

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**THE INFLUENCE OF CONCORD ERRORS ON THE USAGE OF
STANDARD ENGLISH AMONG SECOND CYCLE INSTITUTION
STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF SECOND YEAR STUDENTS AT
AKWATIA TECHNICAL INSTITUTES**



VICTORIA OFFEIBEA

MASTER OF EDUCATION

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**A dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics,
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and communication,
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the Requirements for the award of the degree of
Master of Education
(Teaching English as a Second Language) in the University of
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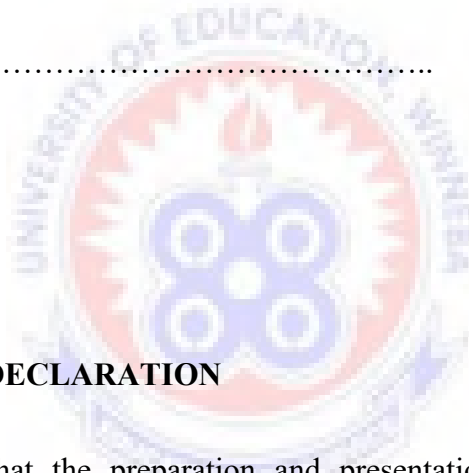
DECLARATION

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

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

SIGNATURE:

DATE:



SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTÉY

SIGNATURE:

DATE:

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and my sisters. I appreciate their encouragement and support without them; I would not have been able to accomplish my Masters education.



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It has never been a smooth ride in pursuing education to this distinct level. There has been several setbacks, challenges and tiring elements which could possibly have prevented me coming this far. Putting these hurdles behind me has proven that there is an element of sheer tenacity which I have never thought existed within myself. To claim that I have finished this dissertation without anybody's help would be selfish and being ungrateful on my part. I thank my family and colleagues who supported me throughout my course of study. It is little wonder, therefore, that I find myself heavily indebted to many people, among them, fellow strugglers, colleague teachers, my course mates and most especially my friends who have been with me through thick and thin. Certain personalities, however, deserve distinct mention for their remarkable, priceless and incalculable contributions to my success this far. I count myself fortunate to have been under the expert guidance and meticulous guidance of a great, dynamic, disciplined, time conscious and hardworking and workaholic supervisor, Dr. Charlotte Fofu Lomotey, whose patience, helpful style of criticisms and above all poised-generating comments have helped to make the dissertation exercise a pleasant, rewarding and undertaking instead of the difficult necessity of a task, I at first imagined the dissertation writing was going to be.

I could sound ungrateful if I fail to acknowledge the support I had from my hardworking, committed and dedicated lecturers I met during my graduate degree at the University of Education, Winneba for their care, words of encouragement and time. I could also like to register my sincerest appreciation to my head of Languages Department of the Akwatia Technical Institute, Mr. Daniel Oduro Tawiah for his support and the entire staff Akwatia Technical Institute staff, especially the English Language Department teachers for their support and words of encouragement. I

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the specific concord problems of students of Akwatia Technical Institute, to find out the possible factors that accounted for the errors, and to suggest ways by which they could make their sentences concordant. Data were collected from second year students of Akwatia Technical Institute using objective test, observation and interview. These were analysed using tables. The findings revealed that the students of Akwatia Technical Institute made all kinds of concord errors, particularly subject-verb concord errors which recorded the highest errors. The way forward has been suggested in the concluding chapter and relates to the involvement of curriculum designers, textbook writers, teachers of English and students and even teachers who do not teach English Language. It is the hope of the researcher that if the suggestions and the recommendations are implemented, students will definitely be able to make their sentences in their write ups concordant and it will also reflect in the academic performance and in their speech.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Concord rules are taught at all levels of education in Ghana, but regrettably, most Senior High School students have challenges making their sentences concordant. In Ghana, students at the second cycle institutions, though have been exposed to the written and spoken forms of the Standard English language, there is inadequate adherence to the rules of concord. From my personal observation as a classroom teacher, it is obviously evident that the main problem in English Language usage transcends both written and oral forms. Even in the second cycle institutions, students still violate English Language concord rules with reckless abandon. The second users of English language in formal and informal or in written and spoken forms often encounter difficulties in obeying concord principles. These issues are more prominent in second cycle institutions in the countries where English language is a second language to the users. This status quo is not different from what the researcher observed in the written and oral usage forms of English Language statements made by students of Akwatia Technical Institute.

The influence of concord errors in the use of English Language is devastatingly obvious amongst students in Akwatia Technical Institute, especially among the second-year students. Even though Ghanaians have an easy access to English Language and have been exposed to it over a long period of time, they tend to make basic errors, even at the advanced levels of language acquisition. Grammar, which refers to the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves is one of the most integral aspect of the English Language which needs to be given the necessary attention. It is therefore

significant for Ghanaians to learn English language grammar because the grammar plays an important role for communication purposes (Ljung & Ohlander, 1992).

In any language, the basic unit of thought that expresses meaning is the sentence. It is generally ordered in some expected pattern. Moreover, in English Language, every sentence has two essential parts, a subject and a complete predicate, which in turn are made up of other parts. However, most students at the various levels of our education system particularly, form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute are faced with a lot of challenges when it comes to the use of concord, hence the focus of this study.

Hudson (1999) asserts that it is very vital for the user of English language to write grammatically correct sentences to avoid disgrace and to lose respect. In this vein it is obvious that incorrect grammar gives a negative impression of the user. English has gained high status, so, it has become one of the preliminary requirements for students' entry into all Second Cycle Institutions in Ghana. Teachers of English Language in general are still unclear about problems of concord. The inability of the form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute to use concord correctly was diagnosed through observation, class exercises, interviews and whole class discussions. The researcher found that, students used a lot of grammatically incorrect sentences in their essays, spoke non-standard English and performed poorly in their concord exercises.

In order to learn English well, both in written and spoken form, students must master vocabulary and grammar rules of English Language itself. Debata (2013) argues that not knowing the grammar of the language is like being a driver who knows nothing about the working engine while knowing the grammar is like being a driver who knows not only driving but also the working machinery. From this illustration, it easily

deducted that one cannot think of learning a foreign language without its grammar. In his article about the importance of grammar in ELT, Debata (2013) states that grammar is an important source of reference when linguistic customs let us down, and a foreign language cannot be learnt correctly just with an unconscious learning. As he discusses, the process of unconscious assimilation of grammar knowledge is not sufficient to speak the target language correctly, clearly and effectively. This strengthens the fact that grammar is a pivotal aspect of language acquisition and naturally, they will be confused on the rules and then will avoid grammar itself. A lot of students have low scores in English language which is as a result of their failure in grammar mastery.

What the researcher diagnosed in the school on concord motivated her to conduct a study into the problems. Though the learners have been acquainted with concord structures from their basic education level, they find it difficult to learn the correct form of the structure. Learners must acquire the basic grammatical knowledge of Subject-verb agreement, in order to improve their level of proficiency in the language (Tan, 2005). There is, however, continuing prevalence of a wide range of errors in students' writing. Teachers, especially those who teach English Language, receive endless complaints from Non-English Language teachers about the incorrect grammar that is reflected in students' writing. The kinds of errors that students commit frequently are subject - verb agreement errors.

Concord as a grammatical category confuses a lot of people who lack proper mastery of grammatical rules. Norrish (1983) is of the view that three main issues make students commit errors in their writing: carelessness on the side of the students, first language interference (the influence of the native language of the learner on his or her acquisition of the target language) and translation.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The insufficient practical teaching, demonstration, and lack of adherence to the principles of concord mostly create gaps for misapplication of various rules and compromise on the Standard English language. The problem of Form two students in the use of concord cannot be over-emphasised. About eighty percent (80%) of the students of Akwatia Technical Institute cannot use concord correctly. This phenomenon is evident in students' written exercises, conversations, class discussions, as well as their responses to oral questions posed by teachers. Teachers of English Language in the school, especially the researcher is worried about the poor use and command of the English Language by a vast majority of the students in the school. Paramount among these problems is the wrong use of concord. In the process of teaching concord in SHS two, it is common to see students forming sentences such as the following:

- “Neither Kwame nor his sister are sick”.
- “Akua drink a lot”.

