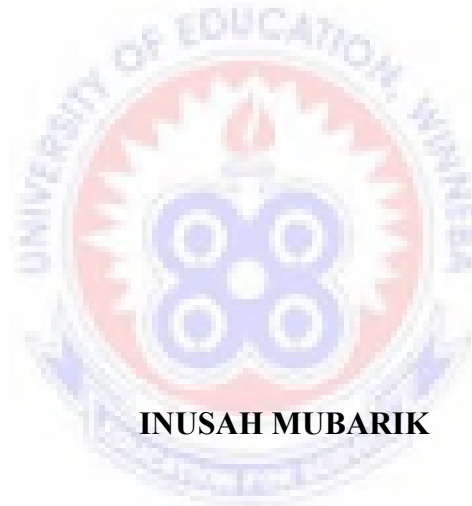**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

ANALYSING CONCORD ERRORS IN STUDENTS' COMMUNICATION IN ENGLISH: THE CASE OF WALEWALE

PRESBY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

INUSAH MUBARIK

2018

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A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS, FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION, SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF EDUCATION DEGREE IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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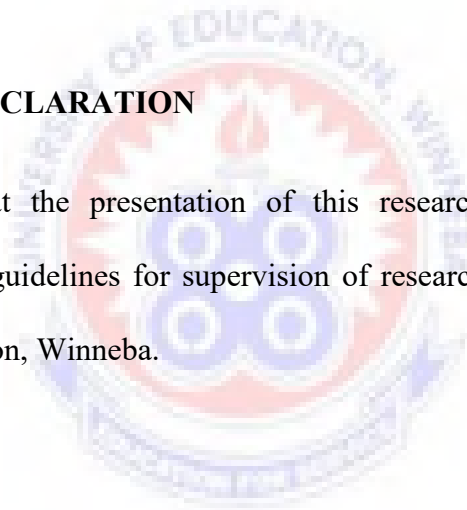
DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Inusah Mubarik declare that except for quotations and references made to other people's works which have been duly cited and acknowledged, this research work is the result of my own work and that it has not been submitted either in part or whole for any other degree.

Signature…………………………………………………………..

Date……………………………………………………………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the presentation of this research work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of research work as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
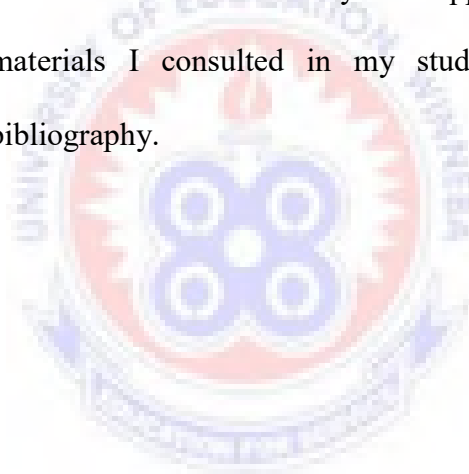
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Signature…………………………………………………………………………

Date………………………………………………………………………………

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my mother, Abass Marther for her tremendous love, unflagging support and inspiration for me to excel and further my studies. Her goodwill and prayers gave me encouragement to accomplish this study.

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ABSTRACT

The poor performance of students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School in concord and English in general has become enormous and hence a source of worry to parents, teachers and the general public. In this perspective, the main aim of this research work is to establish the reasons for the poor performance of students in the three areas of concord. In this study, qualitative research approach was used. Traditional grammar theory was used as a framework which provided the basis for the study. The instruments used to collect data were questionnaire, observation, test, and interview. The researcher conducted a pre-test which enabled him to ascertain the level of the problem. Analysis of data from the study revealed that the use of inappropriate teaching techniques by teachers of English, inadequate teaching and learning materials, lack of motivation from teachers and parents, failure of teachers to make grammar learning child-centred, and lack of qualified English teachers among others have contributed immensely to the students' poor performance in concord and English in general. Consequently, it has been suggested that schools should establish reading clubs and provide students with adequate reading materials so that they would be able to read wide and extensively. Government should improve basic schools libraries and provide schools with the needed teaching materials to facilitate the teaching and learning process of English language.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

English is recognized as undoubtedly the most important language to learn for the increasingly mobile international communication. In Ghana, English language remains the country's second and official language. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (2003), the prescriptive approach to grammar in which rules had to be memorized and sentence parsed, has been replaced with a descriptive approach, in which analysis and observation are key concepts of language change and development. When learning a foreign Language, it is imperative to study the grammar to understand how it is structured, that is, whether it is generally descriptive or prescriptive by nature. In concord analysis, rules are clearly spelled out and grammatical accuracy is measured by one's adherence to these rules (prescriptive grammar). In this introductory chapter, the following issues are discussed: background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations and organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

English has become a ―global lingua franca'' (Graddol, 1997, p. 10). With more than 350 million people around the world speaking English as a first language and more than 430 million speaking it as a second language, there are English speakers in most countries around the world. Most people often call English the international language of business, science, journalism, aviation, law and many more. English language enables people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate on a more or less equitable basis. In Africa, most countries have adopted English language as their official language. In Ghana, English language is not only adopted as an official

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language, but it is also taught as a second language. In Ghana, the language policy for schools stipulates that English should be used as a medium of instruction from primary four (4) while from kindergarten to primary three (3) it is supposed to be used together with a local language (Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, 2003). English language is therefore essential and should be learnt with precision devoid of errors. Most students commit errors when using English language especially concord errors. A lot of students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School commit grammatical errors when speaking and writing especially concord errors. These students commit these errors as a result of certain factors. The factors are as follows.

1.1.1 Background of the School

Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School was established in 1996. It was officially opened on 28th January 1996 with a total of six classrooms, four (4) teachers and thirty three (33) students. In 1997, three classrooms were added making up the Junior High School. The vision of the school was to bring education to the doorstep of every child in Walewale. It was also to produce quality Junior High School graduates from the various part of the community who will be exposed to critical thinking, intellectual and emotional development. Walewale is surrounded by a lot of villages and as a result, the school do not only admit students from its primary school but also from the surrounding villages. These students admitted in to the Junior High School are faced with a lot of grammatical problems. This could be due to the fact that students were not well exposed to the basics or fundamentals of the English language right from the kindergarten, primary and to the Junior High level.

1.1.2 Attitude of Students Towards English Language Learning

Attitude refers to the set of beliefs that the learner holds towards members of the target group and also towards his own culture (Brown, 2000). Language attitude is an important concept because it plays a key role in language learning. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School seem to have negative attitudes towards the study of English language. Through observation, it was realised that most students do not like English language especially grammar. Also, a good number of them absent themselves from English grammar lessons from time to time. Again, through exercises, assignments and exams, it was also realised that students do not like the concord aspect of grammar. Individual attitudes towards the language that they learn meet some needs since they satisfy certain functions such as achieving high grades in English language examination and also improving their speaking and writing skills. (Gardener & Tremble, 1994).

1.1.3 Teachers

Inadequate teachers and unqualified teachers could also be some of the reasons students admitted to Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School perform poorly in English grammar. It is the teacher who sets the tone of learning activities (Allen &Valette, 1997). Since to teach is to communicate, English teachers must have maximum communicative competence. Also, teachers must be knowledgeable in the language itself so that they can make useful decisions regarding what should be taught to whom and how the teaching should be done.

1.1.4 Parents

The people residing in the area of the school are mainly farmers, government workers and traders. The main language spoken in the area is Mampruli. A greater percentage of the natives are poor and illiterate. Due to this, the importance of English education has been far-fetched and has not been realized or regarded by most of the people. For this reason, most parents do not find it necessary and expedient to enrol their wards in school but rather prefer their children to work for them at home, trading centres and on the farms. The few parents who enrol their wards in school also for one reason or the other engage them in various household chores at the expense of their studies. The attitude of these parents affects their words' academic performance, particularly in English language.

1.1.5 Inadequate Facilities

Another factor which has affected the performance of English language in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School is inadequate facilities. Kapoli (2001) notes that authentic materials enable students to explore the language used in day to day life and which is tailored to their needs and interest. The school library is not well equipped with reading books. Reading a lot of English books will make students take in models of correct grammar that will help them in speaking and writing. Krashen (1989) is of the view that we acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading.

UNESCO (2000) reports that the provision of teaching and learning materials, especially books, is an effective way of improving results. However, the World Education Report (1998) reveals that in many countries, conditions are difficult, whether they relate to the physical states of schools and the availability of teaching and learning materials, class sizes or the changing characteristics of the student population.

1.1.6 Technology (social media)

The tremendous growth of social network is accompanied by a series of new jargons called internet slangs. Internet slangs refer to a set of different short forms and language used by internet users. This language is commonly used on the internet mainly to quicken communications or express emotions. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School often use internet slangs during examination and formal writing. This problem is observable by almost all teachers. In Ghana, the performance of students in English grammar is falling because most of these students are addicted to the internet. Most students use internet slangs such as LOL (Laugh out loud), ROFL (Roll on Floor laugh), ur (your), kk (okay) on the internet and once they are comfortable with them, they subconsciously or accidentally use them in examinations and formal writing.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

From the researcher's practical observation through interaction with students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School, it was detected that students have serious problems with concord, especially those pertaining to notional, grammatical, and proximity concord. This becomes clear when they communicate both in speech and in writing. Students are confronted with this problem because of their inability to grasp the concept of concord and its rules. Most students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School are unable to match the appropriate verbs with their subjects in terms of number. They also find it difficult to identify the headword in phrases and as a result they commit concord errors. The structure of English sentence depends largely on the subject and its interacting verbs. Subject-verb concord is most basic in English language and it is being taught at all levels and for this to persist at the Junior High

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School level poses a big challenge and calls for attention. Even though students' problems associated with concord are numerous, those which are easily identifiable and poses serious threats to students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School are grammatical, notional and proximity concord. The frequent violation of these concord rules by the students, both in speaking and writing, is what has prompted the researcher to undertake this work. Celce- Murcia and Freeman (1983) state that in spite of the early introduction and superficially learnt simple rules of the subject-verb agreement, it poses problems for English as second language (ESL) learners at all levels. English learners have to acquire the basic grammatical knowledge of subject-verb-agreement (SVA) in order to improve their level of proficiency in the language (Tan, 2005).

1.3   Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to analyse the concord problems of students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior School. The study will look at the causes of the errors and also try to adopt effective strategies that will help students to overcome their concord problems. In this way, they will be able to produce sentence devoid of grammatical errors and hence improve their performance in the English language.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study seeks to:

1. Find out the concord errors that are committed by the students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School.

2. Find out the causes of the errors committed.

3. Find out the methods that can be adopted to solve students' concord problems.

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1.5 Research Questions

The study aims at finding solutions to the following questions

1. What are the concord errors committed by students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School?

2. What are the causes of these concord errors?

3. What methods will teachers use to help students solve their concord problems?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The results of the study will help students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School to improve their concord skills. It will also help students to improve their academic performance in English and other subjects.

The study will also help teachers and whoever uses English language to be able to use concord correctly. Again, it will also help teachers to use appropriate methods to teach concord effectively in the classroom and hence improve students' performance in the language. It is also hoped that the results of the research will serve as an important resource material for English language teachers, the curriculum planners, the textbook designers, students and future researchers.

1.7 Limitations

 In carrying out the research, the researcher encountered a lot of challenges. First, the study was limited to students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School due to transport difficulties and inadequate funds. Also, the researcher encountered problems in the course of administering of the questionnaire. Some students were reluctant to respond to the questions on time. Also students were not willing to give adequate information for the fear that the researcher will use the information for something

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sinister. The researcher had to show his students identification card which proved that he was a student of University of Education, Winneba doing his master's program in Teaching English as a second language. However, the problems encountered by the researcher did not affect the outcome of the study.

1.8 Organisation of the Study

The research is organised in the form of Chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and organisation of the study. Chapter 2 of the study which is the literature review consists of what has already been written on the topic. It presents the views of other writers on what concord is, types of concord, concord errors committed, causes of the errors and effective teaching strategies that will help students to overcome their concord problems. Chapter three 3 is the methodology. It describes the research design, population, data collection procedures and research instruments. Chapter 4 of the study contains presentation of data collected, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter 5 summarizes the main findings, draws conclusions, and recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The standard of English language is declining among students in the country because learning the language is not easy, especially to master the grammar of the language. James (1998) states that students tend to make more mistakes in grammar. Human beings all over the world communicate with one another in different languages and there is even a greater need now than before for us to be more serious as far as English language is concerned. It is against this background that the poor performance of students in this area has become the greatest worry to parents, teachers, opinion leaders, stakeholders and educational authorities.

