THE STUDY OF CONCORD ERRORS IN THE WRITING OF STUDENTS OF KOFORIDUA SENIOR HIGH TECHNICAL SCHOOL

BY

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THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MPHIL DEGREE IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

Studies show that the main English writing problem area of students in the second cycle institutions in Ghana relates to violation of English concord rules. Concord rules are taught at all levels of education in Ghana, but unfortunately, most senior high school students have challenges making their sentences concordant. This situation is not different from what the researcher observed in the writing of students of Koforidua Senior High Technical School.

The study sets forth to ascertain the specific concord problem areas students of Koforidua Sectech, to find out the possible factors that account for the errors, and to suggest ways by which they could make their sentences concordant. Data were collected from final year students of Koforidua Sectech by way of questionnaires, an in-class essay test, summary test and objective test. These were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)

The findings reveal that the students of Koforidua Sectech make all kinds of concord errors, particularly subject-verb concord errors. The findings also point to the fact that the most challenging category of concord from the point of view the respondents is subject-verb concord. It also discloses that negative attitude of students towards their personal study of English Language affects their performance negatively.

The way forward has been suggested in the concluding chapter and relates to the involvement of policy makers, syllabus designers, textbook writers, teachers of English, and students. It is the hope of the researcher that if the suggestions are implemented, students will eventually be able to make their sentences concordant.
DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own research, prepared by me under the supervision of Dr J. T. Agor and Dr J. A. N. Saanchi, both of the Department of Linguistics, University of Ghana. However, I am solely responsible for any blemishes that this work may contain.

Sources of information used in this work have been duly acknowledged.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God and my entire family, especially my mother, Madam
Selina Agyemang.
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I would like to express my profound gratitude to the Almighty God who endowed me with good health and wisdom to complete this work.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a concise historical background of the spread of English to Ghana, English in Ghana after independence to date, the falling standard of English in Ghana, the scope of study, research objectives, research questions, justification, theoretical framework and organization of the study.

1.1 THE SPREAD OF ENGLISH TO GHANA

It is widely known that English is the language most widely spoken and taught globally. Jenkins (2003:15) relates that the advent of colonialism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries resulted in the spread of the English Language to Africa and Asia. This spread brought about language contact situation and eventually the colonized countries had to adopt the language of the British colonists for better national and international communication. In the case of Ghana, the Portuguese and other Europeans arrived in the 1450s. After the arrival of these Portuguese, the first arrival of the British occurred in the 1550s. The British contact with Ghana, the then Gold Coast, was essentially trade contact. Sey (1973:4) reports that the initial intention behind the interaction between the British and the Gold Coasters, especially the Ga people of modern day Accra and the Fantans of modern day Central Region of Ghana, was purposely for trade. This interaction also resulted in borrowing which is one of the natural consequences of language contact situations. The indigenous traders borrowed some English lexical items such as teacher, tailor and lorry. One policy of the Europeans traders was to train the Gold Coasters as interpreters.

By the end of the 17th century, there was a scattered group of Ghanaians capable of interpreting between the European languages and a number of the indigenous languages. Sackey (1997:131) explains that the total picture of the English landscape throughout the colonial period up to 1957 can be drawn. Because the country had no single indigenous language which was the mother tongue of all, the language of government, law, education and social intercourse at all levels, it was relatively easy for English assisted by the colonial government, to penetrate various aspects of social life
and activity in varying degrees. By 1927, only four out of over forty (40) indigenous languages and dialects had been recommended for use in schools. These four were Twi, Ga, Fante and Ewe.

According to Sackey (1997:126), after the English Language had been spread to Ghana, the then Gold Coast by the British European traders in the 1550’s, the primary objective of the British was to trade with the indigenous traders. When the Wesleyan missionaries arrived in the Gold Coast in 1835, they taught their converts and their pupils mainly with English. They taught English through the Bible. Sey (1973:5) writes: The study of the Bible was actively encouraged, and Church attendance was obligatory for all schoolchildren. The Bible, even at the present, plays a major role in the pupils’ first acquaintance with the English Language. He is very often required to study Bible stories and memorize chunks of passages from both the Old and the New Testaments as part of his general education.

The Wesleyan Missionaries also taught their converts and pupils the English classical literature such as the works of Shakespeare, Milton and Tennyson. These Wesleyan missionaries were an English mission so they were greatly assisted by the colonial government. The Wesleyan missionary was very instrumental in the spread of the English Language in Cape Coast and Anomabu. Africans who preached had to do so through interpreters who spoke English to the congregation since the medium of instruction and preaching in Wesleyan schools and churches was the English Language.

According to Sackey (1997:126) there was the need for the indigenous people to study the English language and become fluent in it. For instance, during the governorship of Sir Charles McCarthy, English was chosen as a compulsory subject and only medium of instruction and of communication in schools. The main motive was to train interpreters who would facilitate the activities between the British and the Gold Coasters. According to Sackey (1997:126), “…grammatical knowledge of the English language as the most important agent of civilization” was among other things, one of the main recommendations of an Education Committee of the Privy Council of the colonial office in 1843. Smith (1929:42) cited in Sackey (1997:130) adds that English was seen as “…the road to knowledge and wealth” since it presented a greater job opportunity for
the Wesleyan students than their Basel compatriots whose schools encouraged the use of indigenous Gold Coast languages.

One process that was also used to accelerate the growth of the population of English speakers on the Gold Coast was the total immersion method. This process refers to the practice whereby some Africans were sent to Europe to acquire not just the language, but also the total culture of the speakers of the language. Apparently, some African children were sent to Britain to be educated. The Ghanaians who were thus immersed returned to assist the Europeans on the coast in their trading activities and the propagation of the English Language. Philip Quarcoo was one of those who were sent to Britain and he returned to Ghana as a missionary schoolmaster and catechist. According to Sey (1973:4), by the 18th century attempts were made to start school for Ghanaiian children, and by 1788 a school for twelve children had been established in Cape Coast.

According to Sey (1973:5), the British colonists built schools in the Cape Coast Castle known as Castle Schools. These schools were established to help in the teaching and learning of English. The syllabuses concentrated on Reading and Writing, both in English and on Arithmetic. Sey (1973:5) reports that the study of Geography, History and Grammar was optional, but the study of English Grammar was very popular. The popularity of the English Grammar was due to the fact that it was the hallmark of scholarship and the key to respectable and well-paid jobs.

During the colonial era, English was adopted as the official language and it became the language of government, law, formal education, newspapers, large-scale business transactions and in national radio and television broadcasts.

From the above discussion, it is deducible that the English Language was transported to Ghana in the 1550’s through trade contact, which the British won by marginalizing other European groups, Sackey (1997:126) as cited in Agor (2003). The processes of transmission were oral transmission, total immersion and formal classroom acquisition.
1.2 ENGLISH IN GHANA AFTER INDEPENDENCE

At the time of independence, Ghana had no single indigenous language, which could be adopted as a national language because of her linguistically heterogeneous state. English which was the language of the British colonists was employed as a lingua franca and subsequently gained official status and has remained the single most important language in Ghana.

Ghana uses English as a second language and its main source of acquisition is through the formal school system. English has remained the single most important language in Ghana because it plays a lot of important roles, especially in education and employment. It has remained a prerequisite for education and employment. Admission into any institution after senior high school (secondary school) such as Nurses Training Colleges, Teacher Training Colleges, Polytechnics or Universities requires a credit in English at GCE, ‘O’level, SSSCE or WASSCE. To qualify for any job in the civil or public sector of the country, one requires a pass or credit in English in GCE, ‘O’level, SSSCE or WASSCE.

During the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods, English has been taught as a subject ever since. For instance, from 1974 to 2002, a local Ghanaian language was used as a medium of instruction for the first three years of the primary schools, but English was the medium of instruction from Primary Four upwards. However, in May 2002, the medium of instruction at all levels of education was changed to English Language. The reasons that espoused an English only language policy in education were: to enable pupils to gain a high level of proficiency in English because all examinations are conducted in English, to allow free movement of pupils across linguistic areas because of the multi lingual nature of the nation and its classrooms, and to avoid the delay in introducing English to children.

In 2009, the 2002 Language Policy was changed. The current National Language Policy states that in the first three years of primary education, the Ghanaian language prevalent in the local area is to be used as the medium of instruction while English is studied as a subject. From Primary Four, English replaces the Ghanaian
Language as a medium of instruction, and the Ghanaian language is treated as just another subject on the time-table.

Furthermore, English is today the world’s most important language regarding education. It is the medium of a great deal of the world’s knowledge, especially in such areas as science and technology. This view is shared by Harry Mashabela (1975) cited in Crystal (1998:101):

Learning and using English will not only give us the much-needed unifying chord but will enable us to keep company with kings in the world of ideas and also make it possible for us to share the experiences of our own brothers in the world …

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There have been great concerns about the falling standard of English in Ghana. Sey (1973:11) writes, “There has been an urgent feeling among educationists that there is the need for research into the problems involved in the use of English in Africa …”

The study of English as a subject is intended to provide the language needs of students as they progress through all the levels of formal education. However, it seems that the study of the language is becoming increasingly difficult for students, especially those at the second cycle. Even though the English language is the official language in Ghana and teachers of English appear to be doing their best, each year the Chief Examiners’ Reports show a decline in the performance of candidates. The latest Chief Examiners’ reports (of 2011) contain such comments as: “…the poor performance of the majority of the candidates was attributed to their inability to express themselves well in the English Language”. It is obvious that even when candidates are not able to perform well in other subjects such as Social Studies, Mathematics, the blame is laid at the door of the English Language that the inadequacy of the English of many candidates resulted in their poor performance in those subjects.

The English syllabus for senior high school underlines the importance of English language in the curriculum. The English syllabus for senior high schools treats concord rules as one of the important topics in grammar. Since this topic is taught, if students are not able to apply the rules of concord correctly, they are punished and the
punishment affects their performance negatively. Students of Koforidua SECTECH perform poorly in English language examinations because of their inability to apply correctly the rules of concord in their writings. These students usually forget that the many parts of a sentence must work together to communicate their ideas clearly and effectively. Words within sentences should be arranged in an understanding pattern, and the words should have certain relationships with one another. In other words, these words must have agreement. It is against this background that the researcher holds the view that there is the need to study the concord errors students make and identify reasons accounting for those errors, and strategies that should be adopted to enhance their performance.

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

1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY

The study focuses on the application of English concord rules and, how students of Koforidua SECTECH apply these rules in their writings. The study concentrates on grammatical concord and the exceptions to the rule of grammatical concord namely, Notional concord and proximity concord. Also, the study deals with Determiner-Noun concord, Coordinated subject concord, Noun-Pronoun concord and verb-verb concord.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the thesis are to:

i. ascertain the actual concord errors in the students’ writings.

ii. identify the various factors responsible for the concord errors the students commit.

iii. find out the possible ways to enhance students’ performance in the area of English concord.
1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research seeks to find answers to the following questions:

i. What are the specific concord errors the students of Koforidua Sectech make?

ii. What factors account for the concord errors they make?

iii. What can be done to help students to overcome their English concord challenges?

1.7 JUSTIFICATIONS

Students’ writings are often littered with subject-verb agreement violations and these violations contribute to the poor performance of these students in the English language. The West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) final marking scheme for English Language Paper 1 allocates the following marks for these aspects:

- Content: 10 marks
- Organisation: 10 marks
- Expression: 20 marks
- Mechanical Accuracy: 10 marks
- Total: 50 marks

Students are able to score good marks for Content, Organisation and Expression. Unfortunately, for mechanical accuracy which includes concord errors, the students often score zero. In fact, errors in concord contribute to students’ low performance in English language examinations. It is hoped that if the recommendations given in this thesis are implemented, students will overcome their concord challenges and perform better in English language examinations.

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is conducted using the Error Analysis Theory. Rustipa (2011:18) defines Error Analysis as “the study of kind and quantity of error that occurs, particularly in the field of applied linguistics.” Error Analysis is a tool to the study of
second language learners’ errors in order to help them overcome these errors. Error Analysis is not a tool of judgment, but a tool for helping.

Error Analysts distinguish between mistakes and errors. Corder in Larsen et al (1992:59) claim that a mistake is a random performance slip caused by fatigue, excitement or nervousness, and therefore can be readily self-corrected. Mistakes are unsystematic, therefore, Error Analysts ignore them in the study of errors. Larsen et al (1992:59) add that an error is a noticeable deviation, reflecting the competence of the learner. It is a systematic deviation made by the learner who has not yet mastered the rules of the target language. The learner cannot self correct an error because it is a product reflective of his or her current stage of L2 development, or underlying competence.

Corder (1967) cited in Ellis (1994:48) notes that errors could be significant in three ways: firstly, they provide the teacher with information about how much the learner had learnt. Secondly, they provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learnt and lastly they serve as devices by which the learner discovers the rules of the target language. Whereas the first significance reflects the traditional role of Error Analysis, the second provides a new role that is of primary interest to the second language research because it could shed light on the third. Corder (1974) created five main procedures to analysing errors:

i. Collection of a sample of learner language

This step is concerned with what samples of learner language to use for the analysis and how to collect these samples. Corder (1974) cited in Ellis (1994:49) identifies three broad types of the sample. These are a massive sample, a specific sample and an incidental sample. A massive sample involves collecting several samples of language use from a large number of learners in order to compile a comprehensive list of error, representative of the entire population. A specific sample consists of one sample of language use collected from a limited number of learners, while an incidental sample involves only one sample of language use produced by a single learner. The current researcher used the specific sample because the entire population of Koforidua Senior High Technical School was not used.
ii. Identification of errors.

Once the sample has been collected, the errors in the sample have to be identified. The errors are identified using the correct target form as the norm; therefore, the deviations from the norms are identified as the errors. An overt error is easy to identify because there is a clear deviation in form, as when a learner says:

*I has a book.*

A covert error occurs in utterances that are superficially well-formed but which do not mean what the learner intended them to mean.

Corder (1971a; 1974) cited in Ellis (1994: 52) proposes an elaborate procedure for identifying errors. This procedure acknowledges the importance of ‘interpretation’ and distinguishes three types: normal, authoritative and plausible. A normal interpretation occurs when the analyst is able to assign a meaning to an utterance based on the rules of the target language. An authoritative interpretation involves asking the learner (if available) to say what the utterance means and, by so doing, to make an “authoritative reconstruction”. A plausible interpretation can be obtained by referring to the context in which the utterance was produced or by translating the sentence literally into the learner’s L1.

iii. Description of errors

The description of learner errors involves a comparison of learner’s idiosyncratic utterances with a reconstruction of those utterances in the target language. Corder (1974) cited in Ellis (1994: 56) devises a framework for describing errors. He distinguishes three types of error according to their systematicity:

1. Presystematic errors occur when the learner is unaware of the existence of a particular rule in the target language. In other words, this type of error occurs when the learner cannot give any account of why a particular form is chosen.
2. Systematic errors occur when the learner has discovered a rule but it is the wrong one. Put differently, these errors occur when the learner is unable to correct the errors but can explain the mistaken rule used.
3 Post-systematic errors occur when the learner knows the correct target language rule but uses it inconsistently. Thus, these errors occur when the learner can explain the target learner rule that is normally used.

iv. Explanation of errors.

According to Ellis (1994: 57), explanation of errors is concerned with establishing the source of the error that is accounting for why it was made. In other words, the researcher finds out why the error was made. Richards (1971:206) distinguishes three different sources or causes of competence errors: Interlingual or Interference errors, Intralingual and Development errors.

Interlingual or Interference errors occur as a result of ‘the use of elements from one language while speaking another’. An example may be when an Akan learner of the L2 says *I am going to bank because the equivalent sentence in Twi Akwapem is ‘Merekɔ ‘bank’’

Intralingual errors “reflect the general characteristics of rule learning such as faulty generalization, incomplete application of rules and failure to learn conditions under which rules apply”. Intralingual errors include overgeneralization errors, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules and false concept hypothesized.

Intralingual errors could be developmental which shows a gap in knowledge of the rule. Thus, the learner attempts to build up hypotheses about the target language based on limited experience. It is established at the explanation stage of error analysis that errors can have more than one source: transfer, or intralingual or developmental.

v. Evaluation of errors.

This procedural step considers how serious errors are. Error evaluation is influenced by the context in which the error occurred. Thus, the same error may be evaluated very differently depending on who made it and where, when and how it was made.

The Error Analysis procedures will guide this work and will enable the researcher to explore and determine the extent to which concord errors affect students of
Koforidua Sectech negatively in order to suggest the appropriate measures to help them improve.

1.9 CHAPTER ORGANISATION

Chapter One is a general introduction, which consists of the background and other related information of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, and research questions, justification, scope of study and theoretical framework. Chapter Two deals with a review of related literature and methodology. Chapter Three comprises the analysis and discussion of students’ marked scripts and summary answers. Chapter Four deals with the grammatical analysis of the sentences in the objective test. Chapter Five, the last chapter will discuss the research findings, summary, suggestions and recommendations.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter defines the concept of concord and identifies the various types. The chapter reviews how concord has been treated in selected works such as Yankson (1994), Halliday (1994), Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), Leech and Svartvik (2002), Sekyi-Badioo (2003), Gogovi et al (2005), Downing and Locke (2006). The chapter also reviews the current senior high school syllabus and textbooks for English Language to find out what topic is taught at that level. The syllabus review will also help the researcher to analyse and interpret the data collected and to give recommendations to syllabus designers, textbook writers and teachers of English. Finally, the chapter presents a review of some previous works on concord.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF CONCORD IN ENGLISH

Various authors have given different authoritative definitions of concord in Grammar. According to Crystal (1988:50), ‘concord or agreement is a way of showing that two grammatical units have a certain feature in common. Thus, if the subject is singular the verb must also be singular. Examples:

i. My brother has a beautiful daughter.
   a. Singular subject Singular verb.

ii. My brothers have nice cars.
   b. Plural subject Plural verb

Crystal (1988:50) holds the view that the most important is the third person rule for verbs in the present tense, which states that singular subjects take singular verbs.

Francis (1956:330) defines concord as “the complementary distribution of linguistic forms having the same syntactic functions in systematic correction with the other formally distinct forms with which they are syntactically linked”.

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Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:176), define *concord* as “the relationship that exists between two grammatical elements such that if one contains a particular feature, the other must also have that feature”. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:176) are of the view that “the most important type of concord in English is concord of number between subject and verb”. Quirk et al (1985:755) define *concord* as “the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (e.g. plurality) that accords with a displayed (or semantically implicit) feature in the other”.

Afolayan and Newman (1983:126) as cited in Arthur (2009:12), draw attention to the fact that the term concord is used to describe the relationship between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence. Mark and Kirsten (2011:46) explain that *concord* or *agreement* occurs when one element in a sentence takes the morphosyntactic features of another element. Morphosyntactic involves both morphology and syntax.

All the definitions cited above imply that if a grammatical unit possesses a feature, for example, a plural noun, that plurality feature of the noun should be matched correctly with the verb.

### 2.2 THE SENTENCE AND ELEMENTS OF THE CLAUSE

Since concord deals with the relationship between grammatical units, it is appropriate to discuss the sentence and elements of the clause.

#### 2.2.1 The Simple Sentence

Winterowd and Murray (1988:444) define a sentence as “a group of words that expresses a complete thought”. They exemplify:

i. Played basketball until dark.

ii. We played basketball until dark.

