that students in the Kubekro JHS form two committed four types of concord errors namely: grammatical concord, notional concord, proximity concord and gender concord in the use of English language as a medium of communication and instruction in the school. These errors were attributed to the type of teachers who teach the English Language, the content of textbooks, the use of the English Language by students themselves, methods of teaching used by teachers and the inter-language and interlingual errors. Also, methods such as constant writing, editing and revision of content, use of language games such as role-play, use of revised books for teaching of grammar through drills, grammar instruction and other form-focused activities are good interventions.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - PRE TEST

DIRECTIONS: Underline the correct verb in these sentences.

1. The girl or her sisters (watch, watches) television every day.
2. Rob and his brothers (doesn't, don't) like sports.
3. His classmates (study, studies) before a test.
4. One of the cookies (is, are) missing.
5. A lady with 10 cats (live, lives) in that big house.
6. Mumps (is, are) very serious.
7. The committee (decide, decides) when to adjourn.
8. Our team (is, are) the best.
9. Everybody (enjoy, enjoys) a good song.
10. Either (is, are) suitable.

ANSWERS

1. The girl or her sisters (watch, watches) television every day.
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9. Everybody (enjoy, enjoys) a good song.
10. Either (is, are) suitable.

APPENDIX B - POST TEST

DIRECTIONS: Underline the correct verb in these sentences.

1. Sally (run, runs) to the park every day.
2. The dogs (bark, barks) at strangers.
3. Ted and Mary (is, are) going to the movies.
4. The game (was, were) exciting.
5. They (worry, worries) too much.
6. She (study, studies) every night.
7. Black or white (is, are) your choice.
8. That (was, were) incredible.
9. Those (is, are) pretty shoes.
10. The cat or dog (is, are) in the yard.

ANSWERS

1. Sally (run, runs) to the park every day.
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