In both sentences, the verbs “are” and “drink” do not agree with their respective subjects. Experts in this field are of the view that formal classroom instruction in Grammar has impact on students' writing improvement and has discussed how to help students solve grammar problems. An error that students, especially those of Akwatia Technical Institute often make is concord. Is concord necessary for communication purposes? Some say it is not because many languages lack the variations in form that make agreement necessary. Additionally, the ability to understand the message in oral and written communication does not depend on the command of the grammar rules relating concord. Although the message can be clear without the right choice of concord forms as there are other ways of showing the number of the controller such as singular and plural forms of personal pronouns.

However, concord in English is a must because to communicate clearly in English Language, it is necessary to use concord correctly. It is against this background that the researcher has devoted her time and resources to find out the common concord errors amongst second cycle students of Akwatia Technical Institute and also determine factors that influence the causes of common concord errors among second cycle institution students.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The researcher developed interest in this topic due to frequent grammatical errors, dominant among the errors is concord which Form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute make in their write ups, conversation, class discussions as well as asking or responding to questions.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- i. analyze socioeconomic characteristics of Form 2 students in Akwatia Technical institute that influence committing concord errors.
- ii. determine the factors that influence the causes of common concord errors among second cycle institution students.
- iii. identify the common concord errors amongst second year students of Akwatia Technical Institute

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study:

- i. What are the socioeconomic characteristics of the form two students that influence committing concord errors?
- ii. What are the factors that influence the causes of common concord errors among second cycle institution students?

- iii. What are the common concord errors amongst second cycle institution students?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study will be beneficial to students, teachers, parents and whoever studies English Language. For students, it will improve their competence and accuracy in their speaking and writing and build upon their proficiency in the language.

It will offer teachers the opportunity, innovative and effective ways as well as strategies and methods of teaching concord. According to Gifty E. Anani (2017), it will be appropriate for teachers to take pupils through a lot of activities to make grammar lessons interesting, furthermore, she stated that mistakes from pupils should be discussed with them. It will make parents develop positive attitude towards English Language.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

In every human endeavor, there is always bound to be hindrances, interfering the smooth and free flow of important information. Hence the researcher in the course of undertaking this research encountered the following obstacles:

In the first place, combining school activities, social and religious responsibilities within the conduction of the study, rendered the whole research work very cumbersome. Also, absenteeism on the part of the students and their inability to express themselves in English Language posed a problem for the researcher.

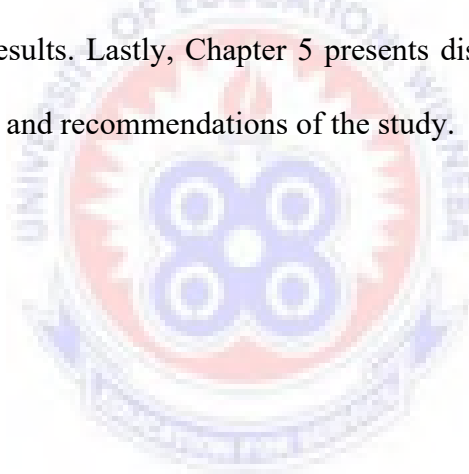
1.8 Delimitation

The study was to be conducted in all Senior High Schools in Ghana but the researcher focused her attention on Form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute. This is because of her personal attachment to the school as a teacher of English language since 2016 up to date. The period has equipped her with first-hand information about

the problems that these students encounter in concord. Therefore, the study was limited to Form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute.

1.9 Organisation of the study

The rest of the study is organized as follows: Chapter 2 highlights the review of vital literatures on the study; it takes a look at stylised facts/contextual review, theoretical review, and then, empirical review of literature. Chapter 3 discusses the methods and the procedures that were used to achieve the specific objectives and the methods of data collection; it sheds light on the conceptual framework and theoretical framework. The chapter also discusses primary source of data, the population to draw the sample from and sample frame. Chapter 4 offers the details of the analyses and the discussions of the results. Lastly, Chapter 5 presents discussions on the summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the stylized facts or contextual concord errors among second user of English language at the second cycle institutions. It also reviews theories of concord errors that influence the written and the spoken of standard English among student at second cycle institutions. In addition, the chapter reviews the empirical literatures on the concord errors of second user of English language among students in the second cycle institutions, especially amongst second year students at the Akwatia Technical institution. The chapter also reviews the definition of concord, the types of concord, the importance of concord, the types of concord errors, the general errors in spoken and written of Standard English and significance of errors. Finally, the chapter concludes on the literature review.

2.2 Stylised facts/contextual review

It is cumbersome to imagine that the second users of a language or to say the first-time users of a language would never slip a tongue, this stance had been affirmed by Dulay and Burt (1977). It is a well-known fact that the first users of a new language would commit several concord errors, as in the case of second year students at the Akwatia Technical institute.

2.3 Theoretical / Conceptual Review

Freeborn (1987) concretized the definition of concord, he put forward a theory that a grammar has made available principles, which has an order arrangement and usage that offer clarity to the users and the hearers, to avoid confusion and ambiguity.

According to Quirk, Greenbaum and Svavik (2005), concord is a sort of association that coordinate two grammatical units, which has opposite correlation, such that as one unit showed a peculiar character like plurality, the second unit must be in an agreement. Yankson (1994) made rigorous definition of concord that concord is an inevitable agreement/coherence that is most needed in a sentence/statement, which aids the user to produce perfect grammatical structure. The inability of the users (native and non-native students) of English language calls for research into this area to find factors influencing the commission of concord error. The word “error” is a Latin word “errare” is defined in the “websters” New International Dictionary of the English language as “a departure from that which is correct.” Corder (1869)

2.4 Empirical Review of literature

Thukur (2002) has stated that concord is embedded with a useful rule of English Language, which guides a verb- subject agreement. Kwofie (2011), citing Yankson (1994) has argued that when second language learners commit grammatical errors, these errors reflect badly on their personality and that they tell listeners something about their educational background and show their inter-language as ‘developing grammar’ that borders on how effective they use the language.

2.4.1 The Definition of Concord

Each authority on the concord aspect of Standard English language has expressed his or her views peculiarly. Concord, according to the Webster’s Word Power Modern Students’ Companion (2014: pp. 117) states that a verb must ‘agree’ with the subject in number. This is to say, a singular subject must follow a singular verb. The implication is that a singular subject must follow a singular verb and vice versa. Gogovi et al (2012, p. 116) states that “the term ‘concord’ or ‘agreement’ in grammar is used to describe the association between the inflectional forms of different elements within

a sentence”. This means that pronouns agree with their nouns. Blake (1988, p. 90) has stated that “the principle that the form of one grammatical unit in a sentence is influenced by the features of a different unit within the same sentence, it is referred to as concord”.

2.4.2 Types of Concord

Concord can be grouped into four main categories. These are: Grammatical concord, Notional concord, Proximity concord and Pronoun concord.

2.4.2.1 Grammatical Concord

Wiredu [1990] defines grammatical concord as the relationship that exists between the subject of a clause and its accompanying verb. Honsby [2002] describes grammatical concord as the fact of having the same number, gender, or person.

The most important type of concord in English is subject-verb agreement which involves, mainly, number and person. For a sentence to be grammatical concord, all the components of the structure must agree with one another.

For example, the subject must agree with verbs within the sentences.

Examples:

1. The man sleeps every morning.
2. The farmers work every day.

2.4.2.2 Pronoun Concord

This refers to the agreement which exists between a pronoun and the noun it refers to. The agreement here involves three major features associated with pronouns. These are number, person, and gender [Wiredu,1990]. Pronouns in English Language generally display distinction in terms of:

- a) Number- whether it is singular or plural
- b) Person- whether it is 1st, 2nd or 3rd person

c) Gender- whether it is masculine, feminine, or non-human

Pronouns that take the place of a noun must be either plural or singular just like the noun they represent.

Example: 1. Everyone has his or her own way of doing things. (*Correct*)

2. Everyone has their own way of doing things. (*Incorrect*)

All the rules of pronoun agreement are based on the rules of subject-verb agreement.

Pronouns must also agree in person.

Example: I like rice because I enjoy eating it. (*Correct*)

I like rice because you enjoy eating it. (*Incorrect*)

2.4.2.3 Proximity Concord

According to Wiredu (1999), there is proximity concord if the agreement between the verb and its subject is because there is a nominal group fact, which is immediately close to the verb. The word proximity means closeness in distance or time, whereby, concord simply means subject verb agreement (<http://hosbeg.com>) subject-verb agreement is the relation that exists between two grammatical units. It means a subject must agree with its verb. Proximity concord usually does not agree with the subject in the sentence or the clause, it agrees with the noun which is the closest and the numerous as the specific noun (Crystal, 2004: 75). For instance, in the sentences below:

Either Kofi or his masters were here

Either his masters or Kofi was here

In these examples, the plural form 'were' is selected because of its proximity to the plural nominal group "his masters". And the singular verb "was" has been chosen in the second sentence, because of its proximity to the singular nominal group 'Kofi.'