Many scholars have written about grammar in general and concord in particular. For language to accomplish its communication function, both the speaker and the addressee need to share the same signals used in the transmission of the message. Grammar is of great importance in this case, for even in a situation where two people speak the same language, if the speaker sounds ungrammatical, communication is greatly impaired.

2.1 Definition of Grammar

Grammar is an important component of a language that allows learners to understand its structure. It can be defined as ―a system of meaningful structures and patterns that are governed by particular pragmatic constraints" (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 518). In another definition, ―grammar is a description of the rules for forming sentences, including an account of the meanings that these forms convey" (Thornbury, 1999, p. 13).

According to crystal (2004), grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor

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the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language. Grammar can help everyone including students, teachers of English and teachers of any subject, after all teaching is ultimately a matter of getting to grips with meaning. Grammar is the rules of a language or the study or use of these rules. To be an effective language user, learners should study grammar because grammar skills will help students to organize words and messages and make them meaningful. Knowing more about grammar will make them build better sentences in speaking and writing.

2.2 Types of Grammar

Linguists have classified grammar in to different varieties: among these varieties are: traditional grammar, comparative grammar, generative grammar, transformational grammar and functional grammar.

2.2.1 Traditional Grammar

The term Traditional Grammar refers to ―the collection of prescription rules and concepts about the structure of the language" (Williams, 2005, p. 50). We say that traditional grammar is prescriptive because it focuses on the distinction between what some people do with language and what they ought to do with it, according to a pre-established standard. The chief goal of traditional grammar, therefore, is perpetuating a historical model of what supposedly constitutes proper language.

2.2.2 Comparative Grammar

The analysis and comparison of the grammatical structures of related languages, contemporary work in comparative grammar is concerned with ―a faculty of language that provides an explanatory basis for how a human being can acquire a first language.

In this away, the theory of grammar is a theory of human language and hence establishes the relationship among all languages." (Freidin, 1991, p. 392).

2.2.3 Generative Grammar

Generative grammar is the rule determining the structure and interpretation of sentences that speakers accept as belonging to the language. ―Simply put, generative grammar is a theory of competence; a model of the psychological system of unconscious knowledge that underlies a speaker's ability to produce and interpret utterances in a language". (Parker & Riley, 1994, p. 222).

2.2.4 Transformational Grammar

Bornstein (1984), is of the view that transformational grammar is a theory of grammar that accounts for the constructions of a language by linguistic transformations and phrase structures. In this theory, the term ―rule" is used not for a precept set down by an external authority but for a principle that is unconsciously yet regularly followed in the production and interpretation of sentences. A rule is a direction for forming a sentence or a part of a sentence which has been internalized by a native speaker.

2.2.5 Functional Grammar

Functional grammar, based on systemic linguistics, emphasizes the way spoken and written language operates in different social situations. In particular, it is very useful in showing how texts work beyond the level of the sentence, how different texts are structured and how language varies to suit the purpose of the users. It takes on a descriptive approach and focuses on **group of words** that function to make meaning. Halliday (1994), points out that functional grammar is so-called because its conceptual framework is a functional one rather than a formal one. It is functional in three distinct senses: in its interpretation (1) of texts, (2) of the system and (3) of the elements of

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linguistic structures. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School have been exposed to one or more of the above types of grammar in the classroom.

2.3 Methods of Teaching Grammar

There are two main ways that we tend to teach grammar. These are: Deductive and Inductive method.

2.3.1 Deductive Method: General …….. Specific

Larsen-Freeman (1991, p. 292) says that ‗in a deductive activity the students are given the rule and they apply it to examples''. Thus, in the deductive way the rules are explicit and the students must create examples of practical use of the language.

In this approach, students are given an explanation by the teacher regardless of the timing relative to the practice part of the lesson. It works from general to the specific. The lesson begins by a presentation in which the teacher introduces the concept to be taught directly. The students should not have difficulty digesting the concept due to the teacher's clarification. To reinforce students' understanding and make sure that the students are following, the teacher writes examples and non-examples of the concepts on the board.

An explanation is offered as to what the rule entails, and students are given the task of identifying the correct examples. This method of teaching concord does not make students explore their thinking skills. It also encourages memorization. However memorizing the rules of concord is not the best for students.

2.3.2 Inductive Method: Specific …….. General

An inductive approach involves the learners detecting, or noticing patterns and working out a ―rule‖ for themselves before they practice the language. (Richards, et al. 1985). Here, the teacher begins the lesson by confronting the students with a stimulating problem, and they are then told to find out how it can be resolved. The confrontation is initiated first verbally, then the teacher writes a group of words on the board linked to the oral discussion he conducts. As the students react, the teacher draws their attention to the significant points he wants to present through his questioning. When the students become interested in and committed to the lesson and begin to offer reasonable interaction amongst themselves and with the teacher, the teacher is able to lead them towards formulating and structuring the problem for themselves. For concord to be well taught, it is good for the inductive method to be used since it is student centred. Teachers of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school use both the deductive and inductive method to teach concord and English language in general.

2.4 Teaching Methods and Strategies that can Promote Students' Grammar Skills

Teachers in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School have adopted various methods and strategies to teach grammar as well as concord. These methods and strategies include the following;

2.4.1 The Grammar Translation Approach

According to Larsen-Freeman (2000, p. 11) the Grammar Translation method was first known as the Prussia method in the United States and as the name suggests it originated from Prussia at the end of the eighteenth century.

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̶The grammar-translation method dominated European and foreign language teaching from the 1840s to 1940s" (Richards & Rogers, 1986, p. 4). In its conception it was reformist, developed as a way of teaching large groups of young students in school. This method involves learning grammatical rules and reading text in the target language and translating them from the second to the native language. Teaching was done in the mother tongue and little attention was given to oral language. The ultimate aim of this method was to appreciate foreign literature and develop the intellectual mind, and grammar was very important in the learning process. Another significant idea in this method was that when the people became familiar with the grammar of the target language, they would also become more familiar with their native language, and the pupils would become better readers and writers (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The aim during the era of the Grammar Translation method was never really to communicate in the foreign language. During this period, grammar was taught deductively and explicitly, and grammatical paradigms should be committed to memory through drills (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). Students should be very conscious of the grammatical rules of the target language. Grammar played an important role in this method, as did translation. Similarities between the native and foreign language were emphasized and if a pupil could translate into and out of the foreign language he/she was successful in his/her learning. Typical activities of this approach are translation of passage and memorization of grammar roles and paradigms.

This approach was not effective in preparing the students to communicate in the foreign language and thus an increasing need for somewhat different approach to language teaching emerged. Teachers in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school used this method in order to let the students get a clear picture of what they are teaching.

2.4.2 The Direct Method

In the latter part of the 19th century phonetics was established as a science, and in the light of this development the importance of speech was emphasized. With the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), teachers now had a tool for teaching pronunciation (Simensen, 1998). Within the direct method, an important principle was that language primarily is speech (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). The native language was not to be used in the classroom, and the teachers would demonstrate the meaning of a word, rather than explaining, for example by using different objects. It was highlighted that vocabulary was acquired more naturally when it was used in sentence rather than memorized in isolation (Larsen-Freeman, 1986). With the direct method came a stronger focus on communication, mainly pronunciation and conversation. Grammar was divergent from the grammar translation method, taught inductively, that is, the pupils studied a grammatical phenomenon in a text, and formulated a rule from what they found in the examples given.

Dictation was also a common classroom activity. That is, the teacher read a sentence or a passage and the pupils wrote what the teacher read, giving a focus to pronunciation and spelling. Teachers in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School used this method. However, the difficulty is that students want to use the native language within and outside the classroom.

2.4.3 The Audio-Lingual Method

The Audio-Lingual, which was proposed by American Linguists in 1950s, was developed from the principle that a language is first of all a system of sounds for social communication; writing is a secondary derivative system for the recording of spoken language (Carroll, 1963). Thus, the purpose of the Audio-Lingual method is to use the

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target language communicatively. According to this method, speech is given priority in foreign language through dialogues that focus on habit formation of students. Larsen-Freeman (2000) states that students will achieve communicative competence by forming new habits in the target language and overcome the old habits of their native language.

This method considered language simple as form of behaviour to be learned through the formation of correct speech habits (Thornbury, 2000). In other words, the goal of this method is to form native language habits in learners (Dendrinos, 1992). Similarly, Richards and Rodgers (2001) stress that foreign language learning is basically a process of mechanical habit formation and good habits are formed by giving correct responses rather than by making mistakes.

Dialogues and pattern drills that students need to repeat are often used to form habits. Hence, as Larsen-Freeman (2000) says, the more often something is repeated, the stronger the habit and the greater the learning. In this method, the teacher reads a dialogue by modelling it. It has been always motivating to put the subject matter in context and students stand a better chance of retaining what they have learned. Students learn the target language within a concrete context that will enable them to relate what they learn to real-life learning environment. Teacher as a role model will encourage and inspire the students to strive for learning the target language.

Through repetition, students can use the target language automatically and fluently as well. In this method, it is desirable that students form a habit to use the target language with ease, therefore, the more they repeat, the easier they will speak the target language without thinking. Some words or phrases are changed in the dialogue. Drills used in this method will allow the students to have practice. Through drills such as single-slot substitution, multiple slot substitution, and transformation, students are given the

opportunity to produce speech in the target language, furthermore, these patterns will let them see how language functions. Students learn how to respond correctly when they practice the drill.

This method focuses on oral skills. It aims to improve students speaking achievement.

Nunan (2000, p, 229) is of the opinion that this method ‖has probably had a greater impact on second and foreign language teaching than any other method. It was in fact, the first approach which could be said to have developed a ‗technology‘ of teaching and based on scientific principles.‘‘ Teachers of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School use this method to teach grammar since it will help them to improve their students‘ oral skills.

2.4.4 The Communicative Approaches

The communicative method was introduced in the 1960s as a substitute to the former structural methods. This new approach was inspired by the innatist theory of language acquisition, which was proposed by the linguist Noam Chomsky as a reaction to the behaviourist (Lightbown & Spada, 1999).

Chomsky argues that children are biologically programmed for language and that they learn from imitation from the environment. Chomsky (1959, p. 43) sees that ‖reinforcement, casual observation, and natural inquisitiveness (coupled with a strong tendency to imitate)" are important factors as far as acquisition of language is concerned.

According to Harmer (2001, p. 85) the communicative approach is closely associated to the notion that ‖language learning will take care of itself" by plentiful practice. The communicative method emphasizes interaction as a both technique and purpose of

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learning a language. It is more important to produce language and communicate effectively than to be correct.

One scholar who has criticized this method is Lehmann (1999), who argues that the focus on communication and the pursuit of fluency in recent decades may have led to a neglect of accuracy. In her doctoral study of 182 tertiary Norwegian students, Lehmann found that these students did not have a good enough command of the English language needed in higher education and working life even though they may imagine so themselves. One of the main reasons for this, Lehmann claims, is that English teaching in Norwegian schools has emphasized oral communication, leaving the students with little knowledge about literary devices and not focusing enough on their mistakes. Lehmann suggests that the diversity of the pupils' development should be reflected in the future curriculum. Although Lehmann is not in favour of going back to the old behaviouristic approach, she points at recent research, which has brought ―conscious learning, based on form and accuracy back on the educational arena" (Lehmann, 1999, p. 213).

Lehmann believes that this approach used by competent teachers may lead to a development of the learners' own potential. Still, Harmer (2001) states that the communicative approach is impossible to remove as communicative activities have taken root in classrooms all over the world. This approach is used by teachers of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School since it will help develop students' own potentials.

2.4.5 The Eclectic Approach

The growing interest for classroom research in recent years has made it possible to evaluate teachers' behaviour. Studies have shown that teachers apply a variety of teaching techniques.

This balanced approach, which has elements of all the approaches mentioned so far, has often been referred to as the ―eclectic approach" (Wagner, 1991, p. 289). An approach which includes understanding language, practicing it and producing it is now, according to Drew and Sorheim (2004, p 22), recognized by many teachers as the best one. Because of the differences in the characteristics of the learners, ―the challenge is to find the balance between meaning-based and form-focused activities (Lightbown & Spada, 1999, p. 151).