The first example expresses an incomplete thought while the second expresses a complete thought. Therefore, the first example is a fragment and the second is a sentence. A fragment is a group of words that does not have a complete thought. Sentences are made up of clauses. A sentence may consist of one, or more than one clause. Sentences containing just one clause are called *simple* and sentences containing
more than one clause may be compound or complex sentences depending on the type of conjunction used.

Leech and Svartvik (2002:275) explain that two simple sentences may be joined into a compound or a complex sentence either by coordination or subordination.

By coordination, a coordinator such as ‘and’, ‘but’ or ‘or’ is used as in:

*Joana heard an explosion. (simple)*
*She phoned the police. (simple)*

*Joana heard an explosion and she phoned the Police (compound).*

By subordination, subordinating conjunctions such as *when, while, so, as, yet, although or though* is used. By subordination, one clause is made a main clause and the other, a sub-clause. For example, the two simple sentences above can be:

*When Joana heard the explosion, she phoned the Police.*

The simple sentence is more appropriate for the purpose of our study. The simple sentence is also used to refer to a clause that is the independent. The clause or the simple sentence syntactically has two basic parts: a subject and a predicate. For example:

*Vitamins are nutrients.*

Subject       Predicate

According to Boadi and Forson (2014:17), the relations between the subject and the predicate are that:

i. The subject precedes the predicate.
ii. The subject stands for a person or something.
iii. What is to be said later about the subject is contained in the predicate.

The predicate, on the other hand, comprises a verb and sometimes other words such as adverbs, complement (adjectives, adverbs, and nouns) and objects.
Sekyi-Baidoo (2003:488) identifies three things the predicate says about the subject.

1. The predicate tells of the being of the subject. The verb used here is usually a form of *BE* and such a verb as *become*. Examples:
   i. Mic *is a student*.
   ii. The weather *became cloudy*.

2. It tells of the state of the subject. Examples:
   i. Evelyn *seemed happy*.
   ii. The food *appears too cold to eat*.

3. It tells of the action associated with the subject. Example:
   i. John *plays chess*.
   ii. Elsa *spent the summer in London*.

### 2.2.2 Clause Elements and Patterns

A clause can be analysed into five different types of clause elements. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) and Leech and Svartvik (2002) all arrive at these five elements. The five different types are: subject (S), verb (V), object (O), complement (C) and Adverbial (A).

#### 2.2.2.1. The Subject (S)

Halliday (1994:32) explains that the subject of a sentence is usually called the doer, but not all subjects are *doers*. He uses the logical interpretation which attributes the function of the subject as the doer of an action. It is made up of a noun or pronoun about which the rest of the sentence speaks. Halliday (1994:32) describes the traditional definition of the term subject which is based on the grammars of Ancient Greek and Rome as *something which does not give a definitive account of what the role of the subject means*.

According to Halliday (1994:32), this traditional definition of subject is not conclusive enough because it is not always the case that a clause will have one element. The shortfall in the traditional definition resulted in various interpretations which attribute different functions to the subject.
The various interpretations of the subject can be summarized as follows:

i. that which is the concern of the message.

ii. that of which something is being predicated (that is, on which rests the truth of argument).

iii. the doer of an action.

Halliday (1994:32) gives an example of a sentence in which the subject embraces all the above three different meanings at one and same time: The duke gave my aunt this teapot. The subject The duke represents the person with whom the message is concerned; the truth, or falsehood of the statement is vested in the subject The duke; and he is the doer of the action. In other words, he is represented as having performed the action of giving.

Halliday (1994:32) writes that grammarians of the day recognized that the three functions were distinct; there was a renewal of interest in grammatical theory. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the terms that came to be used were psychological subject, grammatical subject and logical subject.

The psychological subject means “that which is the concern of the message”. Halliday (1994:32) explains that subject is labeled as psychological because it is what the speaker has in his mind to start the clause with.

The grammatical subject means “that which something is predicated”. According to Halliday (1994:33) it is grammatical because at the time the construction of subject and predicate was thought of as a purely formal grammatical relationship; it was seen to determine various other grammatical features, such as the case of the noun or pronoun that was functioning as subject and its agreement (concord) of person and number with the verb, but the subject was not thought to express any particular meaning.

Lastly, Halliday (1994:33) further explains that logical subject means doer of the action. The subject was labeled logical because of the sense this term had had from the seventeenth century that of “having to do with relations” between things as opposed to grammatical relations’, which were relations between symbols.

Halliday (1994:33) talks about ‘Theme’, ‘subject’ and ‘Actor’. He replaces these three labels with the earlier labels as follows:
Psychological subject – Theme  
Grammatical subject – Subject  
Logical Subject – Actor

When we apply these labels to the passive construction, we get:
The teapot my aunt was given by the duke.
Theme subject Actor

According to Halliday (1994:33) the labels ‘theme’, ‘subject’ and ‘Actor’ were formed based on meaning or function. Thus, the meaning of one element depends on the other elements of the structure; that is to say, the elements do not work independently.

Furthermore, Leech and Svartvik (2002:39) discuss the subject. According to them, the subject of a clause is generally a noun phrase: either a full noun phrase, a name or a pronoun. For example,

i. The secretary will be late for the meeting.
   a. subject (a noun phrase)

ii. Jane will be late for the meeting.
   a. subject (a name)

iii. She will be late for the meeting.
   a. subject (a pronoun)

The subject can also be a non-finite clause. For example,

Playing football paid him a lot more than working in a factory.

The subject can also be a finite nominal clause. For example,

That there are dangers to be dealt with is inevitable.

Leech and Svartvik (2002:39) identify four main functions of the subject and all the four are relevant to this study. They are:

i. The subject normally occurs before the verb in statements.
   a. For example, They have had some lunch.
   b. However, in questions, the subject occurs immediately after the operator.
   c. For example, Have they had any lunch?

ii. The subject has number and person concord with the finite verb:
Examples,  a. *The teacher* is leaving.

a. *I am* learning.
b. With modal auxiliaries, there is no difference in the form of the verb.
   Examples,
c. *I* must leave.
d. *The teacher* must leave.

iii. The most typical function of a subject is to denote the actor, that is the person, event etc. Causing the happening denotes by the verb:
   a. *Joan* drove Joe to the airport.

iv. When an active sentence is transformed into a passive sentence, the subject of the active sentence becomes the agent of the passive. The agent is introduced in by a phrase, but the agent need not be expected:
   a. *Everybody* rejected the proposal. (Active)
   b. *The proposal* was rejected (by everybody). (Passive)

Downing and Locke (2006:42) also discuss the semantic, cognitive and syntactic features of the subject before they look at concord. Semantically and cognitively, the subject refers to the primary participant in the clause of which something is predicated. It is the agent of the finite clause. Syntactically, the subject must be present in declarative and interrogative clauses, but it may be omitted in the imperative clause. When two or more conjoined clauses have the same subject, the first subject is used and the subsequent subject can be ellipted. Downing and Locke exemplify:

He came in, *sat down* and *took* out a cigarette.

In the example above, the subject, *He* is the same as one controlling *sat* and *took* in the two subsequent clauses; it is ellipted to avoid unnecessary repetition.

Downing and Locke (2006:40-43) further explain that subjects determine concord of number (singular or plural) and person (1st, 2nd or 3rd) with the verb. Concord is manifested only in those verb forms that show inflectional contrast. Examples:

i. *The doctor / He / She / has diagnosed the patient.*

ii. *The doctors/ I / You / We/ They/ have diagnosed the patient.*
iii. Where is my credit Card? Where are my credit cards?

Subjects also determine number, person and gender concord with subject complement and of reflexive pronouns. For example:

i. Jean and Bill are my friends. (Subject complement)

ii. He wounded himself. (Reflexive pronoun)

iii. Why don’t you give yourself a treat? (Direct Object)

According to Downing and Locke (2006:44) the subject can be realized as a nominal group, dummy it, unstressed there, prepositional phrases and embedded clause. The table below illustrates and exemplifies these realizations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>TYPES</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Nominal Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>A noun</td>
<td>Joyce went home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii.</td>
<td>A pronoun</td>
<td>They ate the food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii.</td>
<td>A Noun Phrase</td>
<td>The boys stole the watch.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Dummy it (This is a non-referential or semantically empty use of the pronoun it.)</td>
<td>It is nearly four o’clock.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Unstressed there is used to introduce Existential sentences.</td>
<td>There is a pupil in the classroom. There are students in the classroom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prepositional Phrase</td>
<td>By plane costs more than by train. Near the stream lies the treasure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **5.** | Adverbial Group | *Now* is the time.  
*Here* is peaceful enough for prayers. |
| **6.** | Embedded clauses. There are two types: *that* clauses and *wh-*clauses. | *That he is a thief* is unbelievable.  
*What he said* puzzle me. |
| **7.** | A Non-finite Clause  
This takes three forms:  
a. *Wh*+To+infinitive  
b. *To*+ infinitive  
c. *V*+ -ing | *Where* to go remains uncertain.  
*How* to go is even more difficult.  
*To err* is human.  
*To forgive* is divine.  
*Teaching Grammar* can be interesting.  
*Going to school every day* can be very boring. |

### 2.2.2.2 The Verb (V)

The verb is an essential part of the sentence. Clark et al (2001:80) describe a verb as the *motor* of a sentence. It is the *motor* because it describes a subject’s action, conditions or state of being.

A verb is also the core of the sentence because it conveys the action or movement that sparks a sentence and brings it into life. Bauer et al (1982) state “A verb is a word that expresses time while showing an action, a condition, or the fact that something exists”.

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Quirk et al (1985:50) describe the verb element as the “most central” element in the clause structure because of four main reasons. The first reason is that the verb normally occupies the medial position rather than the initial or final. Secondly, it is normally obligatory. That is to say, every sentence must have a verb because the verb is the foundation word of a sentence. Thirdly, it cannot normally be moved to a different position in the clause structure and finally, it helps to determine the other elements that must occur in the clause.

Leech and Svartvik (2003:404) explain that linking verbs do not show action. All linking verbs can be classified as intransitive. Leech and Svartvik (2003:404) identify two types of linking verbs: current linking verbs and resulting linking verbs.

Current linking verbs are like be in that they indicate a state. They include appear, feel, look, remain, stay, sound, taste and seem. Example:

Mr. Brown always appears calm and collected.

Resulting linking verbs indicate that the role of the verb complement is a result of the event or process described in the verb. They include become, get, feel, turn and grow. Example:

We are all going to grow old.

The most commonly used linking verb in English is be (am, is, are, was, were, been, being, be). Examples:

1. Sorry, I am late.
2. Your answer is wrong.

Auxiliary (helping) verbs help the main verbs express an action or a state of being. There are four major types of auxiliary verbs in English. They are: the modal auxiliary verbs (shall, should may, would, will, must, can etc.), be and its inflections (being, be, is, was, are, were, been), Have and its inflections (have, has, had) and Do and its inflections (do, does, did).

According to Palmer (1965:13-14), the verb be alone in the language has a special form for the first person singular of the present tense am. The verb be alone has two distinct past forms was and were. These can, in fact, be regarded as singular and plural respectively, since the first is found with the pronoun I as well as the pronouns he,
she, it, and singular nouns. The other is found only with plural nouns and some plural
pronouns with the exception of the singular second person pronoun you.

Four main features can help identify verbs. In other words, a verb must have at
least one of these features. The four features are:

1. Verbs have tense. Downing and Locke (2006:352) define tense as “the
grammatical expression of the location of events in time”. Thus, tense is the time
expressed by a verb. Downing and Locke (2006:353) state that “English has two tenses:
the present and the past as in goes/went, respectively” Palmer (1965:13) also states that
all verbs of the language with the exception of the modal auxiliaries (may, shall, can,
ought to, dare, need) have two distinct presents tense forms: the –s form and the simple
form. The –s form is used with the pronouns he, she, it and a noun phrase whose
headword is singular. The simple form is used with all other pronouns, I, you, we and
they and with noun phrase whose headword is plural.

English has no verbal inflection to make a future tense. The forms ‘shall
and will’ are not verbal inflections but are attached to pronouns, not to the verb root (I’ll
wait outside). Examples:

i. They walk to school in the morning. (Present tense)

ii. They walked to school yesterday. (Past tense)

iii. Susie will be twenty next week. (Future time)

2. Verbs have singular or plural forms. Whether a verb is singular or plural
depends on the subject of the sentence. When the subject is singular (third person), the
ending -s or -es is added to the bare infinitive form of the verb. For example, the verbs
take and do are in the bare infinitive forms, therefore take becomes takes and do
becomes does. When the subject is plural or first person or second person, the present
tense form is used. For example,

i. They study hard. (Plural)

ii. I study hard. (First person)

iii. You study hard. (Second person)

Helping verbs apart from the modals may also be singular or plural.

Examples:

i. Joan has seen the movie. (Singular)
ii. We *have* seen the movie. (Plural)

### 2.2.2.3 The object (O)

The object receives the action of the verb. Agor (2003:31) refers to the object as “the participant that appears after an action in the clause”. For example:

Kofi *killed* the *snake.*

The object of the verb *killed* is *the snake.* The object *the snake* occurs after a transitive verb *killed.*

A transitive verb is a verb which takes an object to make the structure complete. Examples:

i. The man *pulled* the key.

ii. The python *swallowed* the goats.

The objects *the key* and *the goats* are direct objects.

One test that can help one decide that the verbs *pulled* and *swallowed* are transitive verbs and *the key* and *the goats* are direct objects is to transform the sentences into passive forms as in (iii) and (iv) respectively:

iii. The key *was pulled* by the man.

iv. The goat *was swallowed* by the python.

In the two sentences above, the direct objects of the active sentences (i) and (ii) become the subjects of the passive sentences (iii) and (iv) respectively.

Leech and Svartvik (2002:345) discuss that some verbs require two objects in a sentence. A transitive verb that, in addition to an environment for a direct object, provides another for an indirect object is called a *di-transitive verb.* When the two objects are present, the indirect object precedes the direct object. Di-transitive verbs include *give, sell, tell, teach, offer, buy, lend, award* and *show.* Examples:

Mrs. Adu bought *her children* candies.

In example (1), the indirect object is *her children,* and direct object is *candies.* The indirect object is the recipient or the beneficiary of the action of the direct object. Sentences with di-transitive verbs also allow passive constructions. For example:

*My father gave me this watch.* (Active).

*This watch was given to me by my father.* (Passive)
However, there are verbs that do not require an object at all. These verbs are called intransitive. Because they do not require an object, they do not allow passive formation.

For example:

i. The man became a priest. (Active)

* A priest was become by the man. (Passive).

(The passive form is not acceptable or it is ungrammatical)

### 2.2.2.4 The complement (c)

The complement is an element that refers back to another element already mentioned in the clause. Agor (2003:33) defines the complement as “any noun, noun equivalent or adjective, which refers back to a subject or object and completes the meaning of a verb”. For example,

1. Kofi is a boy. (A noun)
2. His story is a strange one. (A noun equivalent)
3. Sam appears sad. (An adjective)

There are three main types of complement: **subject complement, object complement and adverbial complement**. According to Downing and Locke (2006:64), the subject complement completes the predicate after a copular verb by specifying an attribute of the subject or its identity. In other words, the subject complement is the obligatory constituent that follows a copular verb. For example:

1. Kris is a student.
2. She looks nice.
3. Frank is here.

In the examples (1) above, *a student* is the complement and it is referring back to the subject Kris. In the example (2), *nice* is the complement and it is referring back to the subject *She*. In the example (3), *here* is the complement and it is referring to the position or place that *Frank* is. The complement parts in the examples do not represent new participants as an object does, but completes the predicate by adding information about the subject referent. Because the subject differs from the object, a nominal group can
realize the subject complement and an adjectival group or adverbial as illustrated in the examples above.

One syntactic and semantic feature of the subject complement is that passivisation is impossible. No passivisation is possible because the verb used is copular. A copular verb predicts a meaning of being something, describing or identifying the subject referent. Another syntactic and semantic feature of the subject complement according to Downing and Locke is that “there is number agreement between the subject and its complement and gender agreement between the subject and pronoun at complement”.

For example,

1. *Yvonne* isn’t *herself* today.
2. *The students* are *boys*.

In the first example, there is gender agreement with reflexive pronoun *Yvonne* agrees with *herself*. In the second example, there is number agreement between *The students* (plural) and *boys* (plural). There are, however, exceptions to number agreement as in:

1. The twins are *the same height*.
2. Emma and Percy make *a good couple*.

Downing and Locke (2006:67) further explain that the object complement is the constituent that completes the predicate with an adjective group (Adj. G) or a nominal noun group (NG) following the direct object. For example:

1. You are making me sad.
2. His friends call him ‘Spider’.

Sad in the first example does not refer back to *You* which is the subject but to *me*. The object *Spider* refers to *him* but not *his friends*.

Verbs that can specify or allow the complement of the object include *find, make, appoint, call, elect, leave, consider* and *choose*. The object complement is normally placed immediately after the direct object. Because of the presence the direct object in the clause, passivisation is possible. In the passive construction, the direct object becomes the subject. For example,

The class elected him the president. (active)
He was elected the president by the class (passive).

One important syntactic and semantic feature of object complement is that there is number agreement between the direct object and the nominal group realizing the object complement. For example,

*Poverty has made some citizens armed robbers/criminals.*

However, there is no number agreement between the direct object and the adjective group realizing the object complement as in:

*Poverty has made some workers corrupt.*

2.2.2.5 The Adverbial

The adverbial is one of the clause elements. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:207) explain that adverbials may be integrated to some extent into the structure of the clause or they may be peripheral to it. If integrated, they are termed ADJUNCTS. If peripheral, they are DISJUNCTS and CONJUNCTS.

Jackson (1990:151) explains that adjuncts are grammatical formulae which allow one to append things to a clause. He exemplifies:

*In the morning I had my breakfast in the corner of the hotel dining room.*

There are two adjuncts in the sentence: *In the morning* and *in the corner of the hotel dining room.* *In the morning* refers to or gives information about the whole of the rest of the sentence. For that reason, it is more loosely attached to the sentence than the second adverbial. It is therefore a SENTENCE ADJUNCT and can be placed at initial position or mid-position or end position, that is, ‘I had my breakfast in a corner of the hotel dining room in the morning.’ or ‘I had my breakfast in the morning in a corner of the hotel dining room.’ However, the second adverbial is less flexible in position. It is a PREDICATION ADJUNCT because it refers only to the predication of the sentence, *had my breakfast.* Predication adjuncts are closely related semantically to the predicate, are more fixed in position and usually if not always follow the verb they modify.

Adverbials, particularly adjuncts are generally mobile, that is, they are capable of occurring in more than one position in the clause. For example:

1. *Hastily,* she ate the food.
2. *He hastily* ate the food.
3. He ate the food *hastily*.

Adverbials such as disjuncts are generally optional, that is they may be added to or removed from a sentence without affecting it acceptability. Disjuncts are grammatical formulaic ways of disassociating ideas. There are style disjuncts and attitudinal disjuncts. Style disjuncts are formulae for separating what the speaker is saying from what has come before. They are markers of stylistic changes.

For example: *To be frank*, I don’t approve of her.

In the sentence above, style disjuncts make this change by having the speaker comment on the act of speaking: he’s frank.