Yankson (1994) defines proximity concord as "the verb agreeing with the noun immediately, preceding it in a sentence.

Examples of proximity concord are as follows:

- 1) Either the girls or the woman goes to church.
- 2) Neither Araba nor her sisters were here
- 3) Not only the farmers, but also the teachers were complaining
- 4) Neither his bikes nor his car is faulty.

From the example above, the subject of the various sentences has been made bold. The verbs have also been italicized. The verb corresponds with the subject which is closer to it. If the subject is singular, then automatically the verb is also singular, if the subject is plural, its corresponding verb becomes plural.

2.4.2.4 Notional concord

According to Sekyi-Baidoo (2002), notional concord can be described as the agreement between the verb and the subject according to the perception (that is the idea of numbers) rather than the actual display of grammatical feature for the idea of numbers) rather than the actual display of grammatical feature for the idea.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1985, p. 360) asserts that “notional concord is agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for the idea”. Wiredu (1999) sees notional concord as the agreement that exists between the verb and the subject not because the subject has form that shows it but rather the speaker's perception is considered.

2.5 Rules of Concord

If the subject and verb of a sentence do not agree, that sentence is ungrammatical; we therefore speak of errors in agreement or faulty agreement. To avoid this, we must adhere to the rules of concord. Brown (2009, p. 134) states the following rules of concord:

(a) A verb must agree with its subject in number/person; that is, a singular verb should follow a singular subject: and a plural verb should follow a plural subject. Examples are;

(i) The fan is on the table.

(ii) The pens are mine.

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

Examples:

(1) The principal as well as his vice, is too lazy.

(ii) Richmond, together with his friends, is handsome.

(b) Indefinite pronouns such as everyone, everybody, nobody, someone, somebody take singular verbs.

Examples:

(i) Everyone is late.

(ii) Someone was here.

(iii) Everybody dislikes a cheat.

There are other subjects which appear like plural but function as singular;

(i) Each of the students owns a car.

(ii) One of the female teachers is lazy.

(c) When two or more subjects are joined by 'and' and refer to the same person or thing, the verb is in the singular. However, compound subjects referring to two different people or things take plural verb.

Examples:

- (i) His friend and teacher is caring.
- (ii) Kwame and his wife have arrived.
- (d) When two subjects (a compound subject) refer to the same thing or is thought of as a single idea, a singular verb is used.

Examples:

- (i) Bread-and-butter is very sweet.
- (ii) Rice-and-stew is my favorite.
- (e) Some nouns appear plural in form but are singular in meaning and therefore take singular verbs.

Examples;

- (i) Economics is a very broad subject.
- (ii) The sports news was aired few hours ago.
- (f) When singular subjects are joined by “not only but also”, “neither... nor”, “either... or”, the verb is in the singular. Example;
- (i) Not only the president but also his wife was present at the party.
- (ii) Neither my father nor my mother was present at the P.T.A meeting.

However, if the subjects differ in the number/person, the verb agrees with the subject (noun) nearer to it.

Examples:

- (i) Either the students or the teacher has to come.
- (ii) Neither the teacher nor the students seem lazy.
- (g) A collective noun takes a singular verb when the group is regarded as one unit. But a collective noun takes a plural verb when emphasis is placed on the individual

members of the group; that is, the individual members of the group are acting separately.

Examples;

(i) The food committee is meeting today. (together).

(ii) The audience was clapping. (together).

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

Examples;

(i) That kind of food is outdated.

[ii] Those kinds of cars are in high demand.

Nouns (subjects) that are always regarded as plural take plural verbs.

Examples are Police, people, cattle.

(i) The cattle look healthy.

(ii) The police are hard-working.

2.6 Types of Concord Errors

The following are examples of concord errors: Grammatical Error, Subject-verb Agreement Errors, Sentence Fragments Errors, and Proximity Errors.

2.6.1 Grammatical Errors

Grammatical errors thus mean inaccurate forms, semantics meanings and use. According to James (1998, p. 77) “an error arises only when there was no intention to commit one”. Errors are systematic, consistent deviance produced by learner’s linguistic system at a given stage of learning. This type of concord, although seen as one of the basic principles underlying the concept of concord, is grossly violated by selected students. Subject verb agreement is one of the difficulties students face in trying to use the target language. That is the English Language. Subject-verb agreement

is the first rule of grammar that is taught at basic level when students are learning the language. Subject-Verb Agreement Errors are very serious and signal that the writer does not have mastery over the English Language. Thus, it is important that writers understand the following different situations that might cause subject-verb agreement errors. This rule states that, the subject in a sentence must agree with the verb in person and in number. This means that, if the subject is singular, the verb should also be singular and vice versa. This rule is most often violated by students of English and even teachers who teach the language in schools. For instance, in the sentence below:

‘She go to school every day’,

It can be deduced that, the student could not identify the subject of the noun phrase which is a singular and has to go with a singular verb. This makes the statement erroneous. If students are helped to identify the subject in the sentence and know whether it is singular or plural, they can easily learn to avoid this unpardonable type of error.

A grammatical or a subject-verb agreement will arise when a student uses a singular subject for plural verb and vice versa. It also happens when the prepositional groups which serve as subjects are also regarded as plural instead of singulars.

Some examples of grammatical errors are as follows:

- I. Subject-verb agreement errors
- II. Sentence fragments
- III. Missing comma after introductory sentence
- IV. No Comma in a Compound Sentence
- V. Misplaced or Dangling modifier
- VI. Vague pronoun Reference
- VII. Wrong Word Usage

VIII. Run-On Sentence

IX. Superfluous Commas

X. Colon Mistakes

2.6.2 Subject-verb Agreement Errors

The subject and the verb of a sentence must agree with one another in number whether they are singular or plural. If the subject of the sentence is a singular subject, its verb must also be a singular verb, and if the subject is a plural subject, the verb must also be a plural verb.

Example 1:

- An important person have arrived. (*Incorrect*)
- An important person has arrived. (*Correct*)

Example 2:

- The two things we learnt was about honesty and obedience. (*Incorrect*)
- The two things we learnt were about honesty and obedience. (*Correct*)

2.6.3 Sentence Fragments Errors

Sentence fragments are incomplete sentences that don't have one independent clause. A fragment may lack a subject, a complete verb, or both. Sometimes fragments depend on the preceding sentence to give it meaning. Fragment sentences are also unfinished sentences. They are also punctuated as if they are sentences. It is an incomplete structure, which does not contain a subject-predicate unit, and thus, does not express meaningful thought, despite beginning with a capital and ending with a punctuation mark. Fragments can occur in the following situations:

- a. When the subject is missing
- b. When the verb is missing
- c. When both the subject and verb are missing

d. When the intended sentence is a dependent clause

Example 1:

- He gave his students the grade. In spite of everything. (Incorrect)
- In spite of everything, he gave the student the grade. (Correct)

2.6.4 Missing Comma after Introductory Element

A comma should be used after an introductory word, phrase, or clause. This gives the reader a slight pause after an introductory element and often can help avoid confusion.

Example 1:

- In case you haven't noticed my real name doesn't appear in the list. (*Incorrect*)
- In case you haven't noticed, my real name doesn't appear in the list. (*Correct*)

2.6.5 No Comma in a Compound Sentence

A comma separates two or more independent clauses in a compound sentence separated by a conjunction. The comma goes after the first clause and before the coordinating conjunction that separates the clauses.

Example 1:

- The thief ran into the black car and he drove away before being noticed by the police. (Incorrect)
- The thief ran into the black car, and he drove away before being noticed by the police.

2.6.6 The Proximity Errors

Proximity simply means nearness. Students are always at a fix when it comes to which verb to select when two subjects that are joined by correlatives: either...or, neither...nor, not.... But, the verb however agrees with the noun nearest to it. Students are always confused as to which of the two subjects will determine the verb form to

select when the need arises. They therefore end up selecting the wrong verb in sentences where there are to select the verb when two subjects are joined by correlatives in a sentence.