The texts that have been studied in this thesis were written by students who are most likely to have been exposed to one or several of the different methods. However, it is likely that the majority will have been exposed to an eclectic approach. This approach is used in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School because it caters for the needs of all students since the students are from different backgrounds and have different characteristics.

2.5 Definition of Concord

Quirk (2010, P. 75), observe that ―Concord (also termed agreement) can be defined as the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature that accords with a displayed feature in the other"

Concord is a number (singular or plural) and person with verb, which are determined by subjects (Downing & Locke 2015). They further state that concord is manifested in only those verb forms that show inflectional contrast.

For example,

i.   The librarian he/she has checked the book.

ii.   The librarian I/you/we have checked the book.

Concord is another term for grammatical agreement between two words in a sentence.

The subject and the verb have to agree grammatically and that phenomenon is called subject verb concord. The verb is considered to be the heart of the sentence (Woods, 2010) and it has to take the same grammatical form as its controller, the subject. The subject and the verb are the two most important items in a sentence (Estling-vannesal, 2007). Lutrin and Pincus (2004) define concord as that in which the words in a sentence must match or agree with one another. Quagie (2009) throws more light on the subject of a sentence and what the verb talks about. In English grammar, there is a rule that whenever the subject is singular, the verb of the sentence must also be singular to agree with it. The normally observed rule is very simple.

A singular subject requires a singular verb.

 For example,

Musah talks in class sometimes.

[Singular subject +singular verb]

A plural subject requires a plural verb.

For example,

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The ***girls talk*** in class sometimes.

 [Plural subject + plural verb]

According to Oriaku (2006), concord problems usually arise as a result of complex constructions in which the subject and the verb do not follow each other directly in a straight forward manner. This happens when the subject is separated from the verb by an intervening phrase or clause and one mistakenly makes the verb to agree with the noun in the intervening phrase or clause.

Dada (2000, P. 97) notes that, "The basic notion or underlying principle behind sentence construction must be considered in forming grammatical and meaningful sentences." This principle therefore is concord. According to Adeyeye and Nwabuwe (2000, p. 78), "agreement or concord is used to describe the relationship (harmony) between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence." In relation to this, concord deals with the subject and verb of a sentence which can be inflected. It also means that a verb agrees in form with its subject and that a verb has more than one form, in which each form matches with a particular kind of subject (Hefferman & Lincoln, 1982).

Sekyi-Baidoo (2002), also argues that in concord the verb which is also called the predicator must agree with the subject in number and person. He explains that number is the singularity or plurality of the subject. While person simple means whether the subject is first person singular or plural as ***I*** or ***we*** respectively, second person singular or plural that is you and third person singular or plural as in ***he***, ***she***, ***it***, they especially when the subject is a pronoun. For example; "***She plays well***". In the sentence, "***she***" is a third person singular and "***plays***" is also singular because of the singular marker/**s**/ attached to the verb. Therefore, "***she***" and "***plays***" agree in number (singular). Most

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students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School are not conversant with this rule so most of them constructed sentences like;

i. She play.

ii. They plays.

Wiredu (1999), is of the view that there must also be agreement between a pronoun and the noun it refers to. The agreement here involves three major features associated with pronoun – number, person and gender. This implies that noun pronoun concord calls for agreement between a pronoun and its antecedent in terms of number, person and gender. A pronoun which refers back to a singular noun phrase is in the singular and a pronoun which refers back to plural noun phrase is in the plural. For example:

i.   The *girl likes* her books.
ii.   The *girls like* their books.

Most students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School construct sentences such as the *girls likes her books*" because they have not grasped the concept of concord very well.

According to Brown (2002) there must be a grammatical relationship between a subject and a verb, or a pronoun and its verb, or a demonstrative adjective and the word it modifies. This shows that the subject of a sentence can also be a pronoun. The pronouns *he, she, they, you, I* among others can act as subject in sentences. Demonstrative adjectives such as *this, that, these, those*, show whether the noun they refer to is near or far to the speaker or narrator. The noun always follows the demonstrative adjective and therefore, there should be an agreement between the demonstrative adjective and the noun. For example;

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    i.   ***These pens are*** not writing.

    ii.   ***This book is*** good.

Some of the students in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School write sentences such as;

i. She sells this pens.

ii. He read these book.

Through their communication and composition it could be realized that students could not differentiate between the demonstrative adjective such as ***this, that, these, and those*** in terms of number. They do not know that this and that are singular and these and those are plural hence they use them wrongly in communication and in composition

Oluikpe (2009) to maintain a single idea, the tense used should be consistent; that is, one should not shift from one tense to another because the shifts result in lack of concord in sentences. For example,

    i.   We rushed to the school, but nobody was there.
               ↓   ↓
             Past   Past

    ii.   They went to the canteen, but there was no food.
               ↓   ↓
             Past   Past

However, through the marking of students' composition we see sentences like:

    i.   We rushed to the school, but nobody is there.
               ↓   ↓
             Past   Present

    ii.   We went to the market but there is no rice.
              ↓   ↓
            Past   Present

2.6 Types of Concord

2.6.1 Grammatical Concord

Tuurosong (2012) defines grammatical concord as a grammatical relationship in which a subject must agree with the verb in number and person. By number, he means the relationship between the speaker and what he/she is speaking about. The term ‗‗agreement" according to him is used to describe the type of grammatical changes that take place between the subject of a sentence and its verb. He adds that it has to do with the ‑cordial" relationship that must exist between the subject and the main verb or the first element of the verb phrase.

The strict rule under the grammatical concord is that a singular verb goes with a singular subject and a plural verb goes with a plural subject. For example;

1. The ***door is*** open.

   [Singular subject, singular verb]

2. The ***doors are*** open.

   [Plural subject; plural verb]

2.6.2 Proximity Concord

According to Wiredu (1998) ‑proximity concord" refers to agreement between the verb and its subject base not on notion but on the fact that there is a nominal group which is immediately close to the verb. That is, grammatical concord is established between these elements instead of the normal formal agreement with the head of the noun phrase.

For example,

Neither he nor she **speaks** well.

Either the father or his sons **drive** well.

In the sentences above, the predicate ‒**speaks**" and ‒**drive**" have two or more alternative subjects linked by ‒**or**" or ‒**nor**". This should agree with the subject that precedes it. Thus ‒**speaks,**" and „ **drive**" agree with ‒**she**" and ‒**sons**" respectively.

Quirk and Greenbaum (1987) observe that proximity concord 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.

For example;

1. No one except his own supporters **agree** with him.
2. One in ten **take** drugs.

Most students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School commit Proximity concord errors because they usually match the plural noun or pronoun with the plural verb neglecting the headword in the subject.

2.6.3 Notional Concord

Quirk and Greenbaum (1987) opines that notional concord is agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker. This makes it possible for a singular subject to agree with a plural verb without the sentence being considered grammatically incorrect. For example:

i. The government **are** doing their best to develop the rural areas.

ii. The government **has** broken its promises.

In example (i) above, the noun ―*government"* is treated as a collection of individuals so a plural verb is chosen but in example (ii) the noun ―*government"* is treated as a singular individual body hence a singular verb is chosen.

With the exception of notional concord and law of proximity, a learner has to apply the stable rules that govern the other types of concord in order to make grammatically acceptable sentences. Violation of the rules on the other hand, results in production of unacceptable linear sequences.

2.6.4 Pronoun – antecedent concord

According to Oluikpe (2009) and Escalas (2010) a pronoun must agree in number, gender, and case with its antecedent. This means that pronouns depend on another structure for their meaning. Some of these pronouns that are controlled by their antecedents are the personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns. They go further to say that:

i.   A pronoun replacing a noun must have the same number as the noun it replaces.

ii. A pronoun replacing a noun must be masculine if the noun is masculine; feminine if the noun is feminine and neuter if the noun is neuter.

iii. A subject noun must be replaced by a subject pronoun; an object noun is replaced by an objective pronoun

With regard to **number** we have the following examples;

  i. Ghana expects everyone to do his duty.

                ↓   ↓

         Singular   Singular

  ii. Either the man or the women gave their names.

                   ↓   ↓

           Plural   Plural

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Case: for example;

    i.   All men are created equally. They are endowed by God.

             ↓   ↓

       Subject plural   Subject plural

    ii.   I met the man. I gave him the letter.

                 ↓   ↓

          Object sing. Object sing.

Gender: for example;

    i.   Look at this girl: I believe she is ill.

             ↓   ↓

        Feminine   Feminine

2.6.5 Point of Time – Verb Concord

Latin (1996) opines that verbs must agree with one another where they occur in a chain or move with point of – time – past references in one sentences to avoid confusing the reader or listener about time. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School write sentences like; ―*Adam slept late but wakes up early*‖; ―*last week my father takes me to hospital*‖; this could be due to the fact that they have not mastered the rules of concord with regard to time.

In the first sentence, the issue of time is not clear as the writer combines both present and past tenses. Either the verb ―*slept*‖ should be made present that is ―*sleeps*‖ or the verb ―*wakes*‖ made past, that is ―*woke*‖ for there to be agreement between the two verbs, in which case time will be catered for. In the second sentence, ―*last week*‖ calls for only the past tense form of the verb, hence the verb ―*takes*‖ ought to be ―*took*‖ to give way for concord and time definition.

2.7 General Rules of Concord

Concord in the use of English language means agreement between the subject and the verb or agreement between a verb and other elements of clause structure.

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In the use of concord in English language, there are many rules governing the topic. Below are some of the rules.

Rule 1: Subject and a Verb Concord

When the subject in a sentence is singular, the verb should also be singular and vice versa. For example,

    i.   ***She goes***.

 [Singular subject + singular verb]

    ii.   The ***girls go***.

 [Plural subject + plural verb]

Rule 2: Subject and Object Concord

When ***everybody, everyone*** etc. are used, the object must be singular not plural. For example,

    i.   Everybody ***knows*** his or her name.

    ii.   Everyone ***is*** to blame.

Rule 3: Mandative Subjunctive Concord.

When prayer, suggestion, wish, demand, recommendation or resolution is used in a sentence, the verb that follows must be plural, whether the subject is singular or plural. For example,

    i.   It has been suggested that he ***go*** away.

    ii.   I pray that God ***help*** me on my upcoming examination.

Rule 4: principle of proximity

This principle states that when there is a list of nouns or pronouns at the level of the subject, it is the nearest noun or pronoun to the position of the verb that will determine the choice of the verb.

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For example;

  i. If Adam fails his examination, his teachers, his parents, or his ***friend***

    is to blame.

  ii. If the girl dies, the doctor, his friends, or his ***parents are*** to blame.

RULE 5: Many- a Concord

When __***many a***'' is used, the verb and the noun that follows must be singular.

For example,

  i. Many a candidate speaks bad English.

  ii. Many a girl is here.

The real meaning of example (i) and (ii) are many candidates and many girls.

RULE 6: A Pair of Concord

When a ~~pair of~~" is used, the verb must be singular

For example,

  i. A pair of trousers ***lies*** here.

  ii. A pair of scissors ***is*** on the table

RULE 7: Notional Concord

Notional concord is also called collective noun concord.

When you use a collective noun, the verb that follows must be a plural verb. But in some situations, singular verb goes with a collective noun

For example,

  i. Our club ***meet*** once in a week.

  ii. Our club ***is*** celebrating its first anniversary.

RULE 8: Parenthesis

Parenthesis statement is additional statement to what has already been said. A parenthetical statement should not be considered in choosing the verb that will follow. For example,

i.   The teacher, not her students *is* in the class.

The correct answer is ―*is*‖ because __*not her students*‖‖*is* just parenthesis since it only adds extra meaning, and parenthesis has nothing to do with choosing the verb.

ii.   The manager, not many of his workers *is* here.

―*not many of his workers*‖ is just a parenthesis because it adds some extra meaning, therefore, the parenthesis should be ignored. ―*The manager*‖ is a singular noun, hence a singular verb is needed. Most of the students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school are not familiar with this rule so they commit concord errors.

RULE 9: Accompaniment Concord

When any of the following words; *as much as, alongside, as well as, together with, no less than, in association with, including, like, with, in collaboration with* etc. is found in a sentence, the subject which usually comes before the marker of accompaniment determines the verb to be used. For example,

i.   Fuseina, <u>as well as</u> her friends is (not are) beautiful.