Attitudinal Disjuncts comment on the content of clause to which they attached almost always in declarative sentences.

Examples

- *Fortunately*, John returned the book yesterday.
- *Hopefully*, you will learn to admire the beauty of a grammar.
- He is *wisely* staying at home today.
- *Personally*, I do not approve of her.

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:246) define Conjuncts as follows:

Conjuncts are sentence adverbials that indicate logical relationships between sentences or between clauses. They are mainly adverbs (e.g. therefore, however, nevertheless, moreover, yet) or prepositional phrases (e.g. on the other hand, in consequence, in conclusion).

Examples:

- He is poor, *yet* he is satisfied with his situation. (Conjunct)
- John plays the guitar, his sister, *moreover*, plays the piano. (Conjunct)

### 2.3. CLAUSE PATTERNS

The clause elements discussed above can be put together in a sentence to get the pattern of that sentence or clause. The concept of clause pattern refers to the nature of the relationship between the subject, the verb and the other elements of the sentence.
Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:166) identify seven basic clause patterns. These patterns are:

1. **The S. V Pattern**: This simple pattern describes the relationship between the subject and the verb, that is, what the subject does. The verbs used in this pattern are usually intransitive. Examples:
   
   Subject   Verb
   i. Language changes.  
   ii. Birds fly.

2. **The SVO Pattern**: This pattern shows a subject (s), its action (V) and that which made the action possible, the object (O).

   Examples:
   
   S         V     O
   i. Jesus   demonstrated   love.  
   ii. Nartey   tells    jests.

   This pattern makes it possible to change and active clause into a passive clause as in: *Love was demonstrated by Jesus.*

3. **The SVOO Pattern**: There are two objects in this pattern – the direct and indirect objects. The subject (s) performs an action (V), which is made possible because it involves the direct object (od) and the indirect object (Oi) benefits or

   S          V   O (Indirect)  O (Direct)
   i. Yvonne  told   the children   a beautiful story.  
   ii. Selina  cooked  the labourers   some food.

   This pattern also allows passivisation as in:

   *The children were told a beautiful story by Yvonne.*

4. **The SVOA Pattern**: This pattern is simply the SVO where the action involved is described further by an adverbial. Saanchi (2006:85) explains that the adverbial is an optional element in clause structure because it is normally not considered in the basic
patterns, for it can be added to all the clause types. For instance, one may add an
adverbial to the SV, SVO and SVOO one has been given. Examples:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
S & V & O & A \\
\text{i. Reggie} & \text{typed} & \text{the letter} & \text{on the computer.} \\
\text{ii. The farmer} & \text{mixed} & \text{the substances} & \text{carefully.}
\end{array}
\]

This pattern allows passivisation if object is used as in:

*The letter was typed on the computer by Reggie.*

An example of SVOOA: Selina cooked the labourers some food on the farm.

Saanchi(2006:85) , further explains, however, that if the object in the sentence is
followed by an adverbial complement, then the adverbial is obligatory but not optional.
It is obligatory because it is required for the sentence to be complete. For example,

*Regina put the book on the table.*

The adverbial complement *on the table* is needed to make the sentence complete.

5. **The SVOC Pattern:** This pattern shows a relationship involving subject (S)
which performs an action (V) on object (O). The effect of the action is on both the
object (O) and the complement (C). In this pattern, the complement does not refer back
to the subject, but to the object. The complement can be a noun, or an adjective which
describes or qualifies the object (O) in the light of the action (V) done to it by subject
(S).

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
S & V & O & C \\
\text{i. Raid insecticide} & \text{kills} & \text{bugs} & \text{dead.} \\
\text{(Adjective)} \\
\text{ii. Ghanaians} & \text{voted} & \text{John} & \text{President.} \\
\text{(Noun)}
\end{array}
\]

This pattern allows passivisation as in:

*Bugs are killed dead by Raid insecticide.*

6. **The S. V. C. Pattern:** In this pattern, the relation is between the subject, its
description, and a linking verb that links the subject and its description. The
complement is a noun, an adjective or an adverb that refers back to the subject. In other words, the complement throws more light on the nature of the subject. The two of them (subject and complement) refer to the same thing. They are co-referential. In this pattern, the subject is, thus, described or identified through the complement. Examples:

S     V     C
i. Bombs are dangerous (adjective).
ii. Mary is a nurse (noun).

Because a linking is used in the pattern, it is impossible to change the active clause into a passive voice.

7. **The SVA Pattern:** In this pattern, a subject, a verb and an adverb are used though in some context the adverbial is optional. The adverb tells more about the nature of the action of the verb.

Examples:

S     V     A
i. Funny Face danced beautifully.
ii. I went home.

Leech and Svartvik (2002) give the SVOV pattern. This pattern occurs with verbs that have an object plus a verb. For example:

The manager asked me *to work overtime*.

S     V     O     V

This pattern also allows passive construction as in:

*I was asked by the manager to work overtime.*

2.4 **TYPES OF CONCORD REVIEWED**

This section reviews the following categories of concord as features in Yankson (1994), Quirk and Greenbaum (2000) and Leech and Svartvik (2002). The categories are as follows:

A. Subject – Verb Agreement

1. Grammatical Concord

i. Concord of number
ii. Concord of person
iii. (Noun) pronoun concord
iv. Subject – Complement Concord
v. Subject – Object Concord.

2. Notional Concord

• Collective Nouns

3. Attraction or the principle of proximity

B. Determiner-Noun Concord
C. Concord with co-ordinated subjects
D. Inverted Subject-verb concord
E. Verb-verb concord
F. Concord with indefinite expression of amount.

2.4.1. Subject -Verb Concord

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

Examples:

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

Before one can decide whether the verb should be singular or plural, one must find the subject, decide whether the subject is singular or plural and then match the verb to the subject. To make verbs agree with their subjects, three principles may be applied. These are grammatical concord, notional concord or proximity concord

2.4.1.1. Grammatical Concord

The agreement of parts of a sentence (e.g. number, person and gender) that is required by the conventional rules of grammar. According to Leech and Svartvik (2002), grammatical concord means that certain grammatical items agree with each other. The following are classified as grammatical concord:
**Concord of Number**

This refers to singular and plural as in:

i. *The film* is interesting. (singular)

ii. The films are interesting. (plural)

Concord of number applies to the verb only when the verb is in the present tense with the exception of the verb *be*. For example:

She knows.

They know.

In the past tense, there is no concord variation as in:

She *knew*.

They *knew*.

*Be* differs from other verbs in having many forms:

*am, is, are (the present tense) and was, were (the past tense).*

The modal auxiliaries differ from other verbs in having only one form (must, can, will, could, would, may etc.): She *may* know.

They *may* know.

**Concord of Person**

It has three main forms when the verb *be* is used:

i. *I* am (first person)

ii. *He/she/it* is. (Third person).

iii. *We / You / They* are. (Plural)

Concord of person has only two forms in the present tense when main verbs are used:

He / She /It / Our friend *likes* cooking. (3rd Person Singular).

I / You / We / They / Our friends like cooking. (not 3rd person singular).

With concord of person, the modal auxiliaries have only one form as in:

I/We/You/He/She/Our teacher/Our teachers will come to school.

**Noun- Pronoun Concord**

A pronoun is often used to mean a word which substitutes for the noun. This meaning explains why the pronoun shares a lot in common with the noun in both syntactic and semantic properties. One important property of the English pronoun which should be discussed in relations to this study is the pronoun paradigms or systems. Boadi
and Forson (2014:60) discuss the four types of the pronoun paradigms. The four types are person, number, case and gender. All these paradigms can be found in nouns with the exception of person.

A. Person

Person is the most unique of the paradigms. The reason is that it is a paradigm with a function or meaning. According to Boadi and Forson (2014:60), the meaning or function of person is “the roles which are played by the actors in a speech situation”. A speech situation can be any situation in which at least two persons communicate with words or a conversation, a sermon, a debate or a quarrel. It can also be a piece of writing.

The person system or paradigm is divided into three: First person, Second person and Third person. First person refers to the speaker. The second person refers to the person addressed and it is sometimes called the hearer, addressee, or listener. The third person refers to a person other than the speaker or the person being addressed. Pronouns, which have person distinctions, are personal, possessive and reflective.

B. Number

The number paradigm consists of two terms: Singular Number and plural Number. According to Agor (2003:35), singular denotes one and plural denotes more than one. Personal, possessive, reflexive and demonstrative pronouns have singular and plural forms.

C. Gender

The term gender in grammatical analysis according to Aarts (2010:51) refers the contrast between male and female which are used when speakers are referring to human being of the male sex; the female sex, animals and things which are regarded in English culture as female. Nonetheless, grammatical concord usually has little to do with the distinction between male and female.
The English Gender system is a three-term paradigm in the pronoun. These are masculine, feminine and neuter or common.

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:102) explain that in 3rd person singular, the personal, reflective and possessive pronoun distinguish in gender between masculine (he/she/himself/his), feminine (she / her / herself / hers) and non-person (it/itself/its). However, third person singular of personal pronouns, relative and interrogative pronouns such as who, which, that, how express natural gender distinctions.

D. Case
Case is one of the systems of the pronoun. It is a three-term paradigm.

The terms case:
1. The subjective or nominative case.
2. The objective or accusative case.
3. The possessive or genitive case.

The pronouns that form the subjective case include the following: I, you, he, she, it, we, they, and who. Pronouns that form the objective case include me, you, him, her, it, us, them, and who( m). Pronouns of the possessive case include mine, yours, his, her, theirs, whose and ours.

All these paradigms will help us understand pronoun concord better. Pronoun concord refers to the relationship in which pronouns are made to agree in both number and gender with the words which they refer. Examples:

i. He was prepared with his homework.
ii. Aku lost her job last year.

Subject-Complement-Verb Concord

This type of concord exists between the subject and its complement when the complement is a noun structure. However, if the complement is not a noun structure, there is no concord relation between them. Example:

Phil is a priest.

The subject Phil is singular and the complement a priest is singular.

These girls are beautiful.
The subject *These girls* is the plural and *beautiful* is the complement. Since *beautiful* is an adjective, there is no concord of number relation between the subject and the complement. Adjectives do not show number (singular and plural).

**Subject - Object Concord**

This category refers to the agreement that exists between the subject and the object in terms of **number**, **person** and **gender**. Examples:

a. *She* shoots *herself* in the head.

b. *They* should give *them* another chance.

### 2.4.1.2 Notional Concord

Quirk and Greebaum (2000:176) explain notional concord as “agreement of verb with subject according to the *idea* of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for that”. For example:

The government *have* broken all *their* promises. (BrE)

In the example above, *The government* is treated as plural and therefore takes the plural verb *have* and *their*.

They point out that notional concord is one of the factors that interfere with subject-verb concord. It interferes with subject-verb concord because with subject-verb concord, a subject which is not definitely marked for plural requires a singular verb and a subject which is definitely marked for plural requires a plural verb. Examples:

*The door* is open. (Singular)

*The doors* are open. (Plural)

Singular nouns ending with the *–s* of the plural inflections are, however, apparent exceptions. These nouns include measles, billiards, mathematics, economics, linguistics, draughts and news. For example:

The news is bad today.

Notional concord is applied to collective nouns.
Collective Nouns

Collective nouns are nouns that denote groups of individual people, things or animals. Examples include crew, family, crowd, public, clergy, jury, congregation, team, orchestra, audience, committee and company. Collective nouns can be either singular or plural depending on the use of context. A collective noun is singular and agrees with a singular verb if the group is considered as a single unit or a single individual body. It is considered as plural, and agrees with a plural verb when the group it names is conceived as a collection of individuals or individual members of a group.

This implies that notional concord is at work when a singular noun is used as a collective noun and takes a plural verb or a plural pronoun, or a plural noun is considered a single entity and takes a singular verb. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:177) explain that in British English (BrE), collective nouns are notionally plural, but grammatically singular and obey notional concord whereas American English (AmE) usually has the singular. Example:

i. The committee has been set up so that in the future it will discuss such topics in advance. (AmE)
ii. Committees have been set up so that in the future they will discuss such topics in advance. (AmE)
iii. The committee wants to publicise its views. (BrE)
iv. The committee have been set up so that in the future they will discuss such topics in advance. (BrE)

In American English, if the collective noun is singular, it takes a singular verb, but if it is plural, a plural verb is used as in examples (i) and (ii) above. In British English, however, the collective noun can take a singular verb or a plural verb as illustrated (iii) and (iv) above.

2.4.1.3 The Principle of Proximity (Attraction)

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:176) explain the principle of proximity as “agreement of the verb with whatever noun or pronoun closely precedes it, sometimes in preference to agreement with the headword of the subject”. In other words, this principle is the practice of relying on the noun or pronoun that is closest to the verb to determine whether the verb is singular or plural.
Leech and Svartvik (2002:275) term this principle *attraction* because the last noun attracts a certain form in the verb and upsets the rule of grammatical concord. Examples:

1. A large number of people have asked her to stand for reelection.
2. A variety of analytic methods have been used.

In the examples above, the grammatical heads of noun phrases (number and variety) are both singular and plural nouns (people and methods) in the *of phrase* modifying the head influence the form of the nearby verb.

The principle of proximity or attraction is applied when subjects that are connected by the correlative pairs differ in number and person. Thus, one subject is singular and the other is plural. Examples:

a. Either the teachers or the headmaster is going to the programme.
b. Either the headmaster or the teachers are going to the programme.
c. Either my father or I am attending the party.
d. Neither you, nor I, nor anyone else knows the answer.

The principle of proximity or attraction is also used in *cleft sentences*. Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:414) define a *cleft sentence* as “a special construction which gives both thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause”. A sentence is called *cleft* if it divides a single clause into two separate sections, each with its own verb. Most cleft sentence statements start with the pronoun *it* followed by the verb *be*, which in turn is followed by the element on which the focus falls. For example:

It is I who am the teacher.

In the cleft sentence above, the relative pronoun subject *who* has *I* as its antecedent so the verb *am* agrees with it.

In sentences which have two clauses, a main clause and a subordinate and the subordinate is a relative clause, the verb agrees with the antecedent of the relative pronoun. Example:

a. One of the *boys* who *sing* in the band *is* my cousin.
b. Mr. Antwi is one of the teachers who *are* hardworking.
2.4.2 Determiner-Noun Concord

This relates to the agreement that exists between a noun and its determiners in terms of numbers. Leech and Svartvik (2002:280) describe determiners as words which specify the range of reference of a noun by making it definite as in (the book), indefinite (a book), or by indicating quantity (many books). Determiners always precede the nouns they determine but they have different positions relative to one another.

Determiners in English include articles (a, an, the), demonstrators (this, that, these, those), possessives (my, our, your, his, her, its, their), cardinal numerals (one, two, three…), ordinal numerals (first, second, next, last). Examples:

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

2.4.3 Concord with Coordinated Subjects

Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), Leech and Svartvik (2002), and Yanskon (1994) discuss concord with coordinated or the compound subjects. The coordinated or the compound subject is the subject that has two or more subjects connected by and, or, nor, either…or or neither…nor.

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

1. When a subject consists of two or more nouns or noun phrases coordinated or joined by and, the verb is typically in the plural form as in:
   i. Kofi and Ama are my friends.
   ii. Monday and Thursday are very busy for me.

   In the above examples, the coordination is taken to be a reduction of two clauses:
   Kofi is my friend and Ama is my friend.
   Monday is very busy for me and Thursday is very busy for me.

2. When coordinated noun phrases or nouns refer to the same person or thing, a singular verb is used as in:
i. Gari and beans is my favourite meal.

ii. The hammer and the sickle was flying from the flagpole.

iii. My colleague and long-time friend has bought a car for me.

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

   Law and order are considered important in this election.

   If the two are seen as a single, complex issue, a singular verb is used as in:

   Law and order is an election issue.

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

   Both the judge’s fairness and impartiality were admired.

4. When two nouns or noun phrases are joined by or the correlative pair: either...or, or neither...nor, the general rule is that the number of verb is determined by the number of the last noun phrase. This is the factor of attraction or proximity as discussed earlier in this study.

   Leech and Svartvik (2002:276) suggest that to avoid such concord problems involving the principle of proximity or attraction, it is possible to use a modal auxiliary verb that has the same form in the singular and the plural. For example:

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

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

   Examples:

   a. The headmaster as well as the teacher requires patience.
b. Several representatives of the Board, including the chair, have visited the region in the past year.

2.4.4 Inverted Subject-Verb Concord

Downing and Locke (2006:44) explain that this type of concord involves sentence whose subjects are interrogative pronoun, the adverbial ‘here’, or the unstressed existential ‘there’. Interrogative pronouns include what, which, who, whose. If an interrogative pronoun, the adverbial ‘here’ or the unstressed existential ‘there’ is used as subject of verb of a sentence, it is the noun phrase that follows the verb that acts as the subject. Therefore, if the noun or the noun phrase that follows is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice versa. Example:

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

2.4.5 Verb-Verb Concord

This refers to the agreement between the verb in the first clause of a sentence and a subsequent verb or verbs in the second clause. For example;

i. The robber raped the young girl and killed her.
ii. Obed took his bath before he slept.

2.4.6 Concord with Indefinite Expressions of Amount (Quantifiers)

Greenbaum (2000:179) and Leech and Svartvik (2002:276) are of the view that indefinite expressions of amount often cause concord problems. Most of the indefinite expressions are indefinite pronouns. These pronouns usually end in -body and – one. They include everyone, everybody, none of, every, anybody, nobody, anyone, somebody, someone, no one and each. Other examples of indefinite expressions of amount are any, no and none, some, several, few, all, many, more and most.
The following basic concord rules are followed:

I. The indefinite pronouns such as every, each, everybody, everyone, anybody, anyone, no one, somebody, someone, generally take singular verbs. Examples:

   i. No one wants to die.
   ii. Somebody has taken my phone.
   iii. Everybody is important.

   Nevertheless, Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:182) state that since English has no sex-neutral third person singular pronoun, the plural pronoun they is often used informally in defiance of number concord, as a substitute for the indefinite pronoun ending in –body and –one.

   Examples:

   i. Everyone thinks they have the answer.
   ii. Has anybody bought their camera?
   iii. No one could have blamed themselves for that.

   They explain that in order to avoid the dilemma of whether to use the he or she form, a plural pronoun is used for the sake of convenience – In formal or traditional English, the tendency has been to use he when the sex is not stated:

   Everyone thinks he has the answer.

   Also, both masculine and feminine pronouns can be conjoined as in:

   Everyone thinks he or she has the answer.

II. Few, many, others and several always require plural verbs. Examples:

   i. Several of the houses were destroyed in the fire.
   ii. Few of the students are in the classroom.

III. Some of the indefinite pronouns can agree with either singular or plural verbs depending on the object of the prepositions used. These include all, any, more, some and most. Examples:

   a. Some of the food is spoilt.

   The object of preposition is a non-count noun (food) so the verb is singular.

   b. Some of the cars are expensive.
The object of the preposition is plural (cars) so the verb is plural (are).

c. No people of that name live here.
   [Plural count + plural verb]
d. No person of that name lives here.
   [Singular count + singular verb]
e. So far no money has been spent on repairs.
   [Mass noun + singular verb]

IV. With none of, grammatical concord insists that none is singular, but notional concord invites a plural verb. A singular verb is typical of written formal style, whereas a plural verb is the more natural choice in spoken informal English.