2.6.7 The Tense Error

The use of appropriate and suitable tense is another trouble spot for the learners. A major blemish that is likely to occur in concord under tense is as follows:

- Simple present for simple past
- Simple past for simple present
- Present continuous for simple present
- Past/ present continuous for simple past
- Future for present simple
- Present perfect for simple present
- Present perfect for simple past

Duskova (1969) suggests that the use of the present tense instead of the past is a mistake in performance.

2.7 Causes of Concord Errors

A lot of causes and sources of errors have been introduced by some authorities. In the following section the primary causes of errors will be reviewed: Interlingua errors and intralingua errors. Interlingua errors are those which are related to the native language (NL). That's to say there are interlingua errors when the learners' NL habits (patterns, systems or rules) interfere or prevent them, to some degree, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1971). Interference (negative transfer) is the negative influence of the mother tongue language (MTL) on the performance of the target language (TL) learner (Lado, 1964). The following are some examples of causes of concord error:

2.7.1 Lack of Competent Teachers of English

The teaching technique demands that the teachers to transfer knowledge they have into suitable task, which leads to learning." In addition, they express their views by saying that effective teaching occurs where the learning experience structure by the teacher matches the needs of the learners. The teachers motivate the learner, which enhances student ability to learn. The interest of the teacher in the course that he or she is teaching makes the student put more effort in the course. It is the teachers duty to help students through giving them series of assignments, which will improve their knowledge of English Language.

Students make a lot of mistakes as a result of the teacher factor, i.e. poor teaching pedagogies that the teachers used, which denote their incompetency at the subject area. In most cases, English language teachers in various schools resort to the use of mother tongue to teach and explain the English language even up to the senior high school level.

2.7.2 Lack of Teaching Materials

Teaching materials especially textbooks are really affecting the teaching of English language specifically concord in senior high schools. As it is not possible for the teachers to touch all aspects of the subject in the classrooms, students are expected to be guided by textbooks designed for their level. Good textbooks provide most students with the situation in which learning takes place. The non-availability of textbooks for teaching concord in most Senior High Schools is one of the problems the students are faced with in the learning of the English language concord. Also, highest of production and publication makes the prices of textbooks to be expensive and scarce in the market which makes students rely on the grammar books that are not standardized. Poor quality in teaching concord may also arise due to lack of sufficient

materials in order for the teachers to carry out their works effectively. If the motivation is not there, there is no way the teachers will have a high morale in teaching it (concord).

2.7.3 Learner Background

The background of the learner is another cause of concord error worthy to note. The background here has to do with where the student is coming from and the training the student has gone through with regards to the learning of English concord. Domfe (2015, p. 19) citing Leech et al (1982) supported this by saying that the decline in students' standard and writing of the English Language can be attributed to the background of the average learner. A student who is coming from a home where the family is financially sound is likely to get access to good textbooks which he/she can learn to improve upon his/her English. Therefore, to minimize concord errors, parents are to provide their wards with good learning materials like recommended textbooks written by astute authors that have gone through the mill, computers to access the internet for vital information.

Students coming from poor socio-economic background whose parents cannot afford good grammar books and don't get access to libraries have problems with English concords when it comes to the use of the English Language usage and end up making mistakes when speaking the language. The learner's background cannot be neglected to the background when looking at the causes of concord errors. In a nutshell, it can be concluded that, the above factors can promote errors in students' learning. Therefore, to achieve proficiency in the speaking of the English Language, the above factors that cause errors should be addressed to eliminate or minimize errors in the classroom and in our utterances.

2.8 Sources of errors

Errors can be INTER lingual or INTRAlingual. This means that they may occur between two languages where a speaker negatively influences the usage of a second language with a first language or a speaker makes errors within a language without external language influences. Errors can be grouped into two main categories:

2.8.1 Inter-lingual/Global Influence

Inter-lingual transfer or interference can be on various levels as phonetics and phonology, morphology, semantics and environmental effects on the acquisition. The following are example of errors due to the first language influences on a second language learner.

2.8.1.1 Phonetic and Phonological Interference

A native speaker of Kusaal, a Ghanaian language, is not able to produce the sound /ts/ because it does not exist in their language. A person with Twi as L1 is not able to product the voiceless dental /θ/, because it's not found in their language. They replace it with either /t/ or /f/, depending on the position of the sound in each word. For example, Path - /pæθ/ becomes /paf/ with - /wIθ/ becomes /wIf/ /wIt/. Phonologically, some Ghanaian languages does not permit some consonant clusters of English like /sp/ and /sk/. This, when such learners meet those clusters, especially at the final position, they are interchanged. So /sp/ becomes /ps/ and /sk/ becomes /ks/

2.8.2 Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors are those that occur within a given language without the interference of a learner's L1. There can be errors within language which are not due to the influence of any other language. They surface as a result of overgeneralization, context of learning, avoidance of fossilization. This covers instances where learners of

a second language create a deviant structure based on their experience of other structures of the L2. Overgeneralizations are as follow:

2.8.2.1 Morphologically

The suffix 'ed' as a past and perfect marker for regular verbs in English is transferred to all verbs. Therefore, because 'wash' and 'show' is 'washed' and 'showed' respectively in the past and / or perfect form the following words are given the same suffix to the same tense and aspect. dig -----> digged instead of dug, break -----> broke instead of broke, know -----> knowed instead of knew.

2.8.3 Context of Learning

These are the errors that occur in the process of learning. James (1998) refers to them as induced error. He divided them into subcategories as Material induced, Teacher induced, Exercise based induced and errors induced by pedagogical priorities.

2.8.4 Fossilization

Errors become difficult to get rid of because it has been in existence for long periods. Someone who has pronounced 'bread' as 'blead' for long will not be able to change it. Also, Ghanaians generalize popular brand name for other brands of the same kind of product. For example key soap for all bar soap and pepsodent for all tooth paste.

2.9 The importance of Concord Errors in Language learning

The following are some of the role of concord errors in the teaching and learning of English Language. Errors are not always considered bad in target language usage attempt by learners. According to Corder (1967) errors are crucial because they are a means which learners use in order to learn. They offer an indication of the learners' competence of the target language they have to learn. The important contributions of

language learners' errors in the area of language learning and teaching have been extensively echoed in the literature.

When errors show out, an attempt to investigate them by the teacher is always expected as, according to Corder (1974), the systematic analysis of errors committed by L2 learners offers teachers an opportunity to decide which area needs particular attention. Researchers also believe that errors comprise important evidence with regard to the approaches that learners use in order to acquire a language. Despite their regressive nature, they could be a yardstick of the progress made by the learners to master the language.

In the L2 classroom, errors will always aid by which teachers will evaluate learning and teaching and give an indication of which language areas require emphasis AbiSamra, (2003). Although in some quarters errors are viewed as an unacceptable failure which requires being totally eliminated. Khansir (2012) confirms that studies of second language acquisition focus on learners errors because they give a prediction of the difficulties involved in acquiring a second language. Therefore, the analysis of errors has double functions; that of showing a distinctive learning shortcoming and foretelling what possible errors learners will commit in their writing and speech.

2.10 Conclusion

To summarise, the problem of wrong usage of concord cannot be overstretched, since learners of English Language of which Form2 students of Akwatia Technical Institute are no exception to the commitment of concord errors. The chapter of this work has successfully addressed matters that have a bearing on the subject under study which are concord errors. The chapter reviewed the stylized facts, conceptual review, empirical review of literatures, definitions of concord. In addition the chapter

highlighted on the types of concord errors, causes and types of concord errors, importance of concord errors, and rules of concord errors.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.0 Introduction

This chapter clearly defines the research method used to conduct the study. The researcher clearly outlines how the necessary data and information to address the research objectives and questions were collected and presented. Reasons and justifications for the research designs, research instruments, data sources, and data collection techniques are given. The study was conducted to investigate into the concord errors of the students of the Akwatia Technical Institute. Research methodology is one of the essential components of any research study conducted. The chapter also presents the methods the researcher used in analyzing the concord errors among the students of Akwatia Technical Institute, in the Denkyemba District in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Different research methods have different purposes and different levels of validity. Polit and Beck (2004) also explained methodology as ways of obtaining, systematizing and analyzing data. This implies that, to successfully carry out a standard based research, the researcher has to adopt and use good methods. Research methodology provides the framework upon which the process is conducted. The methodology used was adopted to help the researcher to properly assess the influence of concord errors on the usage of Standard English among students of Akwatia Technical Institute.