The answer is ―*is*‖ because __*Fuseina*‘‘ is the noun that comes before <u>as well as</u>, hence ―*Fuseina*‖ is the subject and it is a singular noun hence a singular verb.

ii.   The little kids <u>alongside</u> their parents are (not is) here.

The correct answer is _‖*are*‘‘ not is because the ―*Little kids*‖ comes before alongside. The subject is plural hence a plural verb. Most of the students of Walewale

Presbyterian Junior High school have not mastered this rule hence construct ungrammatical sentences when speaking and writing.

RULE 10: More than Concord

When ‗more than'' is used, in the position of a subject, the word or number that comes after ‗more than'' will determine the next verb.

For example,

    i.   More than <u>two apples</u> *are* (not is) here.

    ii.   More than <u>one Orange</u> *is* (not are) here.

In the first statement, the answer is ‗*are*'' not „*is*""because two attracts ‑*are"* but in the second statement, the correct answer is „*is*""not ‗*are*'' because one attracts is.

NOTE: Do not think because <u>more than means at least two</u>, that you will use a plural verb after, no you will use a singular verb since it is the word or number that comes after <u>more than</u> determines the next verb.

RULE 11: Indefinite Pronoun Concord

When any of the following words is used, you should use a singular verb; ***everybody, everything, everyone, everywhere, no one, nobody, nowhere, something, someone, somebody, anyone, anything, anybody, anywhere and each***. For example,

    i.   Nothing ***goes***. (not go)

    ii.   Everybody ***likes*** (not like) him.

RULE 12: Relative Pronoun Concord

This rule applies to relative pronouns like ***who, whose, which, that,*** and so on. When they (relative pronouns) are used immediately before a noun or pronoun, the verb which

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immediately follows will be controlled by that noun or pronoun which is close to the relative pronoun and any other verb will be controlled by the main subject of the sentence.

For example,

  i. The number of men who live here *is* alarming.

 ii. All of the people who study Science *are* intelligent.

Rule 13: Pluralia Tantums

According to Geoffrey and Jan (2013) pluralia tantums are nouns that come in plural forms. Some of these words have final __s__' while some do not have, however, whenever any of the following forms appears, it must be followed by a singular verb.

(a) School subjects: Mathematics, Economics, Physics, Statistics etc. all of these subjects end with ―*s*‖ but it does not show plurality.

(b) Games: Darts, snakes and Ladders, Draughts, Billiard, Bowls and skittles etc. all end with "s" but do not show plurality.

(c) Diseases: Meals, Tuberculosis, Shingles, Mumps etc.

(d) Others: titles, news, series, means, etc.

   For example,

   i.   The series of incidents *makes* (not make) me shudder.

   ii.   The means of transport *hastens* (not hasten) travelling.

There are some nouns that do not appear as singular at all but as plural and they often attract plural verbs.

Such words are: ***funds (money), annals, spirits, surroundings, guts, earnings, arms (weapons) auspices, savings, remains, ashes, goods, arrears, outskirts, pains, particulars,*** etc.

For example,

      i.   His <u>manners</u> ***are*** (not is) good.

      ii.   The <u>remains</u> (corpse) of the boy ***have*** (not has) been buried.

These nouns with the final ―s‖ always confuse students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School and hence prevent them from expressing themselves adequately in communication.

RULE 14: Double Title Subject Concord

When two subjects are joined together by <u>and</u> but the two subjects refer to <u>only one person or thing</u>, a singular verb should be used. For example,

    i.   Our headmaster and science teacher <u>knows</u> me.

In this statement, our ***headmaster*** and ***science*** teacher are not two different people but, our headmaster is also our science teacher. Hence the subject is our headmaster and it is a singular noun, hence singular verb.

RULE 15: Co-ordinate Concord

When two subjects are joined together by ‗***and***'', the verb to be used should be plural. For example,

    i.   Joe and Joseph <u>are</u> (not is) here.

    ii.   Rashid and Musah <u>know</u> (not knows) me.

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RULE 16: Categorization Concord

When a collective name, denoting category (not collective noun) is used, the verb to be used must be plural.

Categories like*: the poor, the rich, the wealthy, the successful, the gifted, the weak, the young, the handicapped, the helpless* etc.

For example,

    i.   The poor <u>need</u> help. (not needs)

    ii.   The weak <u>are</u> (not is) left to their fate.

    iii.   The rich are (not is) disobedient.

RULE 17: Plural Number Concord

When an amount or unit is mentioned in a statement, units like, *five thousand, three hundred, percent, twenty meters, five times,* etc. The next verb must be singular.

For example,

    i.   Two pounds of flour <u>is</u> (not are) too few to bake a cake.

    ii.   Ten percent of my earns goes (not go) to my wife.

RULE 18: Mathematical Facts

When mathematical facts are used, such as *subtraction, multiplication, addition*, *division*, etc. Singular and plural verbs can be used.

For example,

    i.   Ten plus ten *is* or *are* (are and is are both correct.) twenty.

    ii.   Ten multiplied by two *is* or *are* twenty.

Both singular and plural are correct.

RULE 19: Every + Plural Number Concord:

When *'every*'' precedes a plural, the next verb is plural. For example;

    i.   Every ten litres of oil bought <u>come</u> (not comes) with a bonus of an extra litre.

But when *'every*'' appears without any plural numbers, the verb is singular. For example:

    i.   Every boy (not boys) *likes* girls.

    ii.   Every man (not men) *likes* football.

When <u>and</u> joins two or more subjects with <u>every</u> or <u>each</u>, the verb should be singular.

For example,

    1   Every man and woman s*peaks* (not speak) good English.

    2   Every student and teacher *comes* (not come) to school early.

RULE 20: Most or Much Concord

When *most* is used, the verb will either be singular or plural, depending on whether the referent is a countable or uncountable noun. For example,

    i.   Most of the boys (countable noun) *are* tall.

    ii.   Most of the time (uncountable noun), John *has* (not have) always been there for her.

When *much* is used in a statement, the verb to be used must be singular. For example:

    i.   Much of the water *has* (not have) been spilled.

Most or much concord always poses a threat to students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School.

RULE 21: All Concord

When *all* appears, it means either everything or all the people. When *all* means everything, the verb to be used should be singular but when *all* means all the people, the verb to be used should be plural. For example;

    i.   All *are* already seated in the hall.

In the above sentence, ―*all*‖ means (all the people are already seated in the hall) hence a plural verb.

    ii.   All *is* well with me.

In the above sentence, ―*all*‖ means (everything is well with me) hence a singular verb.

When *all but* is used, the following verb should be plural. For example,

    i.   All but Joe *are* (not is) in the class.

That means only Joe is absent.

RULE 22: Either or Neither Concord

When <u>either</u> or <u>neither</u> joins two singular nouns together, the following verb should be singular. For example,

    i.   Either Ibrahim or Alhassan *knows* (not know) me.

    ii.   Neither Rashida nor her friend was (not were) here.

But, when <u>either</u> or <u>neither</u> joins two subjects (one singular and the other plural), the verb should be chosen by considering the nearer of the two subjects. For example:

    i.   Either Adam or his friends *know* me.

You can see that *'friends*‗' is nearer to the verb than it is nearer Adam.

When <u>but</u> or <u>but even</u> joins two subjects the verb is chosen by considering the nearer of the two subjects. For example,

    i.   Not only Razak but even teachers *laugh* in school.

    ii.   Not Rashid but Razak *speaks* good English.

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Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School always violate this rule hence produce sentences which are grammatically unaccepted.

RULE 23: Each and One of Concord

When ―*each*'' appears in a concord, a singular noun + a singular verb will be chosen.

For example,

    i.   Each boy (not boys) has a car.

But when *each of* or *one of* appears, the next noun should be plural but the next verb should be singular. For example;

Each of the candidates (not candidate) stands (not stand) a good chance to win a scholarship.

2.8 Why Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High Commit Concord Errors

Dulay and Burt (1977) opine that a new language cannot be learned by anybody without ―goofing". This assertion by these grammarians lends credence to the fact that second language learners are bound to make errors in their attempt to learn the target language which in this case is English. English, like any other language, is rule-governed and these rules should be learned by anybody who wants to speak the language correctly and effectively. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School are often confronted with certain grammatical glitches when it comes to using the rules of grammatical concord. Some of the reasons why students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School commit concord errors are as follows:

1. Inability of students to identify singular subject-singular verb, and plural subject-plural verb. Celce-Murcia and Freeman (1983) states that in spite of the early introduction and superficially learnt simple rules of subject-verb agreement, it poses

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problems for English as second language (ESL) learners at all levels. In phrases where the subject is singular, the verb should take a 3rd person singular (-s) ending and when the subject is plural, there is no need for (-s) ending.

This simple rule is most of the time violated by students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School. For example,

i.*He eat rice.

From the above sentence, it could be seen that the students could not realize that the subject is singular and hence a singular verb should be chosen. If they learn to identify the subject and the verb, this error can be avoided.

2. Inability to Identify Noun Headword

Sometimes students are not able to identify noun heads in noun phrases or even the subjects of sentences. For example,

i.   *A long conversation on Mutaka understanding our difficulties have come to a halt.

ii.   *The reason for the high cost of electricity in our towns and cities are unacceptable.

From the sentences above, you can see that students used plural verbs because the nouns preceding the verbs are in their plural forms; this is not correct because those nouns are not the head of the noun phrase. The correct sentences will read like;

‒A long conversation on Mutaka understanding our difficulties has come to a halt".

‒The reason for the high cost of electricity in our town and cities is unacceptable."

In example (i), the headword in the subject of the sentence is ‒**conversation**" which is singular hence a singular verb ‒**has**" is chosen. In example (ii), the headword in the

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subject of the sentence is ―*reason*‖ which is singular hence a singular verb ―*is*‖ is chosen.

Identifying the headword of a noun phase is still a problem to students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School.

3. Failure of Students to Recognize the Relevance of Tense in Respect of Time

Latin (1996) underscores the fact that problems of concord among students occur basically due to the inability of students to note the dynamism of verb as pertains in verb – verb concord. Verbs must agree with each other where they occur in a chain or move with point – of – time – past references in one sentence to avoid confusing the reader or listener about time. Students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School failed to recognize the relevance of tense in respect of time.

For example,

   i.   *Amina slept late but wakes up early.

   ii.   *Last week, my father goes to Tamale.

In the first sentence, the issue of time is not clear because the students combine both present and past tense. Either the verb _*slept*‗ should be made present, that is ―*sleeps*‖ or the verb _*wakes*‖ made past, that is ―*woke*‖ for there to be agreement between the two verbs. In the second sentence, the use of the point of time past reference _*last week*‗‗ calls for only the past tense form of the verb, hence the verb goes has to be ―went‖ to give way for concord and time definition.

4. Confusion on Plural Inflection Concord

Students in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School have problems with some words that end with (-s) sound. Though these words are singular nouns but because they end

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with (-s) students make mistakes and pair them with plural verbs. Examples of these words are: mathematics, ethics, measles, news, politics etc. For example;

    i.   Measles are in most cases a harmless illness.

    ii.   Politics have made people popular.

    iii.   The news are bad.

From the above sentences, the students have mistaken the [-s] ending of the nouns for the plural inflection and have assigned them plural verbs.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

According to Swanson (2013) theoretical framework is the structure that supports a theory of research study. Concord in English grammar has many rules and with the operations of the rules of concord, it is obviously clear that concord depends on the Dependency Grammar Theory.

Beason (2005) opines that concord is prescriptive by nature as its rules maintain the correct dependency of lexis to make grammatical sense. The dependency grammar theory, dating back to the middle-ages and still useful today, starts from the premise that words ―depend" on each other for the sentence to make sense. The structure of a language is determined by looking at the relationship between a primary word and its dependents. This theory of grammar competency works very well with German/Dutch and English, which allow for word order mobility.

With regard to this study, concord is concerned with the rightful combination of lexis or words in a sentence to make both social and grammatical sense. Word-order dependency is the key thing and hence, the application of the dependency grammar theory in this study. In a nutshell, the literature review has looked at the various definitions of concord as given by some authorities on the subject. And for concord to

be taught effectively, students should be the centre of learning. Students should do all the practical activities in language class. This will help them to understand what they learnt well.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

Research methodology is defined by Leedy & Ormrod (2001, p. 14) as ―the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project.‖ Research methodology is an important component of any study. It provides the framework upon which the process is conducted (Brown, 1996). It is therefore essential that the methodology used in this work is sound and thorough enough to produce accurate data in order that the research objectives will be achieved.