   Example:
   a. None of them is my friend. [Grammatical concord]
   b. None of the people there were more component than we were. [Notional]
   c. None of my colleagues have said anything about it. (Notional)

Grammatical concord is usually obeyed for more than:

   a. More than a thousand inhabitants have signed a petition.
   b. More than one person has protested against the proposal.

Although more than one person is notionally plural, a singular verb is preferred because (one) person operates as head of the singular noun phrase.

V. A number and the number behave differently. A number requires a plural verb because it means many, but the number requires a singular verb because it is taken as a unit. Examples:

   i. A number of politicians have said that the Prime Minister should resign at once.
   ii. The number of successful candidates is not very large.

2.5 A REVIEW OF THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL SYLLABUS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE

   English language is studied as a core subject at their Senior High level irrespective of students’ other programmes of study. The current syllabus for senior
high schools was published in September, 2010. It is a structural syllabus. Ferris and Hedgcock (2005:74) explain that a structural syllabus is a list of the basic structures and sentence patterns of English, arranged according to their order of presentation.

It is a syllabus in which grammatical structures form the central organizing feature. A structural syllabus proceeds from simple grammatical structure to more complex grammatical structure. An example might be something like: Present progressive -> Comparatives -> Simple past -> Past progressive. The main faults of structural syllabuses is that they tend to ignore meaning and a lot of useful language is neglected at the beginning because it is viewed as structurally too complex (If I were you, I would).

The general aims of studying English as a subject at the senior high school level included the following:

1. “To reinforce language skills and competencies acquired at the Junior High School level.
2. To improve the communicative competence of students and give them the confidence to communicate.
3. To raise students’ level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English.
4. To prepare students to function effectively on their own: in offices and other work situations and in tertiary institutions.
5. To enable all senior high school products to deal effectively with the accumulated knowledge of their chosen fields and be able to communicate such knowledge through speaking and writing in English”.

The S. H. S. syllabus for English treats certain topics inadequately. This may be a contributory factor of inadequate teaching and learning of those topics. Consequently, this factor affects the performance of students negatively. Concord, for instance, is one of the topics taught with such inadequacy. Concord, which has been one of the unfathomable topics for students, is given only one unit throughout the whole syllabus. This topic is treated under unit three, section three of year two (2). The topics CONCORD: Subject-Verb Agreement. Under specific objectives, it is stated that: “students will be able to:
1. match the appropriate verb form with its subject in number and person.

Again, under content, five rules on concord with examples are given as:

Subject-verb agreement involves matching the appropriate verb form with its subject. When the nouns used refer to the one and same person, the verb is singular. Example: His boss and friend works hard.

Singular subjects joined by or / nor takes singular verb. Examples:

Either my brother or my sister has arrived.

When a singular subject and plural subject are joined by “or / nor”, the verb agrees with the subject that is nearer the nor / or. Example:

Either the headmaster or the teachers are right.

A singular subject and a plural subject joined by with or no less than takes a singular verb. Example:

The boy with his parents is attending a seminar on human relations.

A collective noun can take either the singular or the plural verb. Example:

The team is / are on the field.

This is all that the whole syllabus presents on concord and it is apparent that it is inadequate. There is no systematic methodology that is suggested except that students in pairs and groups are expected to identify, analyse verbs in subject-verb agreement in given passages.

2.6 A REVIEW OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TEXTBOOKS

There are different types of textbooks used by the various senior high schools in Ghana. However, the one that is widely used and that is based on the syllabus for English Language is the New Gateway to English for Senior High Schools. There are book 1, 2 and 3. Concord is treated only in Book 2, unit 4, page 28-30.

In the book 2, only subject verb concord is scantily presented. Other types of concord are not treated. Aspects of subject-verb concord include selecting the correct form of the verb to match the type of subject, collective nouns and concord, indefinite pronouns and concord and the idiomatic uses of many a in concord.
2.7 A REVIEW OF PREVIOUS WORKS RELATED TO CONCORD

Various researchers such as Yankson (1994), Edu-Buandeh (1996), Agor (2003), Akrong, (2008), Arthur (2009), Annor (2011) have studied errors of students. Yankson (1994) conducted a study aimed at increasing an awareness of the enormity of concord problems and helping both students and teachers to overco these problems. The study was based on concord errors made by first year undergraduates of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka and University of Cape Coast in Ghana. Yankson is of the view that concord rule deviances reflect badly on the speaker’s personality. His study provides the needed scientific empirical data that are reliable to help English language teachers at all levels in West Africa who seem to be operating in the dark, over the years.

Yankson analyses the errors students’ make and classifies them into six categories namely:

2.7.1 Omission of the /-s/ factor

In English, all grammatical persons do not take an “-s” ending, except the third person singular. The inflection “-s” of the third person singular is indicative in the present tense. There is the tendency for students to drop the “-s” ending as a redundant feature. For example:

* The author give us reasons for investment in accessible regions.

“give” should be “gives”.

Yankson describes this error as intralingual and points out that this error is not traceable to mother tongue interference.

2.7.2 Subject-Verb Concord

Yankson groups subject- verb and concord errors into six categories. The rule for the formation of English subject-verb concord is that a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject, a plural verb. The six categories are a. Typical developmental errors.

b. Notional concord errors.
c. Proximity concord errors.
d. Memory Limitation Concord errors
e. Plural inflectional concord errors.
f. Inability to identify noun headword.

2.7.2.1 Typical Development Concord Errors

Yankson (1994:2) explains that these errors are committed as a result of the students’ inability to match a subject with the appropriate verb though the students know the guiding principle. For example, *Life have (has) not been smooth.*

2.7.2.2 Notional Concord Errors

Yankson (1994:3) states that notional concord is the agreement according to the notion or idea that the speaker or writer has and usually notional concord rules are applied to notions that are conceived as, collective nouns. These nouns can take either a singular verb or plural as in:

i. Our *family* is united on the issue. (Unit)

ii. Our *family* have arrived late. (Individuals)

Notional errors are committed when students choose certain nouns that are not collective nouns and use them as such. For example:

* The school have written to me.

*School* used in the sentence above is not a collective noun, but the student thinks it is and used it as such instead of considering it as a singular unit and applying the grammatical concord: *The school has written to me.*

2.7.2.3 Proximity Concord Errors

Yankson (1994:4) explains that this type of concord applies the rule that the verb agrees in number and person with the nearer subject when one of the two subjects joined together by “or”, “but” nor is singular but the other is plural. Examples:

i. Either the girl or the parents are to blame.

ii. Either the parents or the girl is to blame.
This type of concord sometimes confuses students; therefore, they make errors like the following Yankson (1994:4):

i. The reason for its fall in these areas are (is) not far-fetched.

ii. A long discussion on the way of the colonists take (takes) place.

In examples above, it is apparent that the students could not identify the headword or the subject of the two sentences. As a result, they ignorantly selected the noun closer to the verb as the subjects.

### 2.7.2.4 Memory Limitation Concord Errors

Yankson (1994:5) discusses memory limitation concord errors and explains memory limitation concord errors as the type of errors committed by students because of their inability to identify the headword of the noun phrase. He exemplifies:

*This set of underage students who don’t know the difference between good and bad make (makes) things difficult for the reader.*

He argues that because the sentence long, by the time the students finishes writing, he has forgotten the subject of the sentence – set – which should take the verb makes therefore the student writes “make”. The present researcher is of the view that the components of a noun phrase and other words that can function as the subject of a sentence should be properly taught in school. If enough time is spent on teaching the components of a noun phrase such as the headword and modifiers, students would be aware of the headword which will assist them in determining the appropriate corresponding verb.

### 2.7.2.5. Asystematic Errors

Yankson (1994:6) identifies asystematic errors as errors made by students because their inter language is characterised by inconsistencies. He makes the assumptions that such inconsistencies are signs that the second language learner is passing through a transitional phase in his or her language learning development and that as time goes on, he or she will, hopefully arrived at a system when he has acquired some ideas of concord through reading and interacting with others. He exemplifies:

*He refuses to return to school until his father promise (promises) to buy him a car.*
2.7.2.6. Plural Inflectional Concord Errors

Yankson (1994:7) points out that these errors have to do mainly with words borrowed into English from foreign source such as Greek. Examples include Mathematics, Physics and Aesthetics. For example:

Little emphasis were (was) placed on certificates.

In this example, the -s in the noun emphasis is mistaken for the plural inflection and accordingly, a plural verb is assigned.

Another work reviewed is an article by Edu-Buandoh (1997) entitled Error Patterns in the Written Essays of Senior Secondary Students. In her study, she takes a look at the pattern of errors prevalent among Senior Secondary Students in Ghana. She identified six categories of errors namely:

1. Spelling Errors
2. Concord errors
3. Prepositional Errors
4. Vocabulary and Expression Errors
5. Article Errors
6. Other Errors (these include incomplete sentences).

She sub-groups the concord errors from her corpus into three divisions:

i. Singular subject with plural verb.
ii. Plural subject with singular verb.
iii. Concord errors involving tense.

She reports,

In the sample of essays collected by the researchers, concord rule deviance was also high in frequency recurring errors in most of the schools.

Edu-Buandoh (1997) observes that the syllabus being used in the secondary schools is structurally based and the methods being adopted have not been quite suitable in rectifying the problem. Among her recommendations, is the request that, the 40
minutes allocated to grammar be increased on the school time-tables to effect adequate teaching and learning of English grammar rules and mechanics.

She also proposes that teachers of English should use the direct method together with the communicative approach of teaching and avoid vernacular translations of English words and expressions.

Agor (2003), who aims at investigating English concord problems in the writings of teacher trainees, identifies that the English studies teaching syllabus for Training Colleges in Ghana contain only lists of Grammar topics but the categories of concord to be taught in each year were not specified.

In his study, he also identifies some of the causes of the concord problems of training college students as negative attitude to the teaching of grammar in schools. Scope of concord topics taught in training colleges, reduction of the duration of course works from three to two years and limited duration of English teaching periods.

Furthermore, Akrong (2008) in his study entitled Correcting Students’ Concord Errors is more concerned about new strategies of teaching that have to be adopted to enhance the performance of students in Senior High Schools. He also recommended that pronouns should be taught better and properly in Ghanaian schools so that students can identify their subject and object forms and can relate the subject forms to the appropriate verbs.

Arthur (2009) looks at teaching concord at junior high schools. She looks at the various methods teachers of English use to teach subject-verb agreement in the junior high school. She found out that most of the teachers use the right methodologies; however, these teachers need to employ more techniques at the various stages of their lesson presentations for pupils to get better understanding of the topic. According to her, most pupils have difficulties in applying the rules of concord in their compositions, but then when it comes to objectives tests, they are able to select the correct form of the verb to match the correct subject. She asserts that:

As far as the requirements of the English syllabus is concerned, pupils at the basic levels clearly understand the three subject-verb rules required of them. (Arthur 2009:55)
She recommends that the Basic Education English Language syllabus should include more of the rules of concord.

In her study, *Concord Problems in Madina Two Junior High School*, Annor (2011), finds out that J.H.S. pupils have more problems relating subject-verb, especially proximity concord, and pronoun-antecedent concord. She adds that teachers find it difficult explaining the rules of these categories of concord for their pupils to understand. She explains that most teachers may not be quite familiar with the explanations behind the application of particular concord rules though they may be proficient in their use of these rules.

Annor (2011) infers as reported in the literature e.g. Agor (2003), that the inability of some teachers to adduce correct reasons for their answers may also be an indication of the carry-over effect of the not too encouraging performance in English concord among some teacher-trainees.

Annor (2011) suggests among other things that teachers should be given periodic training on English language, especially in terms of concord so that they can understand and appreciate the intricacies of this aspect of English grammar while improving their proficiency as well.

Regarding attitude of students towards the teaching of grammar and learning of the English language, Asinyor (2012) observes that students’ writing mechanisms are below standard because students do not usually study English, since they think English is automatically acquired but not learned. He proposes that students should be encouraged and made aware that English language is the vehicle to the prospects of the opportunities offered in their elective courses to them.

### 2.8 RESEARCH METHOD

#### 2.8.1 Introduction

This section presents the research method used to carry out the study. It discusses the research design, the data source and the participants, and the sampling techniques that were adopted. The chapter also talks about the data collection techniques, and the tools for data analysis method that were used in the study.
2.8.2 Research Design

Considering the nature of the research problem and purpose of this study, the descriptive research design was the most appropriate research method. According to Seliger and Shonamy (2001:124), a descriptive research design involves a collection of techniques to specify, delineate or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. This research design was selected because the researcher has a specific focus on certain aspects of errors students of Koforidua Senior High Technical School make in their writings.

2.8.3 Data Source and Participants

The general setting for the study is Koforidua Senior High Technical School in the Eastern Region. It a mixed school, but there are more male students than the female students. The school runs four main programmes namely: General Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics and E. Maths), Technical courses (Technical Drawing, Auto Mechanic, Applied Electricity, Electronics Metal Work, Wood Work, Building and Construction, Physics and E. Maths), General Arts (Government, Economics, Geography, Twi, Christian Religious Study and E. Maths) and Visual Art (Picture Making, Leader Works, General Knowledge in Art and Economics). Students study these courses alongside the core subjects, which are English Language, Social Studies, Integrated Science and Core Mathematics.

Specifically, the data for the study were obtained from students of the school. This means that the main source of data used was the primary data. By using the primary data, the specific concord errors students made were collected and analysed to enrich the research.

For this study, the population was made up of five hundred and forty-five students (545) final year students of Koforidua Senior High Technical School. This population comprised one hundred and ninety Technical students, one hundred and thirty-two General Science students, one hundred and seventy-five General Arts students and forty-eight Visual Art students.
2.8.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Sampling is a procedure of selecting a part of a population on which a research can be conducted. These samples are normally supposed to be selected in such a way that conclusions or inferences drawn from the study can be generalized for the entire population.

From the above, it could be seen that the total number of students ideally to be used in the study was five hundred and forty five (545). The formula that was developed by Yamane (1967:886) for calculating sample size was used. This formula provides a simplified formula to calculate sample sizes. The formula is produced below.

\[ n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \]

where

- \( n \) = is the required sample size.
- \( N \) = the population size
- \( e \) = Tolerable error (which in this study was pegged at 0.05).

The sample size was thus calculated as follows:

\[ n = \frac{545}{1+545(0.05)^2} \]

\[ n = \frac{545}{1+1.3625} \]

\[ n = \frac{545}{2.3625} \]

\[ n = 230.6878307 \]

\[ n = 230 \]

From the above, the ideal sample size taken was two hundred and thirty (230) students. Considering the fact that the population was made up of the sum from four (4) different categories of students with different populations, there was therefore the need that the sample taken from each category was taken with respect to the real size of the
category involved. Yamane (1967:886) defines tolerable error as the range in which the true value of the population is estimated to be. The four (4) categories were grouped into four (4) different strata. Proportional allocation was used in calculating the size that was supposed to be taken from each stratum. The formula that was used in calculating the sample, which was taken from each stratum, is presented below:

\[ n_h = \frac{N_h}{N} \times n \]

Where

- \( n_h \) = sample size of stratum h (that is the sample size for each programme)
- \( N \) = Total size of population
- \( n \) = Total sample size
- \( N_h \) = Population size of stratum h (population size of each programme)

The sample taken from each programme was calculated as follows:

Technical Students = \( \frac{190}{545} \times 230 \)

= 80

Gen. Sci. Students = \( \frac{132}{545} \times 230 \)

= 56

Gen. Arts Students = \( \frac{175}{545} \times 230 \)

= 74

Visual Art Students = \( \frac{48}{545} \times 230 \)

= 20

Simple random sampling was then used in selecting the respondents from the various categories. This sampling technique was used because it afforded all the
members under consideration the equal chance of being selected. The convenient sampling technique was used to select Koforidua Senior High Technical School because of time constraint and proximity.

2.8.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data for this research was collected using a structured questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions and other prompts for gathering information from respondents. The questionnaire of the study was made up of close-ended questions. Close-ended questions constituted the basis of the structured questions. The techniques used to in collecting the data included in-class essay test, summary test, objective test on concord, and personal interviews. The researcher assigned one month for the entire data collection exercise in an economical and systematic fashion.

2.8.5.1 In-class Essay Test

The students were given an in-class composition test. Each was required to select one question from five (5) essay questions given write an essay of about four hundred and fifty (450) words within fifty (50) minutes for marking. The length and time allocation were based on the requirement of the West Africa Examination Council. The in-class essay test was to give the students the opportunity to bring out their actual proficiency or competence with regard to their application of English concord rules. (See Appendix 1)

2.8.5.2 Summary Test

The students were engaged in a summary test. The researcher wanted to find out whether these students misapply English concord rules in their answers to summary questions. These students were given a summary passage and questions to answer within forty (40) minutes, the usual WAEC time allocation. (See Appendix 2)
2.8.5.3 **Objective Test on English Concord**

An objective test on concord was administered to the students to find out their knowledge about the rules of concord and how they apply these rules. It was to ascertain the specific challenges of these students. Twenty-five (25) questions were used in this test and the time allocation was thirty (30) minutes. (See Appendix 3)

2.8.5.4 **Personal Interviews**

Personal interviews were employed to get the reasons why students applied or misapplied the rules of concord. It was also through these informal interviews that the researcher gathered information about the attitude of students towards their personal use of English Language.

2.8.6 **Tools for Data Analysis**

Data from the completed questionnaire was checked for consistency. Microsoft Excel 2010 and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the software used for the statistical analysis of the errors committed under each category of concord errors. Microsoft Excel 2010 helped to compare the various degrees of errors committed. Frequency tables, pie charts and bar chats were used in presenting the data. The SPSS method was used because it was the best instrument to identify, compare, describe and reach a conclusion. The data was analysed in consonance with the set objectives of the study.

2.9 **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has looked at the concept of concord, types of concord and some related terms. It has also discussed the plenitude of literature on the rules of concord in the English language. The chapter reviewed some previous related works on concord errors. The chapter also discussed the research method used to carry out the study. The researcher used the descriptive research design, the data source and participants, sample and sampling techniques, the data collection techniques and the tools for data analysis.
CHAPTER THREE
DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

3.0 Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the analysis of data gathered from students’ marked essay scripts and their responses given to the summary test. These form part of the questionnaires administered to two hundred and thirty (230) students.

3.1 Response Rate

In all, 230 questionnaires were administered and retrieved. This indicates that the response rate was very high.

Table 3.1. Gender of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>84.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, 2014

Table 3.1 above shows that 195 (84.8%) of the respondents were male with the remaining 35 (15.2%) being female. This is because there were more male students than female students in the Koforidua Senior High Secondary Technical School.