3.1 Research approach

According to Creswell (2014), research approaches are plans and the procedures for research that spans the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. A qualitative research approach, according to Nunan (1992), deals with the use of qualitative methods and is “concerned with

understanding human behaviour from the actor's own frame of reference" (p. 4). It seeks to discover the details of a situation from the perspective of the players involved rather than the researcher's. Qualitative approach uses the actual data from the context, which provides a real and true picture of the phenomenon under study. It is "ungeneralisable" and appropriate for single case studies (Nunan, 1992). The researcher adopted this approach in order to understand the phenomenon under study.

3.2 Research design

A case study research design is the design used by the researcher. A case study, according to Yin (1984), "is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (p. 23). Nunan (1992) explains a case study to be one that concerns itself with "studying phenomena in context," and is limited in scope and focus (p. 75).

3.3 Study Area

The Eastern region is the region in which the study is undertaken. The study specifically will be undertaken at Akwatia Technical institute in Akwatia, Denkyembaour district.

3.4 Population

The researcher targeted the population of the form two students of the Akwatia Technical Institute students where the researcher teaches as a professional teacher of the English Language in the Denkyembaour District in the Eastern part of Ghana. The school runs thirteen programmes namely; Motor Vehicle Engineering (Automobile Engineering), Electrical Engineering Technology, Plumbing and Gas Fitting Technology, Hospitality and Catering Management, Fashion Design Technology, Business Studies in Information Technology, Business Studies in Accounting,

Computer Hardware Technology, Electronic Engineering Technology, Wood Construction Technology, Mechanical Engineering Technology, Building and Construction Technology, Welding and Fabrication Technology. All the students of Akwatia Technical Institute study all the core subjects namely; English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science, Social Studies, Information and Communication Technology and Physical Education which are offered by all the students in the school. The researcher chose the second year students across the thirteen programs offered by the institution. The total number of students taught by the researcher is 541 students made up of 396 boys and 145 girls. The school offers boarding and day options for students. Out of the 396 boys in second year, 236 are boarders and 160 are day students. Of the 145 girls in second year, 136 are boarders and nine (9) are day students. This means that there are more boys than girls in second year of Akwatia Technical Institute.

3.5 Sample and sampling technique

Sampling is related with the selection of a subset of individuals from within a population to estimate the characteristics of the whole population, according to (Kish 1965). It refers to a group of people, objects or items that are taken from a larger population for measurement. The sample serves as a basis for generalization of the findings from the research. Sampling is used to fairly generalise results back to the population from which they were chosen. Generally, it enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population, and to obtain data that are representative of the whole target population.

A simple random sampling was used in selecting the respondents for the study. This sampling technique was used by the researcher because it afforded all the members under consideration a fair chance of being selected by the researcher because of proximity and the constraints of time. A total of one hundred and eighty three (183)

students were selected for the study, after the simple random sampling was done by the researcher when all the students were assembled to do the picking of either yes/no with the support of colleague teachers in the Language Department specifically Teachers of English of the Akwatia Technical Institute. Students were given papers with yes or no folded for them to select one and those who selected yes, were selected for the study and those who picked no were also thanked by the researcher and asked not to see themselves as losers because they were not picked. Students were not displeased because they considered their elimination out of the study as a result of luck not being on their side.

The sampling design follows five steps: step 1 “Define the population and Sampling unit.” Students answer questionnaires in a random manner. Step 2 “Construct the sampling frame.” The construction of sampling is based on drawing from step 1. Student list will be prepared in the school for the study. Step 3: the appropriate sample size will be determined. The logistical and time constraints will determine and limit the sample size to one hundred and eighty-two (182) students in Form 2 class. Step 4: the sample was distributed equally. The sample of students was selected randomly from 13 classes of form two students. Step 5: “select the actual sample.” 14 students were selected from each of the 13 classes. Colleague teachers aided in the administration of the questionnaire to the respondents.

3.6 Research instruments

Research instruments are measurement/tools (for example, questionnaires or scales) designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. Research Instruments refer to various methods through which a researcher obtains data from

respondents for his research work. Research instruments are measurement tools designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. The researcher used some of the common educational research instruments. The instruments the researcher used for data collection in the study were interview, objective test items and written essay scripts of the second year students of the Akwatia Technical Institute.

The research instruments are important for collecting data in all types of research methods. These instruments were to be valid, reliable and usable. The validity has to do with the degree to which an instrument measures what it intends to measure. The usability has to do with the ease with which an instrument can be administered, interpreted by the participant, and scored/interpreted by the researcher. Reliability can be thought of as consistency. It is directly related to the validity of the measure. For the fact that this study focused on finding students' concord errors, the use of tests, interviews and written scripts were the appropriate instruments.

3.7 Data collection procedure

The data will be in two stages. First stage; primary data from students in form two at Akwatia Technical institute will used: semi-structured questionnaires will be administered to the respondents. The second stage will be an essay type question, which will be given to the respondents, to see how they can obey concord rules and the various errors that will surface from their writing skills; as well as structured questions on the various problems like grammatical concord, proximity concord, notional concord and pronoun concord, which the students often encounter in the use of the Standard English will be posed to them.

To determine the factors that influence the causes of common concord errors among second cycle institution students, the researcher used unstructured interviews.

3.7.1 Test (Objectives)

Tests were used to ascertain the understanding of the students in relation to concord errors. One of the most common instruments used in the school is test.

The researcher used test as one of the instruments for the study. This test was carried out to find out how the students of the Akwatia Technical Institute could identify the various forms of concord in the fourth week of the 2019/2020 Academic year. An objective test of twenty questions was designed by the researcher to cover the types of concord taught to find out students' knowledge about the rules of concord and how they apply these rules. The questions were administered to all the one hundred and eighty-two students of form two students of Akwatia Technical Institute sampled through the random sampling. The students were given forty minutes to answer the questions. The test was marked by the researcher and the answers were discussed with the students, specifically the respondents after class. The researcher created the avenue for students to ask questions about the errors they made after the test. The researcher appreciated the students for making themselves available for the exercise.

3.7.2 Written Tests

The written test which is synonymous to essay tests is an open type of test which seeks to allow students compose their own response without any options given to them. It seeks to check the overall comprehension of the students. Essay-type assessment is a sensitive test requiring students not only to recall facts but also to use high-order cognitive skills. The essay test gives full freedom to the students to write any number of pages and require the students to plan and organize for themselves how the response would be.

The respondents were given five composition test questions to select one. The questions were set by researcher on behalf of all the form two teachers of English

Language. Each respondent was required to select one question from the five (5) essay questions given by the researcher to write using about four hundred and fifty (450) words within an hour. Fifty marks was assigned to each question. The purpose of the essay questions given was to give the respondents the opportunity to bring out their actual proficiency or competence with regards to their application of English concord rules in the English Language syllabus of the Senior High Schools. The researcher with the help of other teachers of the English Language collected the exam scripts of the second year students of the Akwatia Technical Institute students.

These scripts were examined by the researcher to find out concord errors of the respondents under study. Also, the researcher wanted to minimize the possibility of guessing for answer provided which is not part of subjective essays. The questions most of the students answered were the letter writing questions that were provided to the respondents because that is the questions most of the respondents were familiar with. The questions given to the respondents were standard questions based on the topics in the syllabus for Senior High Schools in Ghana.

3.7.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. Questionnaires can be thought of as a kind of written interview. They can be carried out face to face or by telephone. Questionnaires provide a relatively cheap, quick and efficient way of obtaining large amounts of information from a large sample of people. The researcher used both closed and open questions to collect data from the respondents.

Closed questions were structured in such a way that the responses are pre decided for the respondents to choose from. Data was placed in a nominal form which sought to restrict the respondents. Closed questions have been used to research type A

personality. (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974), and also to assess life events which may cause stress and attachment (Fraley, Waller, & Brennan, 2000). Open questions were used by the researcher to allow the respondents to freely express themselves and to bring out what they think about questions posed to them. The open ended questions sought to enable the respondents to answer in as much detail as they liked in their own words. The researcher used open questions to ascertain qualitative data from the respondents.

3.7.4 Interview

An interview is a conversation where questions are asked and answers are given. In common, the word 'interview', refers to a one-to-one conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee. It is also a two-way conversation. Interview can also be said to be a process where a researcher solicits information from respondents through verbal or written interaction. The researcher prepared a schedule list of structured questions pertinent to the study before meeting respondents for their opinions on the subject matter under discussion. The researcher used unstructured interview. The major advantage of this method is that it produces high response rate. Besides, it tends to be representative of the entire population of the study and personal contact with the respondents and researcher enables the researcher to explain confusing and ambiguous questions in detail.