This chapter deals with the research design, the sample size, population, the sample and sampling techniques and research instrument and data collection plan.

3.1. Research Design

According to Wiredu (1996), a research design describes in detail, all the procedures and methods the researcher employs in his work. Speaking on the same issue, Adentwi and Amartei (2009) opine that a research design is the overall plan the researcher employs to collect data in order to answer the research questions including the research data analysis techniques or methods. This study is a qualitative research that attempts to accumulate existing information and data regarding how to teach concord effectively. Creswell (2003) describes qualitative research as an unfolding model that occurs in natural setting that enables the researcher to develop a level of detail from high involvement in the actual experience. Trochim (2006) is of the view that qualitative research helps the researcher to develop new ideas and study phenomena in great detail and understanding. The researcher therefore used this method to provide unobstructed interactive learning of concord among students. Again, the researcher decided to use

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this approach in order to enable him verify his observations on the poor performance of students in Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School in concord.

3.2. Population and Sampling

A population is the total collection of elements or participants about which the researcher makes some inferences (Cooper & Schinder, 2003). Alternatively, Brink (1996) and Bless & Higson-Smith (2008) define a population as a complete set of events, people or things on which the focus of the research falls and in which the researcher has an interest and about which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. The population used for this research work comprised students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School. The entire student population of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School is (165) students.

It would have been ideal if all the students were included in the research work because the problem of concord affects the entire student body. However, due to time and resource constraints a sample of the students was used for the purpose of this research work. A sample is a set of individuals selected from a population and intended to represent the population under study. Samples are drawn because it would be impractical to investigate all members of a target population (Brewerton & Millward, 2002). Henning (2004) states that sampling is a process of selecting research participants.

The researcher decided to use the first year students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School as the sample. The reason for the researcher selecting the first years' is that the first years are always eager and anxious to learn new things as compared to the continuing students. Also, the first years have more years to complete school and this will pave the way for the researcher to spend more time with them by explaining the

various methods and strategies for the understanding of concord. Also the researcher has been teaching English Language in the school for the past six years. This will enabled him to gather the required data needed without many difficulties.

3.3 Sampling Technique

In this research, the random sampling technique was used in selecting a section of the students because it was difficult for the study to cover the entire students' population of J.H.S 1. The total number of J.H.S 1 students is 55. This technique was used because it ensures that the sample was not biased hence all the students had an equal chance of being selected. Again, they have a common problem with concord, hence the sample population was taken to represent all of them. The students were selected using ―yes‖ and ―no‖ written on pieces of paper that correspond with the total number of students in J.H.S 1.

The boys simultaneously picked theirs with the girls. Twenty students picked ―yes‖ and thirty five students picked ―no‖. The students who picked ―yes‖ were those used for the study. The sample technique also ensured that there was a fair representation among the students.

Table 3.1 Table showing the size of participants selected for the study.

CLASS	GIRLS	BOYS	TOTAL
J.H.S (1)	10	10	20
Teachers	Male	Female	
	5	5	10

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3.4 Sample Size

The total number of persons involved in the research work was thirty made up of twenty students (boys and girls) and ten teachers. The sampling size of thirty was considered pertinent in respect of time and money for collecting and organization of data.

3.5 Site of the Research

The site chosen for the research is Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School. The school is located in Walewale, the capital of West Mamprusi District. Specifically the school is located at Nayirifong. The school shares boundaries with Walewale Senior High School to the west, Hairiya English and Arabic Primary School to the north and Roman Catholic Primary and Junior High School to the east.

The school is made up of kindergarten, primary and the Junior High School with a total population of four hundred and seventy (470). The school has a good playing field, a library with adequate number of books and a well-built information communication centre where students go for their practical lessons.

This research site was chosen because the researcher is an English teacher in the school so access to information will become easier for him.

Again, the cost of carrying out this work will not be expensive since the researcher will not need much money to travel to long distances to gather information for the study.

3.6 Research Instruments

The research instruments which were used to collect data included: observation, questionnaires, test and interview.

3.6.1 Observation

To obtain adequate information, the researcher observed the students as they communicated orally, both in class and outside the classroom. The researcher observed that outside the classroom most of the students communicate with each other using the local language (Mampruli). Some of them also used non-standard English to communicate with each other. Some of those who tried to communicate using the English language committed a lot of concord errors.

The reason for the concord errors was that those who spoke non-standard English transfer it into the English language. Also, the L1 interference also contributed to these errors.

The researcher also observed the students in the classroom. The researcher paid attention to students when they were answering and asking questions in the classroom. Again, during class discussions the researcher noticed that students do not understand the concord lessons. It was also observed that teaching methods used by various teachers in the classroom were not the best. The researcher chose this method because it provides first-hand information.

3.6.2 Interview

Karma (1999) defines interview as any person-to-person interaction between two or more individuals with a specific purpose in mind. In this study, the researcher interviewed some of the students to find out their views concerning concord. The researcher also interviewed some of the English language teachers to find out the methods and strategies they use to teach English grammar. The interview was carried out in the J.H.S 1 classroom on Wednesday 08th November and Thursday 09th November 2017 respectively. The researcher engaged the students in conservation,

listening to them carefully and noted their errors in concord. In the classroom he used questions and answers techniques to acquaint himself with the degree of students' errors in concord. (See appendix B for sample questions). The interviews sought to find out from students whether they like and understand their concord lessons. Similarly, the interview with the other teachers of the subject gave me the chance to know about the methods they used in teaching concord and what they think about students' inability to perform well in concord.

3.6.3 Questionnaire

This is another important instrument which the researcher used to acquire information about the reason for the poor performance of basic seven students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School in concord. A questionnaire is a means of eliciting the feelings, beliefs, experiences, perceptions or attitudes of some sample of individuals. In this study, questionnaires were distributed to twenty (20) students and the ten (10) selected teachers. The method was preferred because it saves time and allows greater uniformity in the way questions are asked and thus greater compatibility in the responses. Similarly, Gay (1992) maintains that a questionnaire gives respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also to make suggestions.

3.6.4 Test

According to Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) a test is a way of measuring a person's ability, knowledge, or performance in a specific domain. A test is a measurement instrument designed to elicit a specific sample of an individual's behaviour. Apart from the questionnaires, observation, and interview, the researcher also used test to get a vivid picture of the challenges that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High

school have in the three main areas of concord. The pre-test was used to diagnose the extent of students' concord problems and the post test was used to determine the effectiveness of the intervention that has been adopted to solve the problem.

3.7 Data Collection Protocol

The data collection protocol is the process the researcher adopted in the collection of the data. Since the researcher is a staff member of the school, data collection became easier. During interviews conducted on both teachers and students, the researcher recorded the views of the interviewees and questionnaires were also distributed to the students. This enabled the researcher to get first-hand information and an eye witness account in producing credible and factual information for the research work.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis plan is the method the researcher used to analyse the data. According to Allison (2003), data analysis plan is the roadmap for how you are going to organize and analyse your data. The researcher analysed his data by translating conceptual models into a storyline and also analysing the questionnaires distributed to students. The narrative logic approach was used to analyse the data. According to Jean (2000) this method of data analysis involves narrative and putting down findings in paragraphs and tables.

3.9 Pre-Intervention Test

On Monday 06th November 2017, the researcher administered a diagnostic test for the twenty selected students. The test was made up of twenty questions covering the area of grammatical, notional, and proximity concord. Students were tasked to choose correct verbs to march the subjects in sentences. (See appendix C for sample of the pre-

intervention test). After the researcher had marked the test, it was realized that only two out of the selected students scored up to the pass mark which is 50% the rest got below the pass mark. This is a clear indication that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior high School really have problems with the concept of concord.

3.9.1 Intervention

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

Apart from the normal instructional hours, the researcher also organized extra classes for the sampled students. During this period, the researcher had to meet the students from 4:00pm to 5:10pm each day for three days in a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) for the period of two months (November-December). The researcher used various methods, strategies and techniques, within this period to provide a vivid explanation of the various forms of concord to the proper understanding of the students. The methods and strategies which were used include: brainstorming, quizzes, matching the verb, fill in the blank among others. These strategies were deployed taking into consideration, rules governing the various aspects of concord.

3.9.2 Definition of Concord

The researcher made the students to understand that the term concord in English grammar refers to the agreement relations which exist between two grammatical units

so that when one unit displays a particular feature, the other unit will also display a similar feature. A singular subject must have a singular verb and a plural subject must also have a plural verb. For example;

The **book has** a good cover.

{Singular subject, singular verb}

The **girls walk** to school every day.

{Plural subject, plural verb}

From the above examples, the researcher assisted the students to know that the singular subject ‗**book**' takes the singular verb, ‗**has**' and the plural subject ‗**girls**' takes the plural verb ‗**walk**'. The researcher also guided the students to understand that unlike nouns which become plural when they take ‗**s**' at the end, verbs become singular when they take ‗**s**' at the end.

3.9.3 Using the Classroom Situation

The researcher used the classroom situation to let the students understand that grammatical concord is the agreement between subjects of sentences and the accompanying verbs. Here the rule is that a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb. Here the researcher made good use of the classroom environment. He asked the students to mention names of objects they see around. They mentioned objects such as chalk, books, pens, tables and so on.

The researcher then used the objects they mentioned and formed sentences illustrating singular subjects and singular verbs as well as plural subjects and plural verbs. The following were the sentences formed.

    i.   The **table looks** nice.

          {Singular subject, singular verb}

ii.   The *pen writes* beautifully.

{Singular subject, singular verb}

iii.   The *girls read* silently.

{Plural subject, plural verb}

iv.   Your *friends talk* too much.

{Plural subject, plural verb}

Also, the researcher guided the students to understand that clauses and phrases which serve as subjects are regarded as singular and, therefore must take singular verbs. For example,

i.   *Talking while bathing is* not accepted.

ii.   *Smoking cigarettes is* dangerous to your health.

iii.   *To treat them as hostages is* criminal.

Prepositional groups which play adverbial roles are regarded as singular and therefore take singular verbs. For example,

i.   *In the morning is* best for me.

ii.   *In front of the house stands* a tree.

iii.   *Under the table lies* a cat.

The researcher then assisted the students to know that the above rules apply only if a verb is present and its subject is the third person. If the verb is past, there will be no agreement relationship between the subject and the verb.

For example,

i.   The *baby slept* peacefully yesterday.

ii.   My *son slept* after 8:00pm.

iii.   The *babies slept* peacefully yesterday.

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In the above examples even though the subjects are singular and plural respectively, all of them have the same verb form *"slept."*

However, the researcher made the students to understand that the verb, _*be*' displays concord relationship for the past. For example,

    i.   The ***boy was*** eating in the room.

    ii.   The ***boys were*** eating in the room.

After these examples, the researcher wrote the following sentences on the board:

1. The ***chair is*** weak.

2. The ***boys are*** weeding.

3. The ***children are*** playing.

4. The ***bag belongs*** to your sister.

5. The ***box contains*** books.

He then asked the students to identify the subject and verb in each sentence, which they did correctly.

The researcher again asked the students to form their own sentences in the simple present tense using the following verbs*; **play, speak, weed, dance, walk*** and so on.

The students formed the following sentences.

    i.   The ***girl dances*** well.

    ii.   ***She walks*** to school.

    iii.   ***They speak*** good English.

    iv.   The ***boys play*** football in the field.

    v.   The ***farmer weeds*** his farm.

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However, some of the students still had problems with singular and plural verbs. They formed ―Ungrammatical" sentences like:

i.   *The students writes well.

ii.   *The driver drive carelessly.

iii.   *Adam sleep in class.

iv.   *Those boys plays the guitar skillfully.

The researcher observed that these students thought that adding the morpheme _s' to a verb makes the verb plural. He then assisted them to understand that in the case of verbs, the addition of _s' makes the verb singular, unlike a noun which becomes plural when an _s' or _es' is added to it. Plural verbs loose the _s' marker.