Figure 3.1 shows the various programmes offered by the respondents. 80 respondents representing 35% were offering Technical subjects (courses), 56 representing 24% were offering General Science, 74 representing 32% were offering General Arts and 20 representing 9% were offering Visual Art.
3.2 Analysis of Concord Errors in Student’s Scripts

The Error Analysis theory of second language was used to analyse the data in this section. This approach to language analysis involves the collection of learner language, identification, description, explanation and evaluation of second language learners’ errors. All these steps were taken by the current researcher in order to discover the difficulties that the second language learners go through so that the needed assistance is offered them. The principal attention of the researcher when marking the students’ scripts was on concord errors though the students’ scripts were interspersed with other categories of errors. These other errors included wrong amalgamation and syllabification of words, spelling, tense and punctuation errors, non-subject sentence constructions and omission of other essential sentence elements like verbs, objects and complements. Out of the 230 students who wrote the in-class composition, 25 representing 11% did not make any concord errors. Hence, all the 205 scripts representing 89% were analysed.
Table 3.2 gives an indication of the categories of concord errors made by respondents. Questionnaires were designed to assess students in this line towards the realization of the research objectives.

Table 3.2  Categories of Concord Errors

| 1. Subject- Verb Concord Errors |
| 2. Determiner-Noun Concord Errors |
| 3. Coordinated Subject Concord Errors |
| 4. Noun-Pronoun Concord Errors |
| 5. Inverted subject Concord Errors |
| 6. Verb-Verb Concord Errors |
| 7. Constructions with more than One Concord Errors |

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

The table below shows the categories of concord and their frequencies of occurrence:
### Table 3.3

**Summary of Categories of Concord**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories Of Concord Errors</th>
<th>Number Of Times The Errors Occurred In 205 Scripts</th>
<th>Number Of Students Who Committed The Error</th>
<th>Number Of Scripts In Which The Deviation Occurred</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Subject-Verb Concord Errors</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Determiner-Noun Concord Errors</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Coordinated Subject-Verb Concord Errors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Noun-Pronoun Concord Errors</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Inverted Subject Concord Errors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Verb-Verb Concord Errors</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Constructions With More Than One Concord Errors</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.3 shows the number of times a particular concord error was committed by the respondents. Subject-verb concord recorded the highest frequency of errors. The least recorded frequencies were coordinated subject-verb concord errors and inverted subject-verb concord errors.
3.3 Categories of Errors in the Samples

This section presents verbatim structures containing concord errors present in the students’ scripts. These errors have been grouped into their respective categories. The areas of investigation have been emboldened.
3.3.1 Subject-Verb Concord Errors

1. The schools **lacks** most of the required amenities.
2. Students **tends** to flee from the villages to the cities to pursue proper studies.
3. Public secondary schools **is** unattractive to students because most of them lack some facilities that facilitate learning.
4. Also, this **attract** students to have interest in public schools.
5. When this **happen**, it does not attract students to attend public secondary schools.
6. And if a student **use** such a place as a classroom, how can the person concentrate or even achieve his or her aim in life?
7. The students **doesn’t** understand what they are **thought** in class.
8. **This** are all my **suggestions** which I think will help to make secondary schools in deprived communities more attractive to students.
9. **This** are some **practice** that I have **experience** about vacation classes.
10. Vacation classes **helps** students to understand what they have learnt.
11. First and foremost, vacation classes **is** very essential to students.
12. I know my opponent will say vacation classes **wastes** time or **spends** the time for relaxation of the brain.
13. There is a saying that those who don’t have anything doing, the **devil find** a job for them.
14. Even the **bible have** stated in Ephesians that children honour your parent, that you may live long.
15. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, my opponent mat state that the **brain need** to rest during vacation, but I disagree.
16. Teachers have a good **intension** about what they are doing, but some **students takes** this opportunity to do things that are not necessary.
17. So the **child need** some rest during vacation so that he or she can get a sound mind.
18. Vacation classes **helps** teachers to cover all the topics for students to pass their exams.
19. **Vacation classes encourages** teachers to teach the things and teachers extraordinary move faster than the normal days in school.

20. The **above-mentioned views shows** how important vacation classes are.

21. In my point of view, **these classes serves** as a source of good platform for both teachers and students.

22. **These classes motivates** the teachers as a whole.

23. **Vacation classes gives** students in-depth information about subjects and topics already taught.

24. **Vacation classes helps** students to be active and makes them remember all what they learnt during school days.

25. **Vacation classes makes** students learn more topics they have not treated at school.

26. **These helps** them to get more views and advice from them.

27. **Vacation classes brings** about socialization because teachers and students from different schools come together to share views and ideas.

28. This is because sometimes **most students comes** to school after vacation with a “null head”.

29. As we all no, **vacation classes starts** when schools are on breaks.

30. I will like to say that **vacation classes helps** students to learn cover more topics before school reopen’s.

31. **Vacation classes helps** students to make friends and by so doing when a **teacher teach** students something they do not understand they go to their friends and then to teach them what the **teacher have** already **toul**.

32. **Vacation classes is** one of the sources of leading children to bad behaviour’s. That is if you allow your child to go for vacation classes, if she is a girl, that is one opportunity for her to do whatever **she want**.

33. When the **child decide** to go for vacation classes, he/she will not get enough rest.

34. **Vacation classes, I will say is** not bad at all.

35. **This eventually reduce** the living standard of the family.

36. Mr. Chairman, **vacation classes does** not make students lazy.
37. **Vacation classes** is an organized optional classes for students who intend to study more topics not taught in class.

38. During vacation classes, **students makes** new friends and also learn how to socialize with other students from different schools.

39. When **student attend** vacation classes they get prepared for the next term.

40. **Vacation classes gives** the platform for students to **ingage** in immoral acts such as smoking and prostitution.

41. **Vacation classes was** formally good because students had the chance for extra tuition which contributed a lot to their education.

42. My opponent will argue that **vacation classes helps** students to cover up with topics that have not been treated in school.

43. **Vacation classes plays** important role in education of students, especially in the secondary institutions.

44. **Vacation classes has** now become a platform to showcase dressing and increase in immorality.

45. **This affirm** the saying, `Two heads are better than one’.

46. Mr. Chairman, the **cogent factors** I have mentioned **proves** that girls should be given equal educational opportunities as boys.

47. The girls give out their best as the boys and **this help** raise the academic level of the schools.

48. I **strongly speaks** against the motion that vacation classes should be abolished.

49. **Our mothers is** a great example of this saying.

50. He eats before **he ask** of the welfare of the children.

51. **Most men** are only interested in feeding and providing shelter for their wards, but **doesn’t** take into account the moral uprightness of their wards.

52. **Some teachers** in the deprived communities **decides** to attend classes always late.

53. **It also impact** knowledge to the young ones to prepare them for the future.
54. One thing is that every country’s future depend on the youth.

55. The computer laboratory do not contain enough computers therefore, students and teacher finds it difficult when it comes to the learning of Information and Communication Technology.

56. If you wants a better country then all these problems should be solved.

57. Most of our day-to-day activities depends on power supply.

58. No one fails to realize that most students of this generation attends vacation classes with the intention of showing off things they have.

59. Sometimes, activities scheduled in the school delays the teachers to cover all their subject topics.

60. Organising vacation classes help both teachers and students to cover up all the topics they are supposed to cover before the WASSCE.

61. The business of the people do not move on smoothly because of the poor security situation in that area.

62. The development of that area become less and this poses a lot of danger on the people.

63. When the security of a country is proper, it attract investors into the country.

64. Lack of these facilities make staying in these schools uneasy. This make the teaching and learning of the schools ineffective.

65. I am optimistic that when these plausible suggestions of mine is taken into consideration, students studying in public secondary schools in deprived areas will enjoy education.

66. I therefore wants to tell you three problems of schools in the deprived areas.

67. The problems schools in deprived areas are facing has become too much.

68. People who are unemployed creates a lot of problems in the country.

69. Road accident simply mean hazards or damages caused on road.

70. These dustbins has help a lot, but they are not enough.
71. I attend a school in a deprived area and **the school lack** well-equipped laboratories.

72. **Employment have** been a great challenge to graduates.

73. **The drivers who drive before driving does** not see things well and clearly, because their minds are controlled by alcohol.

74. **The lack of these social amenities make** the school boring.

75. A library is where students go and research in **other** to get a broad knowledge about what the **teachers has** being teaching in the classroom.

76. **These second-hand cars causes** road accidents.

77. **The country then face** problems in its agricultural production.

78. **People who are sent to study abroad refuses** to come back.

79. By the way, the **stuffs** I gathered about the goings-on in the beautiful city of Sidney **has** really given me a feel of studying abroad.

80. **Our second cycle schools in the deprived areas lacks** qualified teachers, classrooms and amenities.

81. **Training colleges has** been built to train teachers when these **teachers completes** they do not want to teach.

82. **Road accidents is** caused by drivers who drink before they go to drive.

83. When they drink **they begins** to drive anyhow.

84. **Lack of properly constructed roads have** led to many road accidents.

85. **Some cars has** a very bad fuse.

86. **Our teachers hates** sports so much that they don’t have P.E. with us.

87. **I, the Head Prefect, wants** to tell you some of these problems.

88. **Caning affect** school children and **put** fear in them.

89. **Caning also cause** students to have physical injuries when they are beaten.

90. Sir, please **the inability of some teachers to control their anger, make** them cane students for their little mistakes.

91. **The perennial caning of students cause** them to be timid.

92. Sir, **the excessive caning of students cause them** to avoid or hate going to school.
93. **This cause** the students to defecate anywhere.
94. **Teachers** nowadays **hates** to accept posting to these schools.
95. For example, **the results** of some of the schools in deprived communities that I know **is** the worst.
96. If the government will not do something about this problem then **all these schools has** to be closed down.
97. **The aims** of these concepts **depicts** that girls should be given equal opportunity as boys.
98. **Students completes** these schools in the deprived areas but are not given equal opportunities.
99. **Vacation classes puts** pressure on students.
100. **The dormitories is** also overcrowded and that has come with a lot of diseases.
101. **Vacation classes has** done a lot of good than harm so students should continue to attend.
102. After **this secrete have been revealed** the police came to arrest Ama.
103. **The youth goes** to school but become unemployment after completion.
104. Even if **some people gets** jobs like carpentry they are not respected in their communities.
105. To recapitulate, **lack of qualified teachers, the absence of portable water and the lack of classroom has** made schools in the deprived areas unattractive to students.
106. Also, **qualified teachers goes** a very long way to improve the standard of many weak students.
107. **They** sometimes **discriminates** that because the schools are in the rural areas....
108. When I completed school, **Mum and Dad was** on more.
Students in these schools have been given a lot of opportunities. This enables the government to know the problems confronting the youth.

Usually, teachers give out questions their favorite students. In most cases, students find an alternative in cheating as a way of making good grades in exams.

Students nowadays refuse to choose these schools. These students take these schools as a joke.

I come out with flying colours. It gives opportunity to people. It also gives knowledge to people.

Economics make people gain profit.

Mum and Dad extend their greeting to you.

I know my parents do not have money for me to attend vacation classes.

Nowadays, these schools have been performing well in the WASSCE.

Anytime the teachers give us an assignment, they will not do it. There is a saying that success welcomes those who work hard.

In fact, the teachers take their time to teach in these schools in the deprived areas.

A friend of mine has informed me about it.

If candidates go to the examination hall with foreign materials.

These invigilators allow candidates to do whatever they like.

Teachers who are posted to these deprived schools reluctantly stay in their various houses without going to class to teach their students.

The sad aspect is that during the WASSCE examination, these students try to cheat and when they are caught their papers are
conciled whilest their teachers responsible stays in their various houses enjoying their monthly salaries.

130. Candidates in the school tries to cheat in exams.
131. Students who are lazy does not learn before exams.
132. You may agree with me that where you is can never be located.
133. Education is one important thing that one need in life.
134. My father don’t have money.
135. When people goes to the market to sell, they don’t buy.
136. At that time the family members of Daddy has taken everything that belonged to him.
137. The board of governors have tried its best to solve this problem, but to no avail.
138. The police on our roads lacks equipments and most of them are not up to the task.
139. These are some of the problems that is facing my country.
140. They come out with outfits which exposes parts of their bodies such as the breasts, waist beads and even thighs.
141. Maybe the friend who are also attending the same classes with him can introduce him to that thing and spoil your child.
142. Some students who takes their studies serious will benefit from the classes.
143. Vacation classes will help students to ask questions and get the chance to understand the topics that was not treated in class.
144. People who wants to set up their businesses are very happy because the security of the country is proper.
145. These roads link different communities that wishes their inhabitants admitted into these deprived schools.
146. This makes the road unsafe to use thereby making students who wishes to be admitted in these schools unable to be admitted.
147. Schools in the deprived communities are rated as schools that faces more problems.

148. Some of the schools in the deprived communities have polytanks though, but water which they contain, are unsafe for drinking.

149. Ghana is rated as one of the countries that faces fatal accidents.

150. The president has also decided to build roads in the urban and rural areas to prevent all the road accidents that has been happening in the country.

151. Many of our roads in the rural areas which leads to the urban centres are very bad.

152. The extra classes help them to cover all the topics that has not been taught in class.

153. Drivers who pollutes the environment are to be punished by the government.

154. One of the main problems that needs improvement is unemployment.

155. …but not to those who knows how the students in deprived schools suffer.

156. Because of factors that promotes high population.

157. There are some of the board members who sells the papers to candidates.

158. There should be laws to arrest teachers who indulges in immoral relationships with female students.

159. Some teachers who stays afar should be also given bungalows.

160. We should not loose sight of the fact that there are teachers who leaks examination questions.

161. Those that does that are not arrested by the police.

162. When we arrived at the reception, our luggages were sent in by a receptionist.
163. My school do not play basketball because it is found in a deprived area.

164. It is erroneously assumed that students who goes to village schools not intelligent.

165. The laws of Ghana also says that children should not be denied education.

166. Unity normally exist in such schools.

167. Children may make some mistakes which is avoidable.

168. The law should prosecute people below the age of 18 who votes.

169. Are we to wear clothes which is very expensive.

170. New buses has been bought for school in towns and cities, but not those in the villages.

171. All these facilities has helped the school achieve a lot.

172. The laboratory also help students understand some topics.

173. This means that when one is clean, he or she get blessing from God.

174. Over the years, our wonderful country have been facing this problem.

175. Some of the activities that causes water pollution is dumping refuse into water bodies.

176. The trees in our surrounding protects us from air pollution.

177. Since humans naturally depends on plants for survival, the plants should be protected.

178. The smoke from factories and other places also affect us.

3.3.2. Determiner-Noun Concord Errors

1. Because of all this reasons, they will not send their wards to schools in the deprived areas.

2. If these women were not given equal educational chance as men, will they be given this positions?
3. **This things** the girls have been doing normally entice the boys.

4. If I may ask, Mr. Chairman, will you be happy if you are in the shoes of **this parents**.

5. **All this teachers** are organizing extra or vacation classes.

6. I hope with all **this indisputable points** you will strongly agree with me that vacation classes should not be abolished.

7. **This parents** expect their children to assist them during vacation classes; they receive no assistance from their children.

8. . . . with **this undisputed arguments** I have made, I think there should not be any reason why vacation classes should be abolished.

9. During **this classes**, most students, especially the senior high students dress indecently.

10. Through **this vacation classes**, they also enjoy the good work of **this teachers**.

11. I will thank my fellow students and teachers for giving me the chance to present **these speech**.

12. **Most student** go home and spend their vacation without doing anything.

13. Mr. Chairman, in **most school**, there are inadequate teachers.

14. Some of **this things** they show off are mobile phones, dresses, shoes and haircuts.

15. Since all hands are not equal, **most student** will not be able to capture whatever they were taught back in school.

16. The reason why **these school** are not attractive to most students is that there are inadequate computers in the schools.

17. One rainy Saturday morning, **this two friends** decided to go for **hunting**.

18. There are more to list down but I think **this few ones** I have listed will have a great positive impact in the society.

19. **This candidates** have no option but to cheat in examinations.

20. Sammy, let me come to the reason why I’m writing **these letter**.

21. Let me use **these opportunity** to apologise for my bad deed.

22. I made my mind to achieve **this goals** before thinking about marriage.

23. I have been praying for my teachers who are helping me achieve **this goals**.
24. **These pollution** of the environment can be stopped when some serious rules are formed.

25. Parents of **this final year students** did not bother at all.

26. I speak in favour of **these motion**.

### 3.3.3 Coordinated Subject-Verb Concord Errors

1. **Drinking and smoking** of drivers **has** been causing road accidents.

2. **Bad roads and poor maintenance culture** **is** another cause of road accidents in this country.

3. **The people of Ghana and the youth in the country expresses** their gratitude for your good work done in terms of development.

4. **My opponent and the world** at large **is** afraid of successful women.

### 3.3.4 Inverted Subject -Verb Concord Errors

1. If there **is** enough **classrooms and dormitories**, students will be able to study well.

2. There **is inadequate facilities** in these schools in the deprived communities.

3. There **has been problems** in our educational system.

4. I humbly plead that you declare me the winner of this debate for **the points** of my opponents are **a fallacy**.

5. How **is Kofi and Ama**.

6. Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, you would be me out that, there **is lot of issues** relating to teenage pregnancies, streetism, drug abuse etc.

7. Recently, there **have an increase** in the population of the schools.

8. There **has been rumours** that some schools in the deprived areas have been engaging in negative spiritual activities.

9. There **is many problems** in schools in deprived communities.

10. Here **was these stubborn boys** trying to steal the goats.
### 3.3.5 Noun-Pronoun Concord Errors

1. If girls are given equal education as boys, they would focus on their studies, know the effects of **these things**, therefore obtain from **it**.

2. **The student** needs time to study whatever **they** could not understand during the lesson.

3. If the students are at home, they will help their parents, but Mr. Chairman, what if **his or her** parents are office workers will **he or she** go to their office and help?

4. Some of **you** will become my temporary **enemy** when I finish making my views known to the house.

5. **Student** could help their parents in **their** work places in order for their parents to cater for their education.

6. **Existence of these amenities in these senior high schools** will make **it** attractive to students and teachers.

7. I wish to draw your attention to why students neglect **secondary schools** in deprived communities and ways by which **it** can be made attractive to students.

8. **Mrs. Mensah** died at the age of 35 when **he** birth to **his** child at Akosua.

9. **The children** tend to benefit from that piece of knowledge given to **him/her** by the mother.

10. I would like to ask my **opponents** that if **he** does that and **lives** the home for work, who stays with the children at home?

11. If girls are given equal education as boys they would focus on their studies, know the effects of **those things**, therefore, abstain from **it**.

12. Teenage girls may not get the chance to continue **her** education when **she** becomes pregnant and they will feel shy after delivery.\n
13. Finally, parents and guardians, thank you for always supporting your **child** during **their** time of education.

14. I like mind thrilling **games** because I read about **it**.

15. Most students send **phones** to school and on their way home, they remove **it** and start making calls.
16. Lack of these amenities will not make you understand things the way you should understand it.

17. All the things they gave him, he couldn’t return it.

3.3.6 Verb-verb Concord Errors

1. Veronica and I advised them to be careful about what they have just gotten themselves into.
2. In their class, the students always competed when quizzes, tests and exams is conducted.
3. Kodjo always got above 70% and his parents like him a lot.
4. It was a very big python which has swallowed all the eatable animals it could swallow.
5. When running, he slipped and fall under a big tall tree.
6. The car stopped at the Tema station and wet all alight.
7. The car stopped at the principal streets and later we arrive at his house at Kanda.
8. When we went he said he is from West Africa Examination Council and he ask us if we were candidates.
9. We realized Frank have not been in the house for months.
10. I took the people and realize it was a friend of mine so I picked the call.
11. An hour later, we all meet and discussed on how to sell the cocaine.
12. I was about to move out when I meet a friend of mine.
13. Most men are only interested in feeding and providing shelter for their wards, but doesn’t take into account the moral uprightness of their wards.
14. She saw a cottage and she decided she will go into there.
15. I just did not know what to do but thank him for the offer.
16. Because I had read and study the previous night, I was able to answer all the questions.
17. The youth are employed and has the knowledge to care for their community.
18. After taking my breakfast, I sent my plate and cup to the kitchen and wash it.
19. A woman said it was her baby that is in the house.
20. I saw that there is sense in what they told me.