The researcher asked teachers and respondents questions and sought answers from them. Questions like areas they prefer teaching in the syllabus etc. were asked and relevant answers were provided by the teachers of English Language. Interviews were conducted by the researcher by asking respondents questions on why their errors in concord and also why students applied or misapplied the rules of concord and how they apply these rules. It was also to ascertain the specific difficulties of these students as

far as concord is concerned. It was through these informal interviews that the researcher gathered information about the attitude of students towards their personal use of the English Language and why their errors in concord. Similarly, teachers of the English Language from the Akwatia Technical Institute who teach the subject were interviewed on the reasons why students make errors in concords.

The researcher administered the test and the interview with the help of other teachers during the respondents' English periods and also during intervention classes organized for students. Respondents were informed of the purpose of the exercise before the test and unstructured interview was undertaken. The respondents responded to the questions in the presence of the researcher. The test items were collected after the exercise for maximum retrieval and participation. The researcher expressed his gratitude to the respondents and encouraged them to take their lessons seriously. The respondents were advised to read wide and not limit themselves to only their textbooks. The researcher encouraged the use of exercise books for note taking on vocabulary building. For the interview, only some selected students among the respondents were engaged. Teachers of the English Language were also interviewed. The researcher also collected data on the study under investigation by using the written scripts of the respondents by using a book to write all the errors students made.

3.8 Data analysis

The basic tools of analysis of the data were item analysis, tabular and graph presentation. The researcher also employed the use of the Corder's (1974) error analysis model to aid in his analysis. Corder's (1974) model was adopted by the researcher for the analysis of students' concord errors. This model involved the stages commonly used to analyze errors. For the purpose of this study, these steps were used by the researcher

to suit the nature of the study after the selection of a corpus which was the test item and the written scripts.

The stages were:

- Identification of errors - The error was identified from both the exams scripts and the test.
- Classifications of errors - Concord errors were classified according to their types. For instance, subject-verb concord, proximity etc. were identified.
- Explanation of errors- The researcher explained the causes and sources of the concord errors of the respondents.
- Evaluation of errors- This is the last stage of the Corder's error model where the errors were evaluated to find the extent of the problem and if there would be the need for intervention.

With the use of the Corder's errors Analysis Model, the errors were identified, classified and the errors explained and evaluated.

3.9 Conclusion

The researcher did not restrict herself to the use few data collection instruments, however the choice of the instruments were purely based on the nature of the problem to be investigated in the face of prevailing circumstances such as time constraints. Thus, the researcher was free to use any method deem fit for the research. The chapter discusses the research design used for the study, sources of collecting data for the study, where the data was collected, the population of the respondents used for the study, sample and sampling procedure used for the study and the research instruments that were used by the researcher to collect and analyze data on the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the analysis and discussions of data gathered from the field. The analysis and discussions are based on the research questions in relation to the purpose of the study, which is, to investigate and analyze how concord errors influence the usage of standard English Language among second cycle institution students and to bring to limelight the extent and gravity of concord errors so as to make English Language teachers aware of the nature and importance of the errors students commit, to enable them design intervention measures to address the problems related to concord. The analysis also considers the two groups of respondents; pupils and teachers, involved in the study.

4.1 The socioeconomic characteristics of the form two students that influence committing concord errors

This question is to assist the researcher to identify some of the socio-economic characteristics of students that influence them in committing concord errors.

4.1.1 Occupation of parents

Table 3 shows that the fathers of 37 (20.3%) students are teachers, another 37 (20.3%) are into trading, 8 (4.4%) are auto mechanics, 13 (7.1%) are into mining, 1 (0.6%) is into nursing, 12 (6.6%) are in the security forces, 2 (1.1%) are in the clergy, 16 (8.8%) are drivers, 14 (7.7%) are artisans, 4 (2.2%) are bankers and, 4 (2.2%) are accountants. It is again noticed that, mothers of 23 (12.6%) students are into teaching, 117 (64.3%) are traders, 20 (11.0%) are farmers, 8 (4.4%) are nurses, 2 (1.1%) are in the clergy and 12 (6.6%) are artisans.

It is instructive from the forgoing that a significant majority of the students are from homes that can conveniently be considered low class with mothers of as high as 81.9% of students engaged in such activities as trading, farming and artisanship. In the same vain, the fathers of as many as 122 (67.0%) of the students are involved in such areas of employment as trading, farming, auto mechanic, mining, driving, and artisanship. Not so many of the parents of the students are involved in activities that may be classified as middle class. 33 (18.1%) in the case of the mothers and 60 (33.0%) with respect to the fathers. It can be inferred from the above that majority of the students live with parents whose knowledge and command of the English language is below average hence, most of these students' acquaintance with the language on any sustained basis only occurs at school. Lack of the usage of the language on a regular basis is thus one of the factors that cause them to commit unpardonable concord errors. Domfe (2015) cited by (Leech, et al, 1982) supported this by saying that the decline in students' standard and writing of the English language can be attributed to the background of the average learner. He further asserts that, a student who comes from a home where the family is financially sound is likely to get access to good textbooks which he/she can learn to improve upon his/her English language.

Table 4.1.1. Occupational background of Parents of the Students

Occupation	Fathers		Mothers	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Teaching	37	20.3	23	12.6
Trading	37	20.3	117	64.3
Farming	33	18.1	20	11.0

Auto	8	4.4		
Mechanic				
Mining	14	7.7		
Nursing	1	0.6	8	4.4
Security Force	12	6.6		
Clergy	2	1.1	2	1.1
Driving	16	8.8		
Artisans	14	7.7	12	6.6
Banking	4	2.2		
Accountant	4	2.2		
Total	182	100.0	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.1.2 Regularity and Punctuality of Students at School

When students were asked whether they were regular to school, 151 of them answered in the affirmative, while 31 of them said they were not particularly punctual. Of those who said they were not punctual to school, 14 (sickness), 12 (lack of money), 4 (travelling) and 1 (no reason)

4.1.3 Locality of Basic School Student Respondents Attended

From Table 4.1.1, it is noticed that 90 (49.5%) of the student respondents attended basic schools located in rural areas, 61 (33.5%) attended basic schools that are in peri-urban areas and 31 (17.0%) had the schools they attended located in urban areas. It can be construed from the foregoing that many of the students committed concord

errors due to the fact that quite a significant number of them, 151 (83.0%), attended basic schools located in rural and peri-urban areas where majority of pupils in basic schools are known to have huge challenge in expressing themselves in English language.

Table 1.1.3. Locality in which Basic School Students Attended is Located

Description of Locality	Frequency	%
Rural area	90	49.5
Peri-Urban area	61	33.5
Urban area	31	17.0
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.1.4 Radio Stations Students Listen to

From Table 6, 151 (83.0%) of the students indicated they listen to local language radio stations and 31 (17.0%) listen to English language radio stations. Again, it can be deduced from the above data that the overwhelming majority of the students listen to radio stations that use predominantly Ghanaian language, to be specific, twi. This is one of the main reasons why the students make such errors in relation to concord.

Table 4.1.4. Radio Stations Students Listen to

Radio Station Type	Frequency	%
Local language	151	83.0
English language	31	17.0
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.2 Factors that influence the causes of common concord errors among second cycle institution students

This question to assist the researcher to gain insight into some of the underlying factors that influenced students to commit concord errors.

4.2.1 Language Usually Spoken by Students

Per the data from Table 6, it is observed that, 41 (22.5%) of the student respondents indicated they usually spoke Standard English language at home, 10 (5.5%) said they usually spoke non-standard English language and 131 (72.0%) indicated the usually spoke Ghanaian language at home. On the other hand, 65 (35.7%) said they usually spoke Standard English language in school, 35 (19.2%) indicated they spoke non-standard English language in school and 82 (45.1%) maintained they usually spoke Ghanaian language in school. It can be deduced that since a huge chunk of the students do not speak English language at home 141 (77.5%) nor even at school 117 (64.3%) then, they will be deficient in the correct usage of the as a result of the lack of regular practice.

Table 4.2.1. Language Spoken by Students at home and in School

Language Spoken	Home		School	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Standard English Language	41	22.5	65	35.7
Non-Standard English Language	10	5.5	35	19.2
Ghanaian Language	131	72.0	82	45.1
Total	182	100.0	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.2.2 Reading of novels

Data from Table 7 indicate that 72 (39.6%) students read story books regularly, 103 (58.8%) read story books once a while and 3 (1.6%) did not read story books at all. For majority of students 103 (58.8%) who are not comfortable speaking English language to suggest they read story books once in a while is instructive as to why the students commit such basic concord errors when using English language.