For example,

Singular   plural

Talks   talk

Walks   walk

Reads   read

Sells   sell

Sweeps   sweep
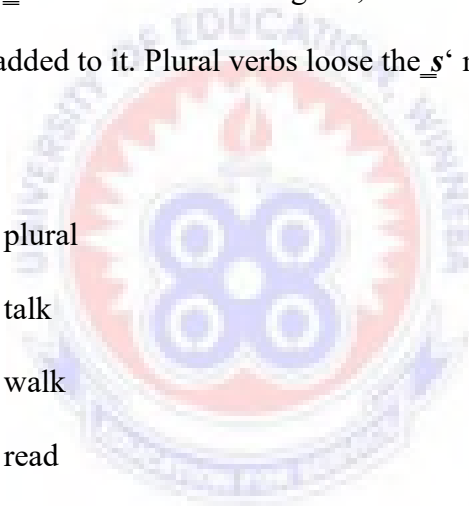
3.9.4 Matching Games

The researcher continued with the lesson by engaging the students in an activity matching game. This game was to arouse the students' interest in the lesson and concord in general.

The researcher divided the class into two equal groups (named A and B). He then wrote subject nouns (singular and plural) and verbs (singular and plural) on word cards. The

researcher then asked group ―A‖ to write out or pick a noun from the list and group ―B‖ to pick a verb to match with the noun. Then the entire class discusses whether or not the verb picked by group ―B‖ agrees with the noun picked by group ―A‖. If the verb agrees, then group ―B‖ is given a point. If not then the point is given to group ―A‖. The groups then switched and this time group ―B‖ picks a noun and group ―A‖ picks a verb. If the verb agrees with the noun then group ―A‖ is offered a point. If not the point is offered to group ―B‖. The game continued till the end of the lesson. The students found this game very interesting and they were all actively involved.

The researcher went further to let students understand that singular nouns joined by „*with*‟, „*as well as*‟ and „*together with*‟are singular and hence demand singular verbs.

For example,

    i.   The ***headmaster***, together with the ***assistant is*** in the office.

    ii.   The ***dog***, as well as the ***cat, eats*** everyday.

    iii.   The ***woman*** with her ***child is*** here today.

    iv.   The ***driver,*** together with the ***mate is*** in the car.

    v.   The ***book,*** as well as the ***pen, looks*** nice.

The researcher gave the students sufficient opportunity to practice the structure several times before proceeding with the following: where partitives, (***one of……………..*** ***some of………..*** ***a few of***………….etc.) are used as subjects the verb agrees with the head of the partitive phrase.

For example,

    i.   ***One*** of the students ***has*** failed.

    ii.   ***Some*** of the children ***were*** absent.

iii.   ***Six*** of the books ***have*** been stolen.

iv.   ***Few*** people do not ***eat*** meat.

v.   ***Some*** students cannot ***read*** well.

The researcher used real materials such as pens, books, etc. in order to help students understand the lesson better.

3.9.5 The Discussion Technique

Through the discussion technique, the researcher presented ***Notional agreement***, also called notional concord or synesis as means of applying subject verb agreement rules according to the intended meaning rather than according to syntax. This means we can pair a singular noun with a plural verb or a plural noun with a singular verb when the intended meaning calls for it.

Collective nouns like ***team, family, public, congregation, army, crowd, audience***, ***committee*** and so on fall into this category. It is therefore grammatical to form sentences like:

i.   The ***public is*** tired of demonstrations.

ii.   The ***public are*** not happy with the new policy.

iii.   The ***congregation was*** enjoying the sermon.

iv.   The ***congregation were*** singing and dancing.

In the examples above, the noun ―***public***‖ is treated as singular form of a group or collective noun in example (i) hence a singular verb ‗***is***‘ is chosen. In example (ii), the noun ―***public***‖ is treated as plural form so a plural verb ‗***are***‘ is chosen. After these presentations, the researcher asked the students to use the following collective nouns to form sentences. ***family, audience, committee, army, staff***.

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The students formed the following sentences.

    i.   His *family are* great musicians.

    ii.   His *family is* a distinguished one.

    iii.   The *audience was* large.

    iv.   The *audience were* singing.

    v.   The *staff is* doing well.

    vi.   The *staff are* doing well.

However, some of the students constructed ungrammatical sentences like:

    i.   *The team has sacked their captain.

    ii.   *The staff have expressed its opinions on the issue.

The researcher at this point corrected these mistakes by letting students know that in example (i) since the verb ―*has sacked*‖ has been chosen and is singular the pronoun ―*their*‖ should rather be ‗*its*‘ which is also singular and not ‗*their*‘ which is plural. Hence the sentence should be ―the team has sacked its captain‖ or ―the team have sacked their captain.‖

In sentence (ii) since the verb, ―*have expressed*‖ has been chosen, and is plural, the sentence should be ―the staff have expressed their opinions on the issues‖, and not ―*its*‖ which is singular.

The researcher went on to help the students understand that two more subjects connected by ‗*and*‘ take a plural verb. For example; *Rashid and Salam are friends*. With notional concord however, two subjects joined by ‗*and*‘ are considered as one thing and therefore a singular verb is required. For example;

    i.   *Rice* and *stew is* my best meal.

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ii.   What I *say* and *do is* my own affair.

iii. *Banku* and *okro* stew *is* delicious.

iv.   *Bathing* and not *exercising is* not good.

3.9.6 Using Demonstrations

The researcher used demonstrations to let the students know that **Proximity** is the state of being near someone or something. At this point, the researcher demonstrated the principle of proximity agreement as the practice of relying on the noun that is closest to the verb to determine whether the verb is singular or plural.

Here the rule states that, if two subjects are joined by ―*either……..or",* "*neither……..nor*", the verb agrees with the subject which is closer to the verb. So if the subject closer to the verb is singular, the verb is singular and if the subject closer to the verb is plural, the verb must be plural.

For example,

i.   Either *Adam* or the *children are* in the house.

ii.   Either the *children* or *Adam is* in the house.

iii. Neither the *boy* nor the *girls go* to school.

iv.   Neither the *boys* nor the *girl goes* to school.

The researcher continued the demonstration with particular reference to these expressions; *any, more, both, neither, all, and either*. The students were made to understand that, the words; *either, both, and neither* are used to refer to two people or things whilst the words; *none, any, and all* are used to refer to three or more things or people.

The researcher wrote the following examples on the board for the students to observe and practices correctly.

1. *Neither* of them came to class this morning. (two people)

2. *All* of them were in class this morning. (three or more people)

3. *Both* of them were in school today. (two people)

4. *None* of them was late. (three or more people)

3.9.7 Using the Interactive Technique

The researcher used the interactive technique to internalize the concept of pronoun and its antecedent. Students were made to understand that pronouns refer to nouns previously mentioned in the same sentence or a sentence used earlier in speech or writing. When we replace a word with a pronoun the word becomes an antecedent.

The researcher used the activity below to help students understand pronoun and its antecedent better.

The researcher asked the students to mention examples of nouns.

They mentioned nouns such as *pen*, *book*, *Asana*, etc.

The researcher wrote the examples on the board and then used them to form the following sentences;

1. I have my *book*. *It* is full of exercise.

2. *Asana* is in class today. *She* looks beautiful.

3. The *students* are coming. *They* are late for school today.

The researcher made the students to understand that in example (i) ‒*it*" is a pronoun referring to the noun ‒*book*". In example (ii) ‒*she*" is a pronoun referring to the noun ‒*Asana*". And in example (iii) ‒*they*" is a pronoun referring to the noun ‒*students*". At

this point, the researcher asked the students to form their own sentences with nouns and replace the nouns with pronouns. The students formed the following sentences;

1. The *pencil* is very long. *It* is very long.

2. The *girls* are dancing. *They* are dancing.

3. *Adam* is going home. *He* is going home.

The researcher continued by letting students know that the simple rule of pronoun and its antecedent is that a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number, gender and case. For example,

Number:

1. One of the girls bought her books.
   ↓   ↓
   Singular   Singular

2. The students studied for their exam.
      ↓   ↓
      Plural   Plural

Gender:

1. The girl is here. I hope she is fine.
         ↓   ↓
      Feminine   Feminine

2. The boy is in class. I think he is writing.
        ↓   ↓
     Masculine   Masculine

Case:

1. The students were busy writing. They have finished the exam.
        ↓   ↓
   Subject. Plural   Subject. Plural

2. We saw the boy. We bought him pen.
        ↓   ↓
   Object Singular   Object Singular

Students were to note that it is ungrammatical to form sentences like the following;

1. *The **woman** have finished cooking. **He** is now serving the food.

2. *__Adam__ have finished bathing. **Sh**e is now going to school.

3. *The **pen** is new. **They** is writing very well.

The researcher then wrote the following sentences on the board and asked the students to replace the nouns underline with the correct pronouns.

1. <u>The dog</u> is barking.

2. <u>The girls</u> are dancing.

3. <u>Razak</u> is full of pride.

4. <u>My sister</u> is beautiful.

5. Next month, Alhassan and Salifu will buy a ball.

The students constructed the following sentences;

1. **It** is barking.

2. **They** are dancing.

3. **He** is full of pride.

4. **She** is beautiful.

5. Next month, **they** will buy a ball.

3.9.8 Using Demonstration

Through demonstrations, the researcher encouraged students that indefinite pronouns that are subjects and are singular go with singular verbs. They include the following compounds of any, _every",„some" and no: somebody, anybody, everybody, everyone, something, anything, everything, nothing, nobody, no one, nowhere, either* etc.

For example:

1. **Someone is** coming here this morning.

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2. ***Nothing is*** in the accounts.

3. ***Everybody knows*** the headmaster.

4. ***Nobody likes*** that idea.

5. ***Something is*** wrong somewhere.

However, the following pronouns are plural.

All, many, several, both, few etc.

For example,

1. ***Many have*** answered the questions.

2. ***Some are*** not coming at all.

3. ***Both*** of them ***are*** here tonight.

4. ***All*** of them ***have*** received their books.

The researcher assisted the students to understand that indefinite pronouns do not refer to a specific person or thing. Although an indefinite pronoun may refer to someone or something identified, it refers to them in general with the notion of ***all, some, any or more***. Students are to note that each compound (except no one) is and must be written as one word;

Otherwise it is not an indefinite pronoun. Thus ―***every one***‖ and ―***any one***‖ means respectively **every or** any single item of a mentioned subject or object.

In addition to the above strategies, the researcher allowed students to use the concord rules appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes in class at all times. The researcher also used motivational techniques to sustain and arouse the interest of students in the lesson. This was done by reinforcing appropriate behaviour through encouragement and reward.

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Students' spoken grammatical errors especially concord errors were instantly corrected with a level of tact and diplomacy in order not to embarrass them.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the analysis of the data collected from the students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School. The data were analysed to address the research questions. The interpretation of the analysis results concerns;

1. What concord problems do students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School students have in dealing with English?

2. What methods and strategies can be adopted to help students overcome their concord problems and hence improve upon their competence in the use of concord in English?

3. What factors are responsible for the poor concord usage among students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School?

4.1 Observation Results of Methods Used by Teachers in the Teaching of Concord (Grammar)

The researcher undertook a classroom observation on the methods used by teachers of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School in teaching grammar (concord). Below is the procedure of a lesson that the researcher observed.

Teacher: (Writes title ―Parts of Speech‖ on the board). Today, we are going to talk about parts of speech in English.

Mention the parts of speech we have in English.

Class: (Mention the types of parts of speech as follows: nouns, verbs, adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, prepositions etc.)

Teacher: (Writes a list of types of parts of speech on the chalkboard) and said today we are going to talk about nouns.

Teacher: (Writes on the chalkboard) Nouns name persons, objects, things and places.

Teacher: (Types of Nouns include: proper nouns, common nouns, concrete nouns, abstract nouns, collective nouns, count nouns, non-count nouns, etc.)

Examples of proper nouns are: Adam, Walewale, etc.

Common nouns; tree, man, etc.

Abstract nouns; love, idea, etc.

Class: (Write down examples of the various types of nouns that the teacher writes on the board.)

The teacher then asked the students to use the examples of nouns on the board to form sentences of their own.

The above method was generally the pattern that was adopted by most of the teachers observed in the course of the study. It could be seen that the lesson was on parts of speech specifically nouns. The teacher wrote the definition of noun on the board with examples and asked the students to copy. The teacher then concluded the lesson by giving the students exercise. In this development, the teacher failed to review the students' previous knowledge (R.P.K.); he did not also involve the students actively in the lesson. Above all, he failed to use appropriate teaching strategies and materials to arouse students' interest in the lesson.