3.3.7 Constructions with more than one Type of Concord Errors

1. People loses their life.
2. It leads to many problem that leads to death.
3. In recent times, there have been occurrence of road accidents which has sent many people to their grave.
4. 2000 people has died their life.
5. We all know that education is the pillar of every nation in these modern world that is why our beloved nation Ghana invest in educating her children.
6. Most people think vacation classes is ineffective and wastes time because jkstudents who usually come to this classes engage in immoral things like pre-marital sex, smoking and ‘sakawa’.
7. Vacation classes as the right time for the students to go through all the topics that was not properly treated for him or her to understand.
8. Vacation help students to relax so that their brain will gain its maximum rate of absorption before the next academic term.
9. Vacation classes helps you to get enough tutorials which helps you to complete your syllables.
10. Students do classes with their teachers, which generates income for the teachers as students pays the classes’ fees.
11. Many discussion and opinion has been raised about this topic in different ways.
12. After that I moved to the kitchen and cleaned there and wash the plate which have been used.
13. I always thank God for what He have done for me all this days.
3.4 Discussion of Categories of Concord Errors

This section discusses errors made by the students in their scripts. Though other categories of errors were present in the extracts under discussion, those errors were not the focus of the researcher. Nevertheless, in the course of discussion of these concord errors, the extracts would be corrected and the corrections may require modifications of other categories of errors to make the extracts better and meaningful. The extracts under discussions are in italics.

3.4.1 Discussing Subject-Verb Agreement Errors

Subject-Verb Concord Errors were the most common. From Table 3.3, this category has the greater frequency. This indicates that getting a verb to agree with its subject is difficult from the point of view of respondents, particularly singular subject with third person singular verb in the present tense.

Samples of subject-verb concord errors in the data are shown below.

**Plural Subject with Singular Verb**

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

i. The *schools lacks* most of required amenities.

ii. *Vacation classes helps* students to understand what they have learnt better.

iii. *Public secondary schools is* unattractive to students because most of them lack some facilities that facilitate learning.

iv. The *students doesn’t* understand what they are *thought* in class.

v. *Students tends* to flee from the villages to the cities pursue proper studies.

Richards (1971) cited in Ellis (1994:56-7) describes such errors as developmental errors. Developmental errors occur when the learner attempts to build up hypothesis about the target language on the basis of limited experience. These errors are also intralingual because the authors made faulty generalisation of the rules of –s
inflection of nouns. Generally in English, a count noun takes an –s when forming its plural. For example, *boy* (singular), *boys* (plural). However, with verbs it is the third person singular form in the present tense that takes an –s. The fact that a plural noun usually ends in an –s does not mean that verbs should also have an –s at the end to make them plural. These authors may be operating intuitively by thinking that the first –s of the noun attracts a second one of the verb.

The frequency of subject-verb concord errors in these students’ scripts indicates that they have not truly internalized the subject-verb agreement rules as a result; they consistently matched the plural subject with singular verbs. The grammatical rule states that the verb must agree in number with its subject. That is, the subject of a sentence and its corresponding verb must agree in number. An agreement error occurs when a plural subject is used with a singular verb as in the above extracts. The errors in examples i and ii above can be corrected as:

i. The **schools lack** most of the required amenities.

ii. **Vacation classes help** students to understand what they have learnt better.

*Singular subjects with plural verbs*

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

i. Even the *bible have* stated in Ephesians that children honour your parent that you may live long.

ii. When the *child decide* to go for vacation classes, he or she will not get enough rest.

iii. *Caning affect* school children and *put* fear in them

iv. *Unemployment have* been a great challenge to graduates
Though the subject of each of the sentences in the extracts above is singular, its corresponding verb is plural. Richards (1971:204) describes the errors in the extracts as *interference errors*. Interference errors occur as a result of ‘the use of element from one language while speaking or using another. Most of the respondents speak Akan language (Asante, Akwapim and Fante). In the Akan language, verbs are not inflected in the third person singular form in the present tense. For instance,

1. *Aku tɔn nsu.*
   
   ‘Aku *sells* water’.

2. *Aku ne Adu tɔn nsu.*

3. ‘Aku and Adu *sell* water’.

   The verb *tɔn* maintains the same form in the two examples cited above even though a singular subject is used in the first example while a plural subject is used in the second example. English language has a different grammatical rule.

   Students match singular subjects with plural verbs because they often have erratic use of the third person –s and think that some verbs create a phonetic environment that makes them sound more ‘third person friendly’ than others.

   One other factor that may be the cause of this error is that teachers of English tend to emphasise the use of third person –s after pronouns *he, she and it* so when the subject of the verb is a singular noun, there is trouble. Students need to make a more conscious effort to understand the grammatical rule that when the subject of a sentence is a singular count noun, its corresponding verb in the present tense should have an –s at the end. In other words, students should be more sensitive to the subject-verb agreement rule that an –s is added to the verb in the present tense if the subject is a singular noun (i.e. a word that names a person, a place, an idea, a process, a thing, an object or an animal).
The correct versions of the extract above are:

i. Even the **Bible has** stated in Ephesians that, ‘children should honour their parents that you may live longer’.

ii. When the **child decides** to go for vacation classes, he or she will not get enough rest.

iii. **Caning affects** school children and **puts** fear in them.

The third sentence exemplifies the grammatical rule that in a structure, which the same subject controls a series of verbs, all the verbs must agree with subject. In the example, the subject **Caning** before the subsequent verb **puts** is deleted because it is the same as the antecedent subject **Caning** which is controlling the verb in the preceding clause.

**Demonstrative Pronoun (Subject) Verb Agreement Errors**

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

i. Also, **this attract** students to have interest in the public secondary schools.

ii. When **this happen**, it does not attract students to attend public secondary schools.

iii. **This are** all my suggestions and I think they will help secondary schools in deprived communities more attractive to students.

iv. **This affirm** the saying, ‘Two heads are better than one’.

Demonstrative pronouns are used to refer to the location of things and persons in space. In this sense, ‘space’ simply means any surrounding or environment. The demonstrative pronouns have number contrast and have two sets: **this and these**, and **that and those**. Aarts (2010:55) explains these four demonstrative pronouns are used in following reference: **this and these** are used to refer to entities that are proximal (close
by), whereas *that* and *those* refer to entities that are distal (further away). *This* and *that* are (singular) while *these* and *those* are (plural).

When a demonstrative pronoun is used as subject, the verb must agree in number with the subject. Unfortunately, the authors of the above extracts did not apply this grammatical rule. They failed to recognize that *this* as the subject should take a singular verb form, but its plural counterpart *these* should take a plural verb form. A possible cause for this violation could be given as fossilisation, thus, this error has become fixed that they find it difficult to change.

The wrong sentences above will be grammatical acceptable if the verbs are changed to agree with their corresponding subjects as in:

i. Also, **this attracts** students to have interest in the public secondary schools.

ii. When **this happens**, it does not attract students to attend public schools.

iii. **These are** my suggestions and I think they will help make secondary schools in deprived communities more attractive to students.

iv. **This affirms** the saying, “Two heads are better than one.”

**Headword- Verb Concord Errors**

These errors are attributed to the inability of the students to identify the headword of the string of words acting as subject. The head or headword is the most prominent element of a string of words. For example, a noun phrase is a string of words whose head is a noun as in *the green book*. Students who have properly internalised subject-verb concord rules have no problem matching subjects such as nominal group (a noun or pronoun) or the Dummy *it* with the right verbs in their speech or writing. In other words, it is easier for students to let the simple subject agree with its verb in the present tense. However, there are instances where the subject is a complex one. A complex subject can be a noun phrase with a multiple pre-modification and post-modification. Pre-modifiers precede their heads. For example;
As stated in an earlier section of this thesis, the subject of a verb can be a nominal group, a phrase (prepositional, adverbial or adjectival), Dummy *it*, clause or a non-finite clause.

The complex subject poses problems in that the student loses track of the headword or memory limitation prevents either him or her from employing the correct verb form, which should enter into relationship with the noun headword. The rule should not change if the subject is simple or complex. Thus, if the head is singular, the verb in the present tense should be singular and if the head is plural, so does the verb. Sometimes, there is an adverb between the subject and the verb. The adverb between the subject and the verb does not change the number, person or gender of the subject so if the subject is singular, the verb must be singular and the vice-versa.

The following are examples produced by some students for the study.

i. The *students* of these great institutions in the deprived communities *finds* it difficult to embark on educational trips to improve their academic performance.

ii. Dear reader, the cogent *factors* I have mentioned *proves* that girls should be given equal educational opportunities as boys.

iii. No one fails to realize that most *students* of this generation *attends* vacation classes with intention of showing off things they have.

iv. The *development* of the area *become* less and this poses a lot of danger on the people.

v. *I* therefore *wants* to tell you three problems of schools in deprived areas.

vi. The *lack* of these social amenities *make* the school boring.
vii. *People* who are sent to study abroad *refuses* to come back.

It is conspicuous in the above samples that the authors could not identify the headword of the sentences and as a result, they were unable to match them with the appropriate verbs. For example;

i. *The students* of these great institutions in the deprived communities *finds* it difficult to embark on educational trips to improve their academic performance.

In the above extract, the headword is *students* and it is plural. This headword is followed by a prepositional phrase of *these great institutions in the deprived communities*. The prepositional phrase that comes between the subject and the verb may be the cause of confusion in determining the appropriate verb. The verb *finds* is used and its usage makes the sentence incorrect. The author forgot the fact that no matter where a verb appears in a sentence, it must still agree with its subject. Students should understand that the verb agrees with its subject but not with a word in the phrase or a clause. They should mentally cross out the interrupting group of words, because these words serve as modifiers of the subjects, but do not change the rules of subject-verb agreement. Since the headword *students* is plural, the verb should also be plural:

i. *The students* of these great institutions in the deprived communities *find* it difficult to embark on educational trips to improve their academic performance.

*ii. People* who are sent to study abroad *refuses* to come back.

The subject of the verb [refuses] is *People*, which is plural and therefore requires a plural form of the verb. If the sentence is divided into main and subordinate clauses, we have:

*People* who are sent to study abroad *refuse* to come back.
3.4.2 Relative Pronoun-Subject with Singular Verb

The principle of proximity (attraction) is applied when a sentence has two clauses; main and subordinate and the subordinate is a relative clause. A relative clause is introduced by the relative pronoun *who, whom, that, which or whose*. There should be agreement between the verb and the antecedent of the relative pronoun in such sentences. Therefore, if the antecedent is singular the verb is singular and the vice-versa. For example,

Spencer is one of the *students* who *play* hockey.

The main clause of the sentence is *Spencer is one of the students*. The subordinate clause is *who play hockey in the school*. The antecedent of *who is students*. So the verb that follows should be plural, thus *play* instead of *plays*. This rule was violated by the authors of the following sentences:

i. Vacation classes will help students to ask questions and get the chance to understand the *topics* that *was* treated in class.
ii. Schools in the deprived communities are rated as *schools* which *faces* more problems.
iii. *Drivers* who *pollutes* the environment are to be punished by the government.
iv. One of the main *problems* that *needs improvement* is unemployment.

In the sentences above, it is obvious that the authors could not identify the nominal group which the relative pronouns - *that, which, and who* refer to. The authors of the sentences in this category might be ignorant of the rules of proximity. If the right rules of the principle of proximity is applied, the sentences will be as shown below:

i. Vacation classes will help students to ask questions and get the chance to understand the *topics* that *were* treated in class.
ii. Schools in the deprived communities are rated as schools which *face* more problems.
iii. Drivers who pollute the environment are to be punished by the government.
iv. One of the main problems that need attention is unemployment.

3.4.3 Determiner-Noun Concord Errors

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2000: 61), there are six classes of determiners with respect to the co-occurrence with the noun classes, singular count (such as bottle), plural count (such as bottles), and non-count nouns (such as furniture).

This and that are one of the classes of determiners that can take both count and non-count nouns. With count nouns, this and that are used with only singular nouns. These and those form another class and they take count nouns that are in plural forms. They are never used with non-count nouns. Examples:

1. This book is red.
2. That boy has a car.
3. This water is tepid.
4. These books are red.
5. Those boys have a car (cars).

The authors of the sentences below could not apply the rules of classes of determiners and consequently produced such deviant structures:

i. Because of all this reasons, they will not send their wards to schools in the deprived areas.
ii. This things the girls have been doing normally entice the boys.
iii. This parents expect their children to assist them during vacation, but because of vacation classes, they receive no assistance from their children.
iv. One rainy Saturday morning, this two friends decided to go for hunting.

Yankson(1994:21) explains that some West African learners of English fail to make the necessary phonetic distinction between these two vowel sound
[i:] and [I] and as a result they make phonological errors, that is, spelling-pronunciation errors. The correct versions of the above sentences are as follows:

i. Because of all these reasons, they will not send their wards to schools in the deprived areas.

ii. These things the girls have been doing normally entice the boys

iii. These parents expect their children to assist them during vacation, but because of vacation classes, they receive no assistance from their children.

iv. One rainy Saturday morning, these two friends decided to go for hunting.

3.4.4 Coordinated Subject-Verb Concord Errors

Concord with coordinated subjects has been discussed by authors such as Quirk and Greenbaum (2000), Leech and Startvik (2002) and Yankson (1994).

Leech and Startvik (2002:277) explain Coordination as when equivalent unit are linked by and or or but. The further explain that Coordination can occur between different grammatical units: clauses, clause elements, words. They exemplify:

1. I’m selling my car and buying a new one.
2. You can wash this dress by hand or in the washing machine.

In the first sentence above, two clauses I’m selling my car and I am buying a new one are linked together by the conjunction and. The second subject is omitted because it refers to the same person in the first clause.

Coordination can occur between words as in:

Tomorrow’s weather will be nice and sunny.

The rules that are applied when using coordinated subjects include:

a. When a subject comprise two or more nouns or noun phrases linked together by and, the verb is in the plural form as in:
University of Ghana and University of Cape Coast are public universities.

b. When the coordinated subjects refer to the same person or thing, a singular verb is used as in:

My brother and adviser has travelled abroad.

In the above sentence, My brother is the same person who is my adviser.

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

Freedom and justice are important in every nation.

However, if the two are seen as a single, complex issue a singular verb is used as in:

Freedom and justice is important.

Second language learners do apply these rules of concord with coordinating subjects wrongly. Some of the students used misapplied these rules in the following structures:

1. Drinking and Smoking of drivers has been causing road accidents.

2. Bad roads and poor maintenance culture is another cause of road accidents in this country.

3. The people of Ghana and the youth in the country expresses their gratitude for your good work done in terms of development.

4. My opponent and the world at large is afraid of successful women.

These errors made by the students can be described as Post-systematic errors using Corder’s (1974) framework for describing errors. Post-systematic errors occur when the learner can explain the target language rule that is normally used, but uses it inconsistently. When those students who misapplied the rules were interviewed, they explained the rules to the researcher but they were not able to use them correctly. The
students made the errors because they overextended or overgeneralised one of the use of concord with coordinated subjects, which says that:

When the coordinated subjects are abstract nouns, the verb can be either singular or plural. The choice of a singular or plural verb depends on how the speaker regards the qualities in the subject; if they are seen as separate issues or qualities, a plural verb and the vice-versa.

In the first deviant structure, the student treated *Drinking and smoking* as uncountable and therefore used a singular verb – *has been causing*. Although *drinking and smoking*, may be regarded as aspects of drug abuse the two words have different meanings and refer to different substances. The two words are uncountable nouns but do not mean the same. *Drinking* refers to the activity of drinking alcohol, while *smoking* refers to the activity of breathing in tobacco smoke from a cigarette or a pipe. Since the two words refer to different activities, the verb *has* should be changed to *have*, thus:

1. *Drinking and smoking* by drivers have been causing road accidents.

In the second structure, the student used *is* which means that *Bad roads and poor maintenance culture* refer to the same quality or issue. However, this is not true. *Bad roads and poor maintenance culture* refer to different issues, therefore the verb *is* must be *are*. If this change is effected, the words another and cause will change. Another is used as a determiner to refer to one or more person or thing of the same kind or a different thing or person. Since bad roads and poor maintenance culture are plural, *other* should be used. Cause is also a countable noun so it should be used in the plural, that is, it should have the –s plural inflection. The sentence will be as:

2. Bad roads and poor maintenance culture *are other causes* of road accidents in the country.

In the last two sentences, the verbs should be changed to *express* and *are* respectively as shown below:

3. The people of Ghana and the youth in the country *express* their gratitude for your good work in terms of development.
4. My opponent and the world at large are afraid of successful women.

3.4.5 Noun – Pronoun Concord Errors

For a sentence to be grammatically correct, all its parts should agree with one another. When a pronoun is used to refer back to noun used, there must be agreement. Leech and Startvik (2002:273) write that;

A pronoun which refers back to a singular noun phrase is in singular, and a pronoun which refers back to plural noun phrase is in plural:

She lost her life. – They lost their lives.

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (2000,181) personal pronouns in the third person must agree with their antecedents both in number and (with the singular pronoun he, she and it) in gender:

a. John hurt his foot.
b. John and Beatrice hurt their feet.
c. Beatrice hurt her foot.d. The climbers hurt their feet.

By contrast, we can have a sentence like:

John hurt her foot.

This sentence would mean that John hurt someone else’s foot (the someone else having been previously mentioned)

These rules of agreement between pronouns used to refer back to nouns or noun phrases used earlier in a sentence were overtly violated by some of the students. Examples of these errors are:
1. I wish to draw your attention to why students neglect secondary schools in deprived communities and ways by which it can be made attractive to students.

2. Mrs. Mensah died at the age of 35 when he gave birth to his child Akosua.

In the first deviant construction, the student uses the headword secondary schools and used it to refer back to the phrase. The noun phrase, secondary schools, is plural and therefore requires a plural pronoun to refer back to it. Introduction of a plural pronoun that will agree with secondary schools will correct the deviation. Thus, I wish to draw your attention to why students neglect secondary schools in deprived communities and ways by which they can be made attractive to students.

In the second construction, Mrs. Mensah is the female and it is in the third person singular, therefore, the pronoun should agree with its antecedent in number and gender. The error is corrected below:

Mrs. Mensah died at the age of 35 after she had given birth to her child, Akosua.

3.4.6 Inverted Subject-Verb Concord Errors

Few students made these errors. The inverted subject refers to the noun phrase that follows the verb. This noun phrase is the subject. Therefore, if the noun phrase is singular, the verb should be singular and if it is plural, the verb must be plural. In the inverted subject constructions, (i.e. Existential sentences), the unstressed ‘There’ and the Wh-interrogators are used as temporary subjects. Examples:

1. What were the reasons for his action?
2. There is a girl in this classroom.
In the first example, the controller of the verb used is *the reasons* and since the noun phrase is the plural form, a plural verb *were* is required. In the second example, the noun phrase, *a girl*, controls the verb *is*.