Table 4.2.2. Students Response to whether they Read Story Books

Response	Frequency	%
Regularly	72	39.6
Once a while	103	58.8
Not at all	3	1.6
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.2.3 Visit to the Library

From Table 8, it is observed that 68 (37.4%) students visited the library regularly, 106 (58.2%) of the students visited the library once a while and 8 (4.4%) of the students did not bother to visit the library at all. As was observed in students reading habits, a clear majority of the students 106 (58.2%) visit the library one a while, a situation that does not auger well for students who struggle to construct meaningful sentences in English language. It is thus not surprising that students commit concord errors. It is evidently clear that majority of the students do not do adequate reading which will lead to improved performance in English language.

Table 4.2.3. Students Views on their Visit to the Library

Response of respondents	Frequency	%
Regularly	68	37.4
Once a while	106	58.2
Not at all	8	4.4
Total	182	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.2.4 Teachers' professional qualification

The question about teachers' professional qualification was meant to find the professional qualification of the respondent. It is noticed in Table 9 that, 1 (16.7%) of the teachers is a masters' degree holder and the remaining 5 (83.3%) are degree holders. All the teachers are qualified to teach English language at this level of the educational system and are therefore expected to handle the subject, particularly concord, very well.

Table 4.2.4. Professional qualification of Teachers

Professional Qualification	Frequency	%
Masters	1	16.7
Degree	5	83.3
Total	6	100.0

Source: Field work data, 2020.

4.2.5 Length of teaching English language

It is observed from Table 10 that, 3 (50%) of the teachers have been teaching for 6 – 10 years, 2 (33.3%) have taught for 11 – 15 years and 1 (16.7%) has taught for 16 – 20 years. Evidently, almost all the teachers are fairly experienced and have been teaching English language for a while which should stand them in good stead to be able to help the students to deal with the challenge posed by concord.

Table 4.2.5. Length of classroom experience of Teachers

Respondents	Frequency	%
1 – 5	-	-
6 – 10	3	50.0
11 – 15	2	33.3
16 – 20	1	16.7
21 and above	-	-
Total	6	100.0

Source: Field work data, 2020.

4.2.6 Attendance at in-service training on the teaching of grammar

All 6 (100%) respondents were affirmative in their response to this item. It is thus expected that the teachers will discharge their duties diligently since they are well equipped with modern pedagogical approaches in the teaching of grammar.

4.2.7 Language used as medium of instruction

Item 4 attempts to get an idea of the medium of instruction used by teachers in their lesson delivery. Table 11 shows that, 2 (33.3%) of the teachers used English as a medium of instruction and 4 (66.7%) of them used both English language and Twi as medium of instruction. Majority of the teachers combining English language and Twi as the medium of instruction is problematic and can be pointed outright as being one of the main causes of concord errors among the students. At this level of the educational system, students are expected to be instructed solely in English language, as such, any attempt to introduce Twi creates confusion in the heads of many students. This is more so considering the fact that rules governing concord in the two languages are not necessarily the same.

Table 4.2.7. Medium of Instruction used by Teachers

Medium of instruction	Frequency	%
English language	2	33.3
Twi		
Both English language and twi	4	66.7
Total	6	100.0

Source: Field data, 2020

4.2.8 Method(s) usually used in delivering concord lessons

This item aimed at finding the teaching method(s) usually employed by the respondents in teaching concord lessons. From Table 12 it is evident that, 2 (33.3%) of the teachers indicated the use of demonstration method, 3 (50.0%) used discussion and 1 (16.7%) said they used a combination of methods. Evidently, a significant majority of 5 (83.3%) of the teachers uses a single method of teaching. This does not augur well for better understanding of students since no particular methodology can be good enough for all the learners in a group. Teachers should be encouraged to adopt the approach of using a combination of methodologies, since it enhances the understanding of students.

Table 4.2.8. Teaching Methods Usually Used by Teachers in Delivering Concord

Lessons

Teaching Method	Frequency	%
Lecture		
Demonstration	2	33.3
Discussion	3	50.0
Combination of methods	1	16.7

Total	6	100.0
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Source: Field data, 2020

4.2.9 Challenges teachers face in teaching concord

It is noticed from Table 13 above that 3 (50.0%) of the teachers pointed out that quite a number of the students have difficulty identifying the head word in sentences and to them it is a challenge. 2 (33.3%) identified the difficulty some of the students have in writing grammatically correct sentences as a challenge, and then 1 (16.7%) of the teachers thought the negative attitudes, such as absenteeism, lateness, inattentiveness, speaking of too much twi even in school, of some of the students is a huge challenge to them. To the respondents these challenges contribute to the students committing concord errors.

Table 4.2.9. Some Challenges faced by Teachers in the teaching of Concord

Description of challenge	Frequency	%
Students have difficulty identifying head word in sentences	3	50.0
Students have difficulty writing grammatically correct sentences	2	33.3
Negative student attitudes (Absenteeism, inattentiveness, speaking of twi)	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Source: Field data. 2020

4.2.10 Students' questioning skills during English Lessons

Per the responses from the respondents it is observed that 2 (33.3%) of the teachers indicated students asked questions during English language lessons but 4 (66.7%) said their students did ask questions during English language questions. It can be inferred from the above data that either students do not understand what is taught or they do not feel comfortable asking questions because the questions have to be asked in English language. Majority of the students (66.7%) not asking questions during lessons is not encouraging since it makes it difficult for teachers to know the difficulties the students have and as such are unable to assist them.

4.2.11 Availability of textbooks to aid teaching

From the responses of the teachers it came to light that 4 (66.7%) of the teachers taught the have enough books to help in their teaching and 2 (33.3%) indicated they did not have enough books. Clearly, majority of the teachers agree there are enough books to assist them in their work. They therefore should be able to assist the students to overcome the problem of concord errors.

4.2.12 Effect of knowledge of concord on students' performance in English language

From the teachers' responses it was gathered that all 6 (100.0%) of them were of the opinion that a good knowledge in concord will help students to do well in English language. In essence, it will assist students to speak and write very good English.

From Table 14 it is noticed that, 2 (33.3%) of the teachers felt a good knowledge of concord will help students to construct grammatically correct sentences, 3 (50.0%) of them were of the view that it will help students to speak good English language and 1 (16.7%) was of the opinion that it will give the students better understanding of the rules of grammar. The aforementioned are important reasons why very good knowledge

of concord is important to students. Teachers of English language should therefore do all they can to assist their students to understand and use concord correctly.

Table 4.2.12. Views of Teachers on how good Concord knowledge improves

Students' Performance in English Language

Responses	Frequency	%
Help students to construct grammatically correct sentences	2	33.3
Helps students to speak good English	3	50.0
Gives students better understanding of grammar rules	1	16.7
Total	6	100.0

Source: Field data. 2020

4.2.13 Use of teaching/learning materials in concord lessons

All 6 (100.0%) respondents responded that they use teaching–learning materials in their concord lessons. Teaching–learning materials if appropriately used should help mitigate the commitment of concord errors, since it will help improve students understanding during lessons. Teachers should therefore do all that they can to use a variety of teaching-learning materials in their lessons to improve on students understanding.

4.3 Common concord errors among second cycle institution students

This question was to help the researcher identify the common concord errors made by the students. A diagnostic objective test was therefore administered on the pupils. The test items were categorized into the common concord types to enable the researcher identify the common concord errors students usually made.

4.3.1 Notional Concord Errors: Items 1 – 5

From Table 15 it is noticed that, 136 (74.7%) of the students got question 1 correct but, 46 (25.3%) got it wrong; for question 2, 82 (45.1%) got it correct and 100 (54.9%) got it wrong; in the case of question 3, 66 (36.3%) of the students were correct but 116 (63.7%) were wrong; in respect of question 4, 95 (52.2%) were correct but 87 (47.8%) were wrong and for question 5, 72 (39.6%) got it correct but 110 (60.4%) got it wrong. To (Quirk and Greenbawn, 1985), notional concord is agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for the idea. This definition however, seems to be lost on a slight majority of the students. In that, averagely, 92 (51%) of the student-respondents got the 5 questions under the notional concord section incorrect (wrong), with 90 (49%) getting it correct. It can be construed that the students have issues with notional concord hence, they committing errors involving them.