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This approach to the teaching of grammar is by no means not adequate for the full understanding of the rules that govern the use of English. Students in a class of this nature are compelled to learn by rote the nouns that the teacher has listed on the chalkboard because there are no adequate explanations and illustrations. This approach certainly does not present grammar in the pleasant and analytical manner that would make it enjoyable for learners. Indeed students in such a class are bound to see the learning of grammar as boring and tedious. Inappropriate methods of teaching grammar have contributed to the negative attitude that most students have developed towards the learning of grammar and English in general.

4.2 Analysis of Data on Attitude and Perception

The response of the students for each oral question is represented in the form of a table and is further analysed to highlight their attitude and perception about learning of grammar and English in general.

The interview questions revealed that most students believe that English is a subject that is easy to learn whilst arguing that grammar is more difficult to learn. Responding to question (3) ‒what subject is the most difficult among the following three core subjects you pursue in school?" (Mathematics, English, Science). Majority of the response (80%) indicated mathematics and science as the most difficult to them while citing English language as the least.

Table 4.1 English as the most difficult subject. (Students' response)

Subject	Respondents	Percentage (%)
English language	2	20%
Mathematics	4	40%
Science	4	40%

From the above table, 20% of the students were of the view that English was difficult to learn while 80% were of the view that Mathematics and Science are the difficult subjects to learn.

Respondents also maintained that English language is easy because it is the only subject they have much knowledge in, even before starting school.

In responding to question six (4) which aspect of English is very difficult, students were quick to indicate grammar as the most difficult aspect of English.

Table 4.2 (Grammar) as the most difficult aspect of English. (Students' response)

Aspect	Respondent	Percentage (%)
Essay writing	2	20%
Comprehension	2	20%
Grammar	6	60%

As shown from the table above, 60% of the students indicated that grammar is the most difficult aspect of English. 20% each said comprehension and essay writing are difficult aspects of English.

Responding to question (6) which aspect of grammar is difficult, students indicated that it was concord. One of the students said ―the concord aspect of grammar is very difficult.‖ Most of the students were of the view that the rules are simply too many to learn and apply appropriately.

Table 4.3 Concord as the most difficult aspect of grammar. (Students' response)

Answer	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%

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The table above clearly indicates that 80% of the students responded that concord is the most difficult aspect of grammar and 20% maintained that it was not.

Some of the students also maintained that they find it boring to study grammar because of its many rules and regulations. They also complained of lack of motivation to study grammar as there is no proper methodology used to teach grammar to them.

4.3 Analysis of Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaires which were administered to the selected ten (10) teachers were all collected thus attaining 100% return rate. According to Saunders (2009), a return rate of 50% is adequate, 60% good and 70% and above very good.

Therefore, the return rate was considered very good to produce the required information for analysis purposes. The teachers were expected to be realistic and truthful in answering the questions. All questions were returned to the researcher on time. The tables below show the manner according to which the teachers responded to the various questions as they appeared in their questionnaire.

Table 4.4 Distribution According to Sex of Teachers

Sex	Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	5	50%
Female	5	50%
Total	**10**	**100%**

The table above shows the gender of the ten (10) selected teachers in the research. From the table, it can be seen that five (5) teachers representing 50% were males while another five (5) teachers representing 50% were females.

Table 4.5 Distribution According to Age

1	2	3	4
20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
2	5	3	-

The above table shows that majority of teachers were between the ages 30-39. Hence the researcher knew that he was dealing with young and mature teachers.

Table 4.6 Qualification of Teachers.

Level	Respondents	Percentage (%)
2nd Degree	1	10%
1st Degree	6	60%
Diploma	2	20%
Certificate in Education	1	10%
Total	**10**	**100%**

Table 4.6 vividly depicts that one teacher representing 10% had a second degree. Six teachers representing 60% had first degree, two teachers representing 20% had diploma and one teacher representing 10% has certificate in education. This implies that all the teachers who participated in the study were professionally qualified and could therefore provide important insights into challenges students face in dealing with concord. According to Richards (2008), professional training and qualification of teachers are essential aspects in enabling them to have a good mastery of the content and acquisition of skills appropriate for language teaching.

The study also sought to find out teachers experience in teaching English. It was considered an important variable for this study due to the assumption that

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experienced teachers have a clear understanding of their students which enables them to select appropriate teaching methods to meet their leaning needs. The findings are displayed in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Teachers Experience in Teaching English

No. of Years	No. of Teacher	Percentage (%)
1-5	2	20%
6-10	5	50%
11-15	3	30%
Total	**10**	**100%**

Table 4.7 reveals that 50% of the teachers had a teaching experience of 6-10 years while 30% had a teaching experience of 11-15 years. It also reveals that 20% of the teachers had a teaching experience of 1-5 years. This implies that majority of teachers had a teaching experience of more than five years. Therefore, they were in a position to give information on challenges students face in learning concord. Richards (2008) notes that teachers teaching experience, in terms of how long they have been in the teaching profession, determines how well they are able to combine their knowledge with practical teaching experience to produce suitable teaching methodology that will bring desired results in language learning among students.

Figure 4.8 Teachers' responses on how often they teach grammar in the classroom.
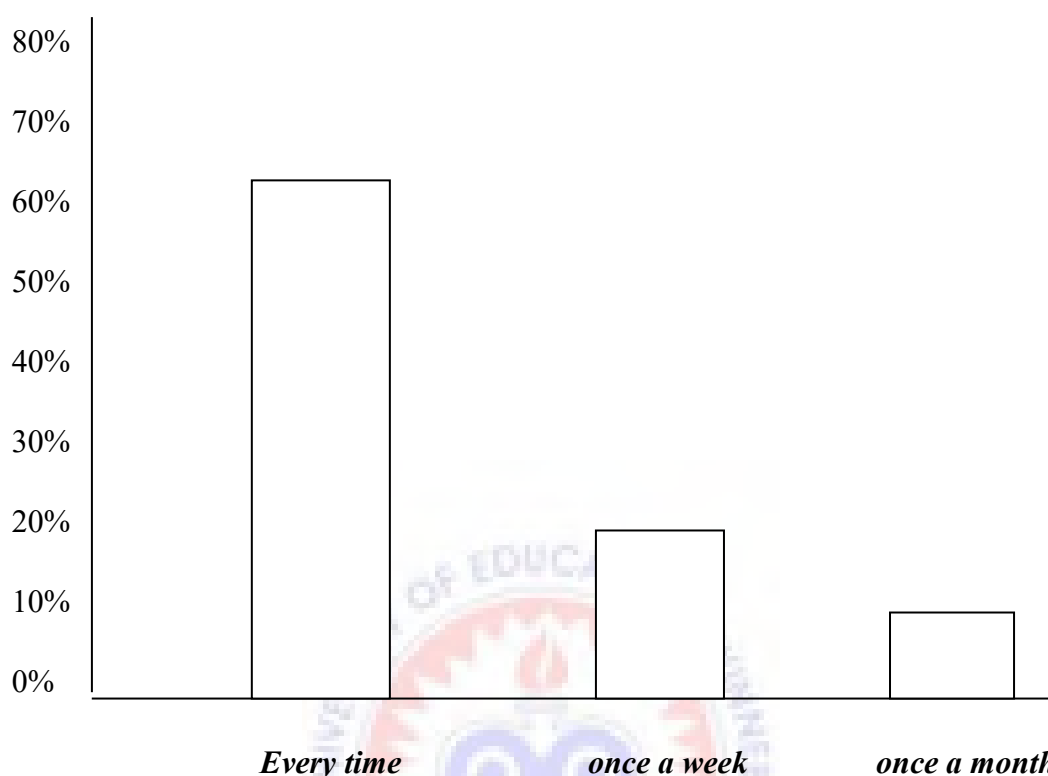
The above figure 4.8: shows that 70% of the teachers answered that they teach grammar every time in the classroom. 20% of the teachers said they teach grammar once a week in their classroom, and only 10% said they teach grammar once a month. According to figure 4.8 we can see that most of the teachers were of the view that they teach grammar every time in their classroom. According to Zhang (2004), grammar teaching should not be done as an isolated topic. Grammar should be taught with texts, in context and as part of communication.

Therefore, teaching grammar infrequently tends to make grammar an individual topic, thus isolating it from other components of language teaching. Teaching it on a more frequent basis will likely integrate grammar teaching as part of regular language learning. Although teaching grammar once a month is rather infrequent, the teachers who practice this claim that it depends on the textbooks, and student's

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needs. They also claim that at the basic level it is hard to follow so many rules in learning grammar. This will make students confuse and possible results in loss of interest in the learning of English grammar.

4.4 Analysis of Test Results

The results of the test that was conducted at the pre-intervention stage produced adequate data that show vividly that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school really had concord problems. This is in line with my research question one. ―What concord problems do students of walewale Presbyterian Junior have in English". Below are samples of students' concord problems that were identified in their test scripts.

On grammatical concord, some of the students constructed the following sentences;

1. *Good *seeds yields* good crops.

2. *The *letter* from Salifu *were* lost in the mail.

See Appendix E (Qn.14 & 15.)

It is obvious from the above sentences that the students did not understand the simple rule involved in grammatical concord. They could not much singular subjects with singular verbs as well as plural subjects with plural verbs. In the first sentence, the noun ‗seeds' is plural hence a plural verb should have been chosen. In this case ‗yield' would have been the correct answer but the students chose ‗yields' which is wrong. Similarly, ‗letter' which is a singular noun in the second sentence should have go with ‗was' which is singular but the students chose ‗were' which is plural. This is a clear indication that the students had inadequate knowledge in concord.

The results also revealed that students have problems with nouns that end with ‗s'. Those nouns because they end with ‗s' the students concluded that they are plural

and thus assigned plural verbs to them. Some of the students formed the following sentences;

    1. *__Ten Ghana cedis__ are the price of a good English book this days.

    2. *__Mathematics are__ Adam's favourite subject.

See Appendix F (Qn. 7 & 8.)

Students are to note however that ‗mathematics' and ‗ten ghana cedis' are singular nouns and demand singular verbs. The verb ‗is' which is also singular should have been selected.

Another area that revealed students' concord problems in the test is proximity concord. The following sentences were identified;

    1.* Either my shoes or your __coat are__ always on the floor.

    2. * The dog or the __cats is__ outside.

See Appendix F (Qn. 1 & 12.)

Students being unaware of the rule of proximity, they chose the verbs ‗are' and ‗is' which do not much with the closest noun. They were supposed to choose ‗is' in the first sentence and ‗are' in the second sentence to agree with the closest noun and fulfil the rule of proximity.

The students could not also identify the Headword in sentences. For example;

*The __man__ with all the skills __live__ on the streets.

See Appendix G (Qn. 3).

In the above sentence, the headword is ‗man' not ‗skills' hence the verb ‗lives' should have been chosen to agree with the headword ‗man' not ‗skills'.

On indefinite pronouns, the following sentences were identified;

    1   *__Nobody know__ the trouble I've seen.

2   *___All___ of the books even the old one ___is___ in the box.

See Appendix F (Qn.6 & 10.)

The students thought that ‗nobody‘ is plural and therefore chose plural verb ‗know‘ instead of singular verb ‗knows‘. They also failed to realise that ‗all‘ is plural and therefore a plural verb ‗are‘ should have been chosen not singular.

All these among other factors indicated clearly that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school really had concord problems.

During the intervention stage, the researcher inquired from teachers about the factors which were responsible for students‘ concord problems. This is my research question two. (What are the causes of students‘ concord problems?).The teachers outlined the following factors to be the prime cause of students‘ concord problems.

The first candid opinion of teachers was lack of motivation and encouragement from parents and teachers. To the teachers, students need to be motivated and encouraged to study grammar especially at the primary level.

The teachers were also of the view that the students do not read wide and extensively hence they lack adequate vocabulary to express themselves well in grammar.

Again, the data from the teachers suggested that lack of teaching and learning materials and inadequate teachers of English have also contributed immensely to students‘ concord problems.

Also, the teachers confirmed that the students have negative attitude towards the study of English language and that the students also use nonstandard English both in and outside the classroom.

Consequently, the answers to research question three (What measures can be adopted to solve the students‘ concord problems) popped up clearly when the

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teachers suggested some measures that could be employed to improve the students concord ability.

In the first place, the teachers pointed out that in order to help students solve their concord problems, grammar should be child centred. Students must be actively involved in the lessons.

Again, students should be provided with adequate reading materials both at home and in school. This will make them read wide and build on their vocabulary and improve their concord usage.

The teachers also opine that if they use appropriate teaching and learning materials such as language laboratories, audios and video tapes in teaching grammar, it will build on students understanding of grammar and English in general.

It was also suggested that remedial teaching should be encouraged since it will help struggling learners shore up their basic skills in grammar. This extra support will help the students improve on their concord skills.

4.5 Analysis of pre- test results

During the pre-intervention stage, the researcher observed and recorded down the marks scored by the students in the concord test.

Table 4.9 Marks obtained by students in the pre-intervention test

Marks	No. of Pupils	Percentage (%)
0-5	13	65%
6-10	4	20%
11-15	3	15%
16-20	-	-
Total 20	**20**	**100%**

The table above illustrates the marks that were obtained by the twenty students on the pre-intervention test conducted by the researcher. From the table, thirteen students representing 65% scored marks between (0-5). Four students representing 20% fell within (6-10). Three of the students representing 15% obtained marks from (11-15). From the table above, it could be seen that no student obtained marks ranging from (16-20). The researcher set the pass mark at 50% out of the total marks of 20. However, these marks obtained by the pupils clearly revealed that the students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School really had difficulties in concord.

4.6 Analysis of Post-test results

After the students were taken through the intervention strategies as discussed earlier in chapter three, another concord test was administered to the students.

The table below shows the marks they obtained.

Table 4:10 Marks obtained by students in the post – intervention test.

Marks	No. of Pupils	Percentage
0-5	-	-
6 – 10	2	10%
11 – 15	6	30%
16– 20	12	60%
Total 20	20	100

From the table above, twelve students representing 60% scored marks ranging from (16-20).

Six students representing 30% scored (11-15). Two students representing 10% scored (6-10). None of the students scored marks between (0-5). Judging from table 4.10 above, one would realize that the performance of the students in concord has improved remarkably as compared to the first test. Hence we can say that there was a remarkable improvement on the students' ability to overcome their concord problems.

4.7. Summary of Findings

Through the analysis of the data collected, the researcher realised that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High school really had concord problems. The causes of the students' concord problems were numerous. However, some of these causes were partly attributed to either the teachers or students.

4.7.1 Summary of Findings on Students

The results of the pre-test observation confirmed that students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High School really had concord problems. The students committed errors such as subject verb agreement, pronoun antecedent, and notional concord errors etc. These errors were attributed to the fact that students are not motivated and encouraged to study grammar at the primary level hence they had little knowledge in concord. The poor concord usage among students is also attributed to lack of vocabulary, and poor reading and writing habits. Most of the students do not want to use writing as a formal means of communication but rather prefer to use the mobile phone as a simple means. It is crystal clear from the data collected that students had negative attitude towards the learning of concord and grammar in general as evidenced in their sentence constructions.

The researcher also identified students' lack of interest in reading as a factor that causes their poor concord usage. Krashen (2004) maintains that reading results in the subconscious acquisition of vocabulary, syntax and spelling.

When students read wide they will acquire adequate vocabulary and hence improve on their grammar. Similarly, Kweon and Kim (2008) confirm that second language learners acquire vocabulary incidentally through extensive reading and the acquired vocabulary is retained without much attrition. This shows that if students develop good interest in reading habits their performance in English grammar will improve tremendously.

The researcher in his investigation also realized that the students' poor concord usage was partly attributed to the fact that students considered the concord aspect of grammar as having several difficult rules which they find too much difficult to comprehend. This factor was evident in the answers to the questionnaires. In response to one of the questionnaires, a student responded ―concord is too difficult and tedious to learn because it has many rules which always confuse me."

Evidence collected from the interview showed that the poor concord ability of the students has adversely affected them not only in English but in other subjects of study.

Finally, the study also brought to light that students' inter-lingual and intra-lingual transfer were also a cause of their inability to use concord effectively. This is in line with Brown (1980) and Yankson (1994) who maintained that concord errors that border on language transfer are traceable to interference of the mother tongue with the second language. There is therefore the tendency for the students to make

generalization about the target language system and produce utterances that are grammatically unaccepted.

4.7.2 Summary of Findings on Teachers

With the findings gathered from the research, it is revealed that most teachers of English do not use appropriate teaching and learning methods in the teaching of English. This study revealed the dominance of textbooks, dictionaries and the chalkboard in the teaching of English in the Junior High School. Modern media such as audio and video tapes, language laboratories, programmed texts, flash cards; computers, magazines and newspapers are rarely used. These findings agree with those of Kolawole (1998) who found that the teaching of English Language is bedevilled with many problems such as inadequate period of teaching, methods of teaching, and lack of adequate and useful resources. Most of the English teachers failed to use modern technology in the classroom to make learning student – centred and individualized.

Also, it came to light from the investigation that most English teachers show preference to teaching some aspects of grammar. This clearly shows that these teachers do not have an in-depth knowledge to deal with all the aspects of grammar.

The responses the researcher obtained from the questionnaire administered to the teachers disclosed that the standard of English in schools is falling and they are quick to blame students for not being interested in speaking the language. The general complaint is that the students' performance in English is bad and that teachers were doing their best to solve the problem. Some of the teachers admitted that the students speak nonstandard English when they are with colleagues. The

researcher's observation also confirmed that students speak the local language (Mampruli) more often when they are in school than English.

Despite all these negative findings, there were positive results too. Some of the measures that can promote the effective usage of concord among the students were identified.

They include the following:

1. The use of appropriate teaching methods such as matching games, conversations, demonstrations, discussion technique etc. And adequate teaching and learning resource such as language laboratories, audios and video tapes etc.

2. The teaching of grammar should be student – centred; students must be actively involved in the lessons.

3. Encouraging students to read wide by providing them with adequate reading material both at home and in school.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter looked at analysis of data collected with regard to attitude of students towards the study of English grammar, methods used by teachers in teaching English, causes of students' concord problems and factors that could improve students' concord usage. And for students of Walewale Presbyterian Junior High to improve upon their concord problems the measures that have been suggested must be taken in to serious consideration.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations of the study and suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

This sub-section gives a summary of the findings in relation to the objectives of the study. It addresses the factors which are responsible for the poor concord usage among students and strategies that would enhance students' concord skills.

5.2 Factors responsible for the poor concord usage among students.

The study revealed the following factors:

➢ Factors that Relate to Learners' Educational Background

• Negative attitude towards the learning of grammar.

• The notion that concord rules are many and difficult to learn.

• Lack of motivation and encouragement from parents and teachers.

• Code-switching of Mampruli and English.

• Intra-lingual and inter-lingual transfer.

➢ Factors that Relate to the School Environment

• The use of inappropriate teaching techniques by English teachers.

• Inadequate teaching and learning materials.

• Inadequate and lack of qualified teachers.

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- Failure of teachers to make grammar lessons child centred.

Strategies that could enhance students' concord ability

- English teachers should use appropriate teaching methods and materials.

- Grammar lessons should be made child centred.

- English teachers must be given regular in-service training to help update their knowledge in the teaching of concord.

- English teachers should teach all the aspects of grammar.

- Teachers at the primary level should teach grammar often to students so as to build their concord knowledge before they enter the Junior High.

5.3 Recommendations

The researcher upon analysis of the results recommends the following activities to be taken in order to enhance students' concord ability.

- Teachers of English should try as much as possible to emphasize concord relations in their grammar lessons design. This, will motivate and sustain the students' interest throughout the teaching and learning process, and also meet the needs of the learners.

- Teachers should encourage students to read wide. They should read more books at all levels especially, at the basic level. When a good reading habit is reinforced among the learners at a tender age, it will go a long way to improve the students' use of English and their communicative competence will be enhanced.

- The government, school authorities, and individuals should make much effort to supply adequate teaching and learning materials which will aid English language

teaching. This, would to a large extent rekindle students' interest in the study and in the teaching of the language.

- It is also recommended that teachers of English language should be equipped through workshops, seminars, and in-service training with modern techniques in the teaching of English language as a second language to update their knowledge and skills.

- More tutors of English language should be trained to ensure their adequate number at all times in the schools in order to lessen the burden of the few existing ones in the schools.

- Teachers of English language should make grammar lessons child centred. They should provide more rooms for students to be actively involved in the lessons. Activities such as debates, quizzes, and language games should be organized frequently to provide avenues for students to practise concord.

5.4 Conclusions

In this study, efforts were made to identify students' concord errors at the Junior High level. It was established that the causes of the errors were numerous, hence, some teaching strategies were suggested as a way of minimizing the errors. It is therefore my fervent hope and believe that there will be a tremendous improvement of concord in the writing of students. Also, a great improvement will be realized if teachers, parents, educational authorities as well as government offer the necessary support to the students.

5.5 Suggestion for Further Research

Even though the outcome of the research was good, there is still room for improvement. The researcher still recommends further studies to be carried out on the other aspects of

concord. Further researches should be conducted on pronoun antecedent, and indefinite pronoun concord, to help unveil more causes of the problem as well as appropriate measures and recommendations on how to improve upon the concord skill of students.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH IN WALEWALE PRESBYTERIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL. THE RESEARCHER WILL TREAT THIS INFORMATION WITH THE OUTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY THEREFORE GIVE OBJECTIVE AND WHOLEHEARTED INFORMATION.

SECTION A (PERSONAL DATA)

Please tick or provide a response where appropriate

1. Sex: male   [   ]   Female [   ]

2. Age: 20 – 29   [   ]   30 – 39 [   ]

            40 – 49   [   ]   50 + [   ]

3. Academic qualification

    i.   2nd Degree

    ii. 1st Degree

    iii. Diploma in Basic Education

    iv. Certificate in education

4. How long have you been teaching English?

    1 – 5   [   ]   6 – 10 [   ]

    11 – 15 [   ]   16 – 20 [   ]

SECTION B

5. What Subject do you teach?

6. How often do you think grammar should be taught in your classroom?

7. How often do you teach grammar?

    Every time [   ]   once a week [   ] once a month [   ]

8. Do you have textbooks on concord?   Yes [   ]   No   [   ]

9. Do you teach the concord aspect of grammar?

    Yes [   ]   No [   ]

10. What Language do your students speak most in school? ----------------------------

11. How often do they speak English in school?

    Always [   ]   sometimes [   ]   not at all [   ]

12. What effect does this have in the teaching and learning of concord?

13. What problems do students face in studying concord?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

14. What are the factors responsible for the concord problems among students?

………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………….

15. Suggest ways that can help solve the problem in fourteen (14) above.

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………
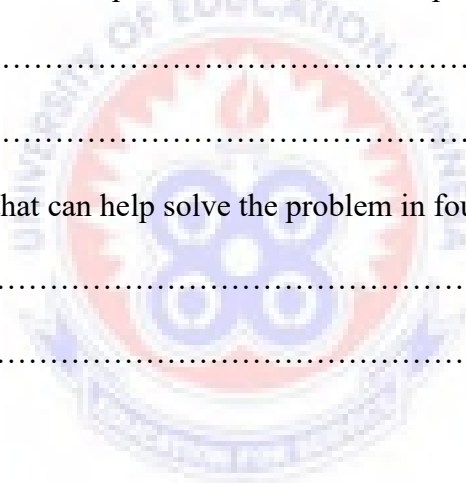
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS OF WALEWALE PRESBYTERIAN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL. THE RESEARCHER WILL TREAT THIS INFORMATION WITH THE OUTMOST CONFIDENTIALITY THEREFORE GIVE OBJECTIVE AND WHOLEHEARTED INFORMATION.

SECTION A (PERSONAL DATA)

Please tick or provide a response where appropriate

1 Sex: Male [   ]   Female [   ]

2 Age: 12—14 years [   ]   15—17 years   [   ]

           18—20 years [   ]   over 20 years   [   ]

SECTION B

3 Which subject is the most difficult among the following subjects you pursue in school?

English language [   ]   Mathematics   [   ]   Science [   ]

4 Which aspect of English language is very difficult?

Essay writing [   ]   Comprehension [   ]   Grammar   [   ]

5 How much importance does grammar has in English language learning?
....

6 Which aspect of grammar do you find difficult?
....

7 Why do you find that aspect to be difficult?

....

8 Do you find grammar boring?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

9 What language do you speak most in school?

English language [   ]   