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

1. If there *is* enough *classrooms and dormitories*, students would be able to study well.
2. How *is Kofi and Ama*?
3. Recently, there *have been an increase* in the population of the schools.

The structures one and three above have a plural noun phrase following the verb in each of them. However, there is no agreement between the verbs and the noun phrases. The deviations can be rectified if the verbs are changed to plural as in:

1. If there *are* enough *classrooms and dormitories*, students will be able to study well.
2. How *are Kofi and Ama*.

In the third structure above, the noun phrase is singular so the verb should agree with the noun phrase in number. The structure corrected below:

Recently, there *has been an increase* in the population of the schools.

### 3.4.7 Verb-Verb Concord Errors

Verb-verb concord errors were common in scripts of students who chose the question that asked them to write a story ending, “We regretted venturing into it.” Tense, according to Comrie (1985: viiff), refers to the grammatical realization of location in time. The principle of sequence of tenses is observed when referring to more than one time in one sentence or in one paragraph. This implies that there should be consistency in the selection of verb tenses when one is writing or speaking. Careful and accurate use of tenses is important so that one’s reader does not get confused. When one
is talking about the same event of group of events, one must make sure that he or she sticks to a single general tense-present, past or future. For example:

I opened the door, and Mike was standing there.

The example above is made up of two independent clauses:

i. I opened the door.
ii. Mike was standing there.

These two independent clauses are joined by the coordinator and making the sentence a compound sentence.

Sakyi-Baidoo (2003:530) explains, however, that independent clauses are independent not only in meaning and in structure, but also in tense. He exemplifies:

As it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be.

The example above is a compound sentence with three independent clauses with three different generalizations thus past, present, future respectively. Sakyi-Baidoo (2003:530) further explains that in complex sentences, however, it is expected that there is agreement of tenses, that is, the tense of the subordinate clause must agree with that of the main clause, or the clause on which it depends. He exemplifies:

A. God declared that Moses would not step on the land of Canaan.
B. Since Hannie needed food, we went to the Kasoa market.
C. Ekuba delayed because she needed more money

Sakyi-Baidoo(2003:531) gives the exceptions to the principles of agreement of tenses. The most remarkable exception of the principle is when the subordinate clause speaks of a general truth or eternal truths, beliefs, proverbs, aphorisms and literary quotations. Examples:

1. Galileo discovered that the earth moves around the sun. (A fact)
2. Christians hope that Christ will certainly come back.(Belief)
3. Even in Class Two, we had been taught that, “Time and tide wait for no man”. (Proverb)

The students who made verb-verb concord errors could not decipher the principles of sequences of tenses. Below are four examples of the deviant constructions:

1. Kodjo always got above 70% and his parents like him alot.
2. When running, he slipped and fall under a big tall tree.
3. The car stopped at the Tema Station and we all alight.
4. I took the phone and realize it was a friend of mine so I picked the call.

In all the four deviant constructions, the students were inconsistent in the selection of tense. In each of the clauses, one clause contains a verb in the past but the other clause has a verb in the present tense. This means that all the sentences contain disagreement in tenses. The first deviant structure is a compound sentence. There are two independent clauses conjoined by the coordinator and. The student used a verb in the past thus, got in the first clause, but the verb in the subsequent clause used a verb in the present tense- like. This means that the student failed to sequence his/her tense to reflect the time of the event in the second clause. The sentence is corrected below:

1. Kodjo always got above 70% and his parents liked him a lot.

The second deviant structure is a complex sentence. There are two clauses, but one is the main clause and the other is the subordinate clause. In the main clause two verbs are used, but the first one is in the past and the second one in the present. The students who wrote the sentence did not observe the rules of sequence of tenses within sentences. The correct version should be:

2. When running, he slipped and fell under a big tall tree.

The third and fourth deviant structures are corrected below:

3. The car stopped at Tema Station and we all alighted.
4. I took the phone and realized it was a friend of mine so I picked the call.
3.4.8 Constructions with More Than One Concord Errors

The deviant constructions produced have more than one concord errors within one sentence. The sentences below are examples produced by students in their essays:

1. People loses their life.

The second deviant structure contains a determiner-noun construction concord error and subject-verb concord. As already discussed in a section of this research, This is singular so must take a singular noun when used as a determiner and takes a singular verb when used as a subject (demonstrative pronoun). In the sentence, the subject of ‘does’ is ‘students’ which is plural, but the author of that sentence used a singular verb. The errors are corrected below:

However, these days, students who attend vacation classes do very well in their final examination.

The third sentence contains subject-verb agreement and noun-pronoun concord errors. The subject used is a third person singular subject therefore; it requires a verb in the third person singular form. Yankson (1994.19) explains that a pronoun takes the same form singular or plural –as the noun subject headword, which precedes it, and which the pronoun refers to in the sentence. If the subject-verb agreement and noun-pronoun concord rules are applied, the deviant construction becomes:

The child has to stay home and help his or her parents.

3.5 Analysis and Discussion of Summary Categories

The main reason for the inclusion of the summary test for this thesis is to ascertain whether students make concord errors in the answers they provide for summary tests. If it proves that students make concord errors, the research wanted to find out if those errors indeed affect their performance in summary test, which carries 30 marks in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination. Concord errors are considered grammatical errors and examiners are instructed to deduct \( \frac{1}{2} \) for any
grammatical error in each correct answer. The number of students who made concord errors in their answers is low. Almost all the concord errors sampled were subject-verb concord errors.

1. The space **cost** huge sums of money which can be used to feed the hungry mouth.
2. It **cost** huge sum of money.
3. They **advances** sound points to discourage the venture.
4. Space exploration **have developed** scientific instruments.
5. Space exploration **waste** money.
6. Space exploration **cost** huge sum of money.
7. It **help** people in other countries.
8. Space exploration **cost** a huge sum of money
9. Space exploration **have improve** in medical values.
10. Space exploration **invent** scientific instruments for measurement.
11. Space exploration **have affected** atmospheric pollution.
12. Space exploration **have provided** us with accurate knowledge.
13. Space exploration **have brought** to us improvement in medical value.
14. Space exploration **increase** the depletion of the atmosphere.
15. Space exploration **have pinpoint** the exact position of oil field.
16. Space exploration **cause** pollution.
17. Space exploration **provide** no or little economic value to anyone.
18. Space exploration **pollute** the atmosphere which is unfavorable for human habitation.

3.6 Conclusion

The analysis and discussion of data on concord errors in students’ scripts and summary answers were presented in this chapter. From the discussion above, it was discovered that in both the students’ essay scripts and summary answers, subject-verb agreement errors had the highest number. The discussion also revealed that sometimes students found it hard to apply their knowledge of concord rules correctly in their writing.
4.0 INTRODUCTION

This section presents a grammatical analysis of all the twenty-five sentences in the objective test. The grammatical analysis is to make it evident that only one of the two forms of the verb provided in each sentence is grammatically correct. The test was to determine how students apply the rules of subject-verb concord. The Structuralist theory was adapted, because the contents and strategies for teaching English language in senior high school are based on structuralism.

4.1 The Sentences in the Objective Test

4.1.1 Sentence 1

Both sailors (was, were) attempting to grab the lifeline.

Subject: Both sailors

Pre-modification: Both (This is a determiner placed before count nouns to indicate that the persons and items being referred to are only two.)

Headword: Sailors (This is a plural noun and requires a plural verb)

Predicate: were attempting to grab the lifeline.

Finite verb: were attempting to grab (This is a verbal phrase comprised a past form the verb be – an auxiliary, and a main verb in the – ing form followed by a to– infinitive verb ‘to grab’.)

Principle: Grammatical concord
4.1.2 Sentence 2

Hockey and football (has, have) always been particularly aggressive sports.

Subject: Hockey and football (This is a compound subject or a coordinated subject. Both form the headword.)

Predicate: have always been particularly aggressive sports

Finite verb: have been (This is a verbal phrase with have as the auxiliary and it agrees with the compound subject Hockey and football. been is the main verb and it is the past participle form of be)

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.3 Sentence 3

It is I who (is, am) the head teacher.

This is a cleft sentence so the focus of the analysis will be on the agreement between the relative pronoun and its antecedent:

… I who (is, am) the head teacher.

Antecedent: I (First person singular pronoun)

Relative pronoun: who (This is a subjective relative pronoun used to refer to human being or person. It may be used in both subjective and objective cases in American English).

Predicate: am the head teacher.

Finite verb: am (This is the first person singular verb form of the verb be in the present tense. There is agreement between the antecedent I and the verb am).

Principle: Proximity concord
4.1.4 Sentence 4

Several of the students (have, has) gone home.

Subject: Several of the students

Pre-modification: Several of the (Several is an indefinite pronoun and it is used with plural nouns so it requires a plural verb. of is a preposition and the is a definite article).

Headword: students (This is a plural noun)

Predicate: have gone home

Finite verb: have gone (This is a verbal phrase with have as an auxiliary in the present tense and it agrees with headword students. The main verb is gone, a past participle form of go.)

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.5 Sentence 5

The committee (has, have) regrouped themselves into three.

Subject: The committee

Pre-modification: The (This is a definite article)

Headword: committee (This is a collective noun so its number can be singular or plural on the idea intended by the speaker. However, the use of themselves and three were indicators of plurality Therefore, committee in this context requires a plural verb.)

Predicate: have regrouped themselves into three
Finite verb: have regrouped (This is a verbal phrase with have as the auxiliary verb in the present tense and it agrees with the headword committee. The main verb is regrouped which is in the past participle form.)

Principle: Notional concord

4.1.6 Sentence 6

Trips to Europe (has, have) become more expensive.

Subject: Trips to Europe

Headword: Trips (This is a plural noun)

Post-modification: to Europe (This is a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition to with the prepositional object Europe.)

Predicate: have become expensive more expensive

Finite verb: have become (This is a verbal phrase with have as the auxiliary verb in the present tense and it agrees with the headword Trips. The main verb is become which is in participle form.)

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.7 Sentence 7

There (is, are) too many grammatical errors in this essay.

Subject 1: There (This is unstressed there is used as subject to introduce this existential sentence. There does not determine the form of the verb because its number whether singular or plural cannot be specified. In other words, notionally the unit that follows the verb, too many grammatical errors is the subject. Agor (2003:96) names the unit that comes after the verb as the
postponed subject. The postpone subject determines the form of the verb so if the unit is singular the verb is singular and the vice versa).

Subject 2 (Postponed subject): too many grammatical errors

Pre-modification: too many grammatical (The premodifiers are made up of an intensifier too, a quantifier many which is used with plural count nouns except in the idiomatic usage many a and the adjective grammatical.)

Headword: errors (A plural noun)

Post-modification: In this essay, (This is a prepositional phrase.)

Finite verb: are (This is the plural form of the verb be in the present tense that agrees with the subject 2 in number.)

Principle: Grammatical/ Notional concord

4.1.8 Sentence 8

The good news (is, are) that the Black Stars won that tough competition.

Subject: The good news

Pre-modification: The good (This pre-modification consists of the definite article the and the adjective (attributive) good.)

Headword: news (This is a singular noun ending with the –s of the plural inflection and requires a singular verb.)

Predicate is that the Black Stars won that tough competition

Finite verb: is (This is the singular form of the verb be in the present tense that agrees with the headword news in number.)

Principle: Grammatical concord
4.1.9 Sentence 9

The effect of the workers’ strike (are, is) spread over the country.

Subject: The effect of the workers’ strike

Pre-modification: The (A definite article)

Headword: effect

Post-modification: Of the workers’ strike, (This is a prepositional phrase with strike as the head).

Predicate: is spread over the country

Finite verb: is spread (This is a verbal phrase introduced by the singular form of the verb be in present tense and it agrees with the headword effect in number. The main verb is spread.)

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.10 Sentence 10

The drug dealer, together with his agents, (was, were) arrested outside the city.

Subject: The drug dealer

Pre-modification: The (This is a definite article.)

Headword: drug dealer

Post-modification: Together with his agents, (This is a pseudo-conjunction)

Predicate: was arrested outside the city
Finite verb: was arrested (This is a verbal phrase consists of the singular form of the verb be in past tense that agrees with the headword drug dealer in number. The main verb arrested.) Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.11 Sentence 11

One of the members of the family (was, were) elected as successor to the throne.

Subject: One

Post –modification: of the members of the family (This is a prepositional phrase introduced by the preposition of)

Predicate: was elected as successor to the throne.

Finite verb: was elected (This is a verbal phrase consists of the singular form of the verb be in past tense that agrees with the headword one in number. The main verb elected.)

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.12 Sentence 12

Either my parents or Nelson (is, are) going to the wedding.

Subject: Either my parents or Nelson (The subject is has two subjects which differ in number and person. My parents is third person plural whilst Nelson is third person singular)

Headword: Nelson

Predicate: is going to the wedding.

Finite verb: is going (This is a verb phrase. The third person singular form of the verb be-is in the present tense introduces this
verb phrase and it agrees with the headword Nelson. The main verb is going.

**Principle:** Proximity concord

### 4.1.13 Sentence 13

_The couple (disagrees, disagree) with each other about where they should spent their vacation._

**Subject:** *The couple* (This is a collective noun that can be plural or singular. However, its anaphorical referent they make its meaning plural.)

**Pre-modification:** *The* (This is a definite article.)

**Headword:** *Couple*

**Predicate** disagree with each other about where they should spend their vacation.

**Finite verb:** disagree

**Principle:** Notional concord

### 4.1.14 Sentence 14

*Romeo and Juliet still (remains, remain) much of its popularity.*

**Subject:** *Romeo and Juliet* (This is a title of one Shakespeare’s books (plays.) The meaning in this context does not refer to the eponymous heroes of the play but the title of the play.)

**Headword:** *Romeo and Juliet*
Predicate: remains much of its popularity  Finite verb: remains

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.15  Sentence 15

That couple (has, have) been living there for years.

Subject: That couple

Determiner: That (It is singular)

Headword: couple (This is a collective noun and its meaning is singular because of the singular determiner that precedes it)

Predicate: has been living there for years

Finite verb: has been living

Principle: Notional concord

4.1.16  Sentence 16

One of the disasters which often (occurs, occur) when you are traveling is to arrive at your destination without your luggage.

Subject: One of the disasters which often occur when you are traveling

Headword: One

Post-modification: of the disasters which often occur when you are traveling (This post-modification is made up of a
prepositional phrase of the disasters and a relative clause occur which when you are traveling.)

**Finite verb:** occur (This verb agrees with disasters which is the antecedent of the relative pronoun which)

**Principle:** Proximity concord

### 4.1.17 Sentence 17

Neither the headmaster nor the teachers (takes, take) such a decision.

**Subject:** Neither the headmaster nor the teachers (This subject group has two noun phrases that vary in number. The second noun phrase the teachers determines the form of the verb because it is closer to the verb position. the teachers is plural and requires a plural verb.)

**Headword:** teachers

**Predicate:** take such a decision.

**Finite verb:** take

**Principle:** Proximity concord

### 4.1.18 Sentence 18

All the soup (was, were) spilled on the new floor.

**Subject:** All the soup

**Pre-modification:** All the (The pre-modifiers are All which is a quantifier and the definite article the.)
Headword: soup

Predicate: was spilled on the new floor.

Finite verb: was spilled (The verb phrase is introduced by the singular form of the verb be in the past and it agrees with the headword soup.

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.19 Sentence 19

At the top of the hill (stands, stand) two majestic oaks

Subject: two majestic oaks (This is the inverted subject of the sentence and the verb should agree with it.)

Headword: oaks

Finite verb: stand

Principle: Grammatical concord

4.1.20 Sentence 20

Phil or Caleb usually (opens, open) the office each morning.

Subject: Phil or Caleb

Headword: Phil or Caleb (The two singular subjects are connected by the correlative ‘’or’’ and this connection does not make the subject plural so a singular verb is required)

Predicate: opens the office each morning.

Finite verb: opens
**Principle:** Grammatical concord

4.1.21 Sentence 21

*Here (is, are) five examples of hard drugs.*

*Here* does not determine the form of the verb because its number whether singular or plural cannot be specified. Other words, notionally the unit that follows the verb, *five examples* is the subject, thus, *postponed subject* Agor (2003:96) The postponed subject determines the form of the verb so if the unit is singular the verb is singular and the vice versa).

**Subject 2 (Postponed subject): five examples**

**Pre-modification:** *five* (The premodifier is made up cardinal numeral* five*. It gives us the specific number of examples)

**Headword:** *examples* (A plural noun)

**Post-modification:** *of hard drugs* (This is a prepositional phrase.)

**Finite verb:** *are* (This is the plural form of the verb *be* in the present tense that agrees with the subject 2 in number.)

**Principle:** Grammatical/Notional concord
4.1.22 Sentence 22

In the early sixties, if you (listened, listen) to an elementary school pupil speaking English, he or she (will, would) sound like someone already in the secondary school.

The question has to with sequence of tense. The sentence begins with a prepositional phrase which acts as an adverbial phrase of time. This adverbial phrase indicates a past time, thus, early sixties. Therefore, listened and would make the sentence correct. Sequence of tense means that if a sentence has two or more clauses; main and subordinate, if the sentence begins with the subordinate and the verb used is the present, in the main clause, the verb must be in the present and the vice versa.

Principle: Concord of Tense

4.1.23 Sentence 23

(These, This) cars are his.

Subject: These cars

Headword: cars (This is a plural noun.)

Premodification: These (These can be described as a determiner, or a demonstrative adjective or a premodifer.)

Predicate: are his.

Finite verb: are (This verb is a plural verb in the present tense from be. It agrees with the plural subject These cars.)

Principle: Determiner- noun Concord
4.1.24 Sentence 24

**Subordinate Clause:** Although the apples were sweet  
(This subordinate clause begins with the Subordinating Conjunction Although. The subject of the clause is the apples, the verb is were; a plural past verb form from be and sweet is an adjective acting as subject complement. The apples is a plural verb form.)

**Main Clause:** I did not enjoy them.

**Subject:** I (First person singular pronoun)

**Finite verb:** did not enjoy (This is a past verb phrase with the negative form not.)

**Predicate:** did not enjoy them

**Principle:** Pronoun-antecedent Concord

4.1.25 Sentence 25

*The cost of my dress in addition to my bag (equal, equals fifty Ghana cedis only.)*

**Subject:** The cost of my dress in addition to my bag

**Headword:** cost (This is a singular noun)

**Pre-modification:** The (This is a definite article.)

**Post-modification:** of my dress in addition to my bag (This post-modification has a prepositional phrase with the prepositional objects dress and bag. These two objects are connected by a pseudo-conjunction in addition to.)
**Predicate:** equals fifty Ghana cedis only

**Finite verb:** equals (This is a singular verb in the present tense that agrees with the headword cost in number.)

**Principle:** Grammatical concord

### 4.2 Analysis of Students scores in the Objective Test

This section presents an analysis of students’ performance according to the programmes they offer in the school.

Table 4.1 shows the scores obtained by the General Arts respondents in the objective test. Seventy four scored Question 23, sixty-eight scored Question 6, and sixty-seven scored Questions 9,10, 11, and 12. However, forty-eight and forty-four had Questions 22 and 25 wrong respectively.