Table 4.3.1. Students Performance in notional Concord

Items	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Item 1	136	74.7	46	25.3
Item 2	82	45.1	100	54.9
Item 3	66	36.3	116	63.7
Item 4	95	52.2	87	47.8
Item 5	72	39.6	110	60.4

Source: Field data, 2020

4.3.2 Pronoun Concord: Items 6 – 10

Per the data from Table 16, it is observed that 165 (90.7%) of the students were correct and 17 (9.3%) were wrong in their response to question 6; for question 7, 69 (37.9%) got it correct and 113 (62.1%) were incorrect in their response; with question 8, 145 (79.7%) got it correct but 37 (20.3%) got it wrong; in respect of question 9, 156 (85.7%) of the respondents were correct in their response but 26 (14.3%) were incorrect in their response and then; for question 10, 128 (70.3%) of the students were correct and 54 (29.7%) students were incorrect in their response. It is evident from the above that on the average, 132 (72.5%) of the students responded correctly to the group of questions that came under pronoun concord. It can therefore be inferred that, though a slightly high number of the students did well, there is still on the average about 50 (27.5%) of the students who did not do well. Such students have difficulty dealing with pronoun concord which, according to (Wiredu, 1990) refers to the agreement which exists between a pronoun and the noun it refers to. That the agreement involves three major features associated with pronouns, namely, number, person, and gender.

Table 4.3.2. Students Performance in Pronoun Concord

Items	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Item 6	165	90.7	17	9.3
Item 7	69	37.9	113	62.1
Item 8	145	79.7	37	20.3
Item 9	156	85.7	26	14.3
Item 10	128	70.3	54	29.7

Source: Field data, 2020

4.3.3 Grammatical Concord: Items 11 – 15

From Table 17, it is realised that 93 (51.1%) of the students and 89 (48.9%) of them answered question 11 correctly and incorrectly respectively; as regards question 12, 137 (75.3%) students got it correct but 45 (24.7%) got it wrong; for question 13, 105 (57.7%) of the students answered correctly and 77 (42.3%) answered incorrectly; with question 14, 75 (41.2%) were correct in their response and 107 (58.8%) were wrong in their response; then for question 14, 114 (62.6%) of the students got it correct and 68 (37.4%) of them got it wrong. On the average therefore, 105 (57.7%) of the students answered the set of questions under grammatical concord correctly but, 77 (42.3%) of them answered incorrectly. Inferentially, it is clear that quite a good number of the students are unable to deal with problems involving grammatical concord. According to (Wiredu, 1990), grammatical concord is the relationship that exists between the subject of a clause and its accompanying verb. It can be construed based on their performance that a number of the students are unable to relate the subject of a clause to the accompanying verb and that is why they keep committing such concord errors.

Table 4.3.3. Students Performance in Grammatical Concord

Items	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Item 11	93	51.1	89	48.9
Item 12	137	75.3	45	24.7
Item 13	105	57.7	77	42.3
Item 14	75	41.2	107	58.8
item 15	114	62.6	68	37.4

Source: Field data, 2020

4.3.4 Proximity Concord: Items 16 – 20

From the data in Table 18, it is noticed that 92 (50.5%) of the students were correct in responding to the question and 90 (49.5%) were incorrect in their response to question 16; for question 17, 140 (76.9%) got it correct and 42 (23.1%) were incorrect in their response; with question 18, 120 (65.9%) got it correct but 62 (34.1%) got it wrong; in respect of question 19, 84 (46.2%) of the respondents were correct in their response but 98 (53.8%) were incorrect in their response and then; for question 20, 140 (76.9%) of the students were correct and 42 (23.1%) students were incorrect in their response. It is clear from the above data that on the average, 115 (63.2%) of the students responded appropriately to the group of questions that came under proximity concord. It can as such be inferred that, a significantly high number of the students did well. There is however, on the average about 67 (36.8%) of the students who did not do well. Such students obviously, have difficulty dealing with proximity concord which, according to (Quirk and Greenbaum, 1980:177) contend, denotes agreement of the verb with whatever noun or pronoun which closely precedes it, sometimes in preference to agreement with the headword of the subject.

Table 4.3.4. Students Performance in Proximity Concord

Items	Correct		Wrong	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Item 16	92	50.5	90	49.5
Item 17	140	76.9	42	23.1
Item 18	120	65.9	62	34.1
Item 19	84	46.2	98	53.8
Item 20	140	76.9	42	23.1

Source: Field data, 2020

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter of the study summarises significant findings of the study and draws conclusions from the findings and presents recommendations to mitigate the commission of concord errors in English language by students in second cycle institutions in general and from two students of Akwatia technical Institute in particular.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study established that a significant majority of the students, 83.0% to be exact, listened to radio stations that use Ghanaian language in their programmes. It also came to light that an awesome percentage of the students, 83.0%, were mainly from basic schools in rural and peri-urban areas where students' performance in Standard English language is usually quite low. The occupational background of parents of most of the students is indicative that they are not from affluent homes and for that matter may not have access to materials that can assist them to improve on that English language. Additionally, it was found that majority of the students, 64.3%, do not speak Standard English language even at school, meaning they hardly practiced what they learned in the classroom.

Again, it was discovered that significant numbers of the students do not read regularly neither do they visit the library regularly. Moreover, interviews with teachers of English language in the school pointed to the fact that the students do not ask questions in the classroom; have difficulty identifying head word in sentences, as well as writing grammatically correct sentences. Moreover, negative student attitudes: absenteeism, inattentiveness, and indiscriminate speaking of Twi were pointed at as

being a major challenge in their work in the classroom. The interview further revealed that a significant majority of the teachers, 83.3%, depended on single methods of teaching in their lesson delivery. Also, it was found that 66.7% of the teachers use both English language and twi in their lesson delivery, something that connoisseurs of the language abhor. Finally, it was apparent from the interview with the teachers that on the job training or in-service training was far and in-between for them. In-service training is a tool that is used to equip teachers with up-to-date knowledge of the subject they teach.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study and the subsequent conclusions drawn, the consequent recommendations are made:

1. The school authorities should introduce a rule in the school that bars students from speaking Ghanaian language in the campus of the school. This will in turn assist students to improve on their English language
2. The medium of instruction in second cycle institutions in Ghana is English language as such teachers, English language teachers in particular, should be made to abide by the laid down policy directive
3. A conscious effort should be made to encourage students to cultivate the habit of reading. In this direction, parents should be impressed upon to buy supplementary reading materials for their children.
4. Teachers, particularly English language teachers, should be impressed upon to as a matter of necessity to read more to grasp better understanding of the concord rules themselves, this will better inform them to employ a variety of teaching methods in their lesson delivery.

5. In-service training should be regularly organised at the instance of the school authorities to equip teachers with modern trends of teaching in their area of specialisation.
6. The guidance and counselling department of the schools should be charged to work on the attitude of students in schools so that there will be attitudinal change in students.
7. Authors of English Language textbooks should place emphasis on other aspects of English language.eg. Emphasis on adequate oral work may lead to students learning whole sentences which leads to accurate and proficient use of English language.

5.3 Conclusion

On the basis of the findings made from the study these assumptions could be made. That too many of the students were fond of speaking Ghanaian language, specifically Twi, even while in school. This does not give them ample time to put into practice the things they learn in the classroom. The situation where teachers combine English language and Twi as the medium of instruction is contributing to the poor performance of the students in English language. This is so because the rules of concord in the two languages differ in so many respects. Again, it does make some of the students feel that they can also contribute to discussions in class in Ghanaian language.

The poor reading habit of a significant majority of the students also contributes to their committing concord errors with reckless abandon. In that, they are oblivious of many simple expressions in English language. Effectively, their repertoire of vocabulary is deficient. The reliance of English language teachers on specific (single) teachings methods in lesson delivery does not engender understanding among the class. Due to individual differences among students in a class, not every student in a given class may be comfortable with a particular teaching strategy, say demonstration. As

such, if a teacher uses only that method in his/ her lesson delivery then students who are not fond of it are likely to have difficulty grasping the concept that particular lesson is intended to present to the students. The near absence of in-service training for teachers of English language affects their output tremendously. It is the case because they are deprived of opportunity to add to their knowledge and to be equipped with modern strategies of teaching in their subject area. The negative attitude of students in the classroom makes it difficult for teachers to provide the assistance they intend to give to their students.



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