**Table 4.1**

| Questions | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Q16 | Q17 | Q18 | Q19 | Q20 | Q21 | Q22 | Q23 | Q24 | Q25 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Wrong     | 22 | 23 | 34 | 26 | 52 | 6   | 7   | 6   | 5   | 7    | 6    | 10   | 11   | 13   | 14   | 17   | 10   | 9    | 48   | 0    | 17   | 44   |     |     |
| Unanswered| 0  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | 2   | 2   | 0   | 2   | 1    | 2    | 1    | 3    | 1    | 2    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |

Figure 4.1 shows that 70%, 65%, 60 %, 45%, 44 % and 30 % had Questions 5, 22, 25, 3, 2, and 1 wrong respectively. All the six (6) questions tested aspects of subject-verb agreement. It was discovered that more than half of the respondents from the General Arts had problems with Questions 5, 22 and 25, which were testing notional concord, concord of tense and grammatical concord respectively.

Table 4.2 shows the scores obtained by the Visual Art students in the objective test. All the twenty respondents scored Questions 1, 4, 13, 14, 15 and 18. Thirteen, eight, twelve, and ten, however, got Questions 3, 10, 22, and 24 wrong respectively.
Visual Art

Table 4.2

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The graph below shows that 65%, 60%, 50%, and 40% had Questions 3, 22, 24, and 10 wrong respectively. All the four (4) questions tested aspects of subject-verb agreement. It was discovered that more than half of the respondents from the Visual Art had difficulties answering Questions 3, and 22, which were testing concord of tense and proximity concord respectively. The percentage for the unanswered was minimal.
Source: Field Survey, 2014. Table 4.4 shows the scores of the technical students in the objective. From the table, seventy-seven scored Question 1; seventy-two scored Question 8, sixty-nine scored Questions 7 and 24 and sixty-five scored Question 12.
Table 4.3 shows the scores of the Science respondents in the objective test. From the table, all the respondents scored Questions 1 and 8; fifty-five scored Questions 6 and 7, and fifty-four scored Question 15. Only Questions 20-25 were unanswered.

**Table 4.3**

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The graph below shows that 68%, 38%, 38%, 38% and 25% had Questions 3, 5, 12, 22, and 25 wrong respectively. All the five (5) questions tested aspects of subject-verb agreement. It was discovered that more than half of the respondents from the Science classes had problems with Questions 3, which was testing proximity concord. The percentage of the unanswered was minimal.
Figure 4.3 Scores of General Science Respondents

Table 4.4

Technical

| Questions | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q5 | Q6 | Q7 | Q8 | Q9 | Q10 | Q11 | Q12 | Q13 | Q14 | Q15 | Q16 | Q17 | Q18 | Q19 | Q20 | Q21 | Q22 | Q23 | Q24 | Q25 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Correct   | 77 | 63 | 25 | 56 | 58 | 61 | 69 | 72 | 62 | 53  | 65  | 64  | 65  | 63  | 59  | 60  | 52  | 52  | 49  | 59  | 37  | 63  | 69  | 53  |     |
| Wrong     | 3  | 17 | 52 | 24 | 22 | 19 | 10 | 8  | 18 | 15  | 16  | 15  | 17  | 21  | 19  | 28  | 27  | 30  | 20  | 42  | 16  | 11  | 26  |     |
| Unanswered| 0  | 0  | 3  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 0   | 1   | 0   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 0   | 1   |     |

The graph below shows that 65%, 55%, 38%, 35%, 35%, 34%, 31%, and 30% had Questions 3, 22, 20, 10, 19, 13, and 4 wrong respectively. All the eight (8) questions tested aspects of subject-verb agreement. It was discovered that more than half of the respondents from the Technical classes had problems with Questions 3, and 22, which were testing proximity concord and concord of tense respectively.

The percentage of the unanswered was minimal.
4.3 Conclusion

The analysis and discussion of data of responses to the objective test were presented in this chapter. From the discussion, it was discovered that students usually have difficulty in applying their knowledge of concord rules correctly.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.0 Introduction

The researcher identified problems in students’ writing and set out to investigate the problems to know the causes and the effects of the problems on students’ academic performance. The researcher investigated concord errors in the writings of students of Koforidua Senior High Technical School. The data, their analysis and discussion have been presented in Chapters Three (3) and Four (4) of this work. In this chapter, the summary of the findings, the pedagogical implication and discussion are presented.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The related issues of the whole study included the ascertainment of the particular concord errors that create problems for students of Koforidua Sectech, the factors that account for those concord errors they make, the causes of students’ poor performance in their study of English Language and measures for improving their performance. The summary of the findings included the findings from essays analysed, and the findings from objective test.

5.1.1 Findings from Marked Scripts Analysed

After analysing all the two hundred and thirty (230) scripts of the respondents, it was discovered that students of Koforidua Sectech make all kinds of concord errors in their writings. Out of the two hundred and thirty (230) scripts, twenty-five (25) did not contain any concord errors. It was also discovered that though students of Koforidua
Sectech had some understanding of subject-verb agreement rules, they were not able to apply these particular rules appropriately. Consequently, subject-verb agreement errors were the most frequent. Interestingly, it was observed that the students’ use of the plural subjects with singular verbs was as a result of their own intuitive rule that count nouns with the –s plural marker must use a verb with an –s inflection. For example: These invigilators allows candidates to do whatever they like. In the above example, the author thought that the –s of invigilators should attract an –s in the verb, thus allows instead of allow. Students should be made to understand that singular count nouns take –s in their plural forms, however, when a verb takes an –s, it means that verb in the present tense is third person singular.

The opposite of the above observation is the singular subjects with plural verbs. These deviations were made because the authors thought the subject had no –s, therefore the verb should not have any –s.

For example:

The laboratory also help students understand some topics.

Students should make conscious efforts to understand the subject-verb agreement rule that an –s is added to the verb if subject is a singular noun. Therefore, the above sentence should be:

The laboratory also helps students understand some topics.

Another finding is that conrder errors such as determiner-nouns concord errors, coordinated subject-verb concord errors, inverted subject-verb concord errors, verb-verb
concord errors were of low frequency in the students’ scripts as these structures are not common in their repertoire.

It was also discovered that most of the errors committed in the students’ scripts were developmental errors, interference errors and psycholinguistic errors.

5.1.2 Findings from the Objective Tests Analysed

Most of the questions used in the objective tested subject-verb agreement. One finding is that the respondents have more problems with these types of subject-verb agreement: proximity concord, grammatical concord and notional concord though these students have been taught these topics. Though some respondents were able to choose the right answers for some of the questions that tested proximity concord, grammatical concord and notional concord, from the analysis, it was discovered that more than half of the respondents did not score most of the questions that tested these sub-categories of subject-verb agreement. The questions included Questions 3, 5, 10, 12, 22, 24 and 25.

Through an interview with the respondents, they explained that they had for instance, the Question 3, which tested proximity concord wrong because the right answer ‘am’ when used did not sound good in their ears. However, ‘is’ sounded good and ‘normal’ in their ears. It is I who (is, am) the head teacher.

More than half of the respondents had Question 10 wrong because some applied the principle of proximity and some also took ‘together with’ as the coordinating conjunction ‘and’ and chose a plural verb ‘were’ instead of ‘was’. The sentence:
The drug dealer together with his agents (was, were) arrested outside the city.

Those who applied the principle of proximity explained that ‘his agents’ is closer to the verb and it is plural so it should control the verb, therefore they chose ‘were’. Those who took ‘together with’ as a coordinating conjunction, but not a pseudo-conjunction replaced ‘together with’ with ‘and’ and chose ‘were’.

For Question 25, the respondents could not identify cost as the headword of the phrase, singular and acts as the subject. Also, they treated ‘in addition to’ as the coordinating conjunction ‘and’, and chose the plural verb ‘equal’.

The sentence:

The cost of my dress in addition to my bag (equal, equals) fifty Ghana cedis only.

The respondents misapplied the rule of verb-verb concord in Question 22 and the Pronoun-antecedent concord in Question 24. Generally, students have learnt and understood the rules concord, but they misapplied these rules.

5.1.3 Factors that Account for the Errors.

A number of factors account for the concord errors made by the respondents. Prominent among these factors are inadequate scope of concord topics in the S.H.S syllabus and textbooks, students’ negative attitude towards the study of the English Language, students’ inability to truly internalize the concord rules of the English Language and how teachers teach the concord rules.
5.1.3.1. The Scope of Concord Topics in the S.H.S Syllabus and Text Books.

Concord is treated under unit three, section three of year two S.H.S syllabus. Surprisingly, concord is treated only in the second year and in the New Gateway to English Book 2 unit 4 pages 28-30. The scope of the categories of concord to be taught is subject-verb agreement.

Therefore, according to the syllabus, teachers of English are supposed to teach grammatical concord, the principle of proximity and notional concord since these are the three main principles, which are involved in subject-verb agreement. The syllabus is silent on other categories such as the pronoun antecedent concord, verb-verb concord and the exceptions to concord rules – the subjunctive mood and the modal auxiliary verbs.

Consequently, if the teachers of English strictly go by the specification of the syllabus, then the students will not be taught other categories of concord except subject-verb agreement. Both the syllabus and the textbooks limit both teachers of English and students from doing detailed work in the area of concord.

The inadequate scope of categories of concord taught at the S.H.S contributes to the numerous concord problems of students of senior high schools.

5.1.3.2 Negative Attitude of Students to the English Language

In the discussions that followed each administration of test on concord to respondents disclosed that one of the prominent factors that contribute to students’ poor performance in English is their negative attitude towards the study of English. In the
literature, it is known that the learner’s attitude affects his or her study of the second language. Schumann (1978a: 35) explains that attitude deals with whether the L2 group and TL group hold positive or negative attitudes toward each other. A positive attitude helps the L2 learner to be more successful in the learning of L2, but a negative attitude makes them less successful.

The integrative and instrumental motivations are the two types of motivations that drive learners in their learning process. Cook (1996:97) explains that integrative motivation involves the learner’s more admiration for the target culture and this great admiration makes the student more successful in the L2 classroom. The instrumental motivation is the student’s motive for learning a second language, which is to pass examination or to get a certain kind of job. Cook (1996:97) adds that L2 motivation is still being researched. Asinyor (2012:116) agrees with Cook in her assertion that L2 motivation is still being researched. Asinyor (2012:116) explains that though Sectech students understand that the educational system in Ghana requires that a student get at least a pass or credit in English before he can proceed with his academic ambitions and these students understand the values of good speaking and writing ability, they are not bothered about studying English.

Agor (2013:165), however, discusses the negative attitude to the teaching of grammar by teachers of English referring to the second cycle institution he visited Presbyterian Boys’ Senior High School (Presec) at Legon. Agor (2003:168) posits that the teaching of grammar of English does help provided it is taught consistently as a means of improving mastery of the language. He further adds that the adoption of any particular approach to the teaching of English grammar should be determined: if
students in an English class could read fluently, understand clearly what they read and express themselves freely in English, then they could be conveniently introduced to some of the rules in Grammar that would help them to edit their own work and eventually produce good writing.

The current researcher found out that students of Koforidua Sectech have relegated the personal study of English Language to the background. They think being successful in the language is automatic. This negative attitude affects their performance in both internal and external examination.

Furthermore, these students’ lackadaisical and ambivalent attitudes about the study of English Language affect the image of the schools. The school is a second-class school and runs both secondary and technical programmes. Most of our science students are not able to qualify for the Medical School because they need eight (8) A’s before they qualify read medicine. Most of these science students are not able to obtain A1’s in WASSCE English language. Students who offer Arts courses are also unable to get admission into the Law School because they are not able to obtain A1 in English Language. Before students will be able to get admission into Law Schools, they should obtain six (6) A’s in six (6) subjects including English Language. Thus, aggregate six (06). Both the Science and Arts students are able to make 7A’s, but a B2 and B3 in English Language deprives them of being admitted into the Medical and Law Schools.

5.2 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 students’ problems with
concord. The solution has pedagogical implications for syllabus designers, textbook writers, teachers of English Language and students of Koforidua Sec Tech and other schools by extention.

5.2.1 Syllabus Designers

Since the only category of concord to be taught in the S.H.S. syllabus relates to the grammatical concord, the present researcher suggests that syllabus designers endeavour to include all the categories or types of concord in the syllabus. These categories can be spread throughout the three-year programme. For instance, in year one, the syllabus may specify two categories, year two others and so on and so forth.

5.2.2 Textbook Writers

Textbook writers should not limit the contents in textbooks they write to the principle grammatical concord. They should emphasise 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.

5.2.3 Teachers of English Language

Teachers of English, especially those at the second cycle must do well to understand all the rules of concord so that in their teaching, they can explain the rules of concord with dexterity for students to internalize the various aspects of the broader concept of concord such as Noun-pronoun, verb-verb, Determiner-noun etc. If teachers of English can decipher which concord rule may be applicable in a particular context,
they can help to clarify a concord rule that perhaps was misunderstood or partially learned by their students.

Teachers of English should feel a strong sense of responsibility towards the students they teach. They should not be only concerned with the success of their students in both internal and external examinations, but these teachers should maintain a good relationship with their students. Positive Teacher-student relationship develops and improves students’ academic performance. Teachers who are affable, maintain a good relationship with their students, and are responsive to their academic needs contribute greatly to the academic well-being of the students.

According to Otavio (2013), teachers should make students more sensitive to concord rules in the input that surrounds them. The more these students notice and re-notice the 3rd person –s outside the classroom, the more likely they are to restructure their interlanguage. Otavio (2013) entreats teachers to encourage students to monitor their speech, which might contribute to long term overall accuracy.

5.2.4 Students in SHS

Students should develop positive attitude towards the study of English Language. They should change their mindset that English Language is automatic and it is more of speech subject than writing and should be prepared to be committed to the study of it. For instance, they should gradually move from lexical intuitive and offer erratic use of third person -s towards more conscious and systematic sort of mapping and deployment of the underlying systems when it comes to the study of concord rules.
Finally, students should revise their notes on concord regularly to avoid deviations associated with concord.

5.2.5 Concluding Remarks

This study discloses that students of Koforidua SecTech have plethora of problems in applying the rules of English Language concord. Students should be aware that it is unpardonable when their constructions of sentences are full of concord rule deviations. For one thing, their speech habits sometimes interfere with their ability to apply the rules of concord. If they have the habit of dropping the Final ‘-s’ from words when they talk, they need to be particularly careful not to leave off the ‘-s’ when they write. Books that are made available to the students must be examined. The students must cultivate the culture of reading because the culture of reading can improve their performance.

The way forward has been suggested in this chapter under the sub-topic pedagogical implications and it is the researcher’s fervent hope that these suggestions would be heeded to in order for students’ concord errors to minimise.
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

1. COMPOSITION QUESTIONS

SECTION A

ESSAY

[50 marks]

Answer one question only from this section. Your answer should be about 450 words long.

You are advised to spend about 50 minutes on this section.

1. Write a letter to the Minister of Education suggesting three ways of making public secondary schools in deprived communities more attractive to students.

2. Write a letter to your friend who stays abroad on three problems affecting your country and suggest three ways of solving them.

3. Write an article for publication in one of your national newspapers expressing your views on “The need for girls to be given equal educational opportunities as boys”.

4. You are the principal speaker in a debate on the topic “Vacation classes should be abolished”. Write your views for or against the motion.

5. Write a story ending with the expression: We regretted venturing into it.

(These are all W.A.S.S.C.E. past questions).
Space exploration started more than half a century ago and has brought many benefits with it. No one can deny that it has taken the world of medicine a bit step forward in that substances of medicinal value can now be made under specially controlled conditions prevailing only in space.

Space exploration has laid bare some of the secrets of the universe. By providing accurate knowledge about the heavenly bodies and the laws which govern them, scientists now know that space is limitless and actually stretches to infinity.

Such precise knowledge has enabled scientists to know the movements of the planet and predict eclipse, partial and total, up to the very day, hour or exact movement of occurrence. This precious knowledge has freed from superstitious views they held. And this is a great relief because when such beliefs have gripped people they think to bring the clock of the development backwards and actually bring all progress to a standstill.

In the field of communication, space exploration has done marvelously well for all mankind. Sensitive scientific instruments, which can measure great distance with accuracy, have been developed. Space exploration has helped to pinpoint the exact positions of oilfields and other mineral deposits for some countries. Needless to say, this has brought a lot of improvements to the financial and economic well-being of these nations. More importantly, space exploration has brought clear understanding of the weather. Scientists are able to make useful predictions to save thousands from natural disasters.
While some people urge scientists on further space exploration, others condemned it in no uncertain terms. They advance sound reasons to discourage the venture. Space exploration, they assert, is one of the most expensive enterprises imaginable, but of little or no real economic value to anyone. One spaceship costs huge sums of money which can best be used to feed the hungry mouths of the earth’s teeming masses. A lot people do not have access to safe drinking water and some are even plagued by various kinds of diseases. If scientists have not solved worrying earthly problems, why should they spend billions on a venture which mankind does not reap any concrete benefits from?

Apart from the above objections, space exploration is risky beyond measure. On one occasion, a crippled spaceship and its human cargo were blown into pieces on re-entry into the earth’s atmosphere. There is no denying the fact that space exploration, more than any other pursuit has worsened atmospheric pollution.

Space is, indeed, a vast endless expanse with bodies of varying sizes, which are either too hot or too cold and totally unfavourable for human habitation. Why then should we embark on a venture that does not benefit anyone?

a. In three sentences, one for each, state the benefits of space exploration.

b. In three sentences, one for each, state the arguments advanced by critics of space exploration. (Summary passage and questions are picked from W.A.S.S.C.E. May/June 2012 English Language Paper 1, pp 7-8)
APPENDIX 3

3. TEST ITEMS ON CONCORD

SECTION C

Select the appropriate verb form from the options provided in the brackets.

1. Both sailors (was, were) attempting to grab the lifeline.

2. Hockey and football (has, have) always been particularly aggressive sports.

3. It is I who (is, am) the headmaster.

4. Several of the students (have, has) gone home.

5. The committee (has, have) regrouped themselves into three factions.

6. Trips to Europe (has, have) become more expensive.

7. There (is, are) too many grammatical errors in this essay.

8. The good news (is, are) that the Black Stars won that tough competition.

9. The effect of the workers’ strike (are, is) spread over the country.

10. The drug dealer, together with his agents, (was, were) arrested outside the city.

11. One of the members of the family (was, were) elected as successor to the throne.
12. Either my parents or Nelson is, are going to the wedding.

13. The couple disagrees, disagree with each other about where they should spend their vacation.


15. That couple has, have been living there for years.

16. One of the disasters which often occurs, occur when you are traveling is to arrive at your destination without your luggage.

17. Neither the headmaster nor the teachers takes, take such a decision.

18. All the soup was, were spilled on the new floor.

19. At the top of the hill stands, stand two majestic oaks.

20. Phil or Caleb usually opens, open the office each morning.

21. Here is, are five examples of hard drugs.

22. In the early sixties, if you listened, listen to an elementary school pupil speaking English, he will, would sound like someone already in the secondary school.

23. (These, This) cars are his.

24. Although the apples were sweet, I did not enjoy (it, them).
25. The cost of my dress in addition to my bag (equal, equals) fifty Ghana cedis only.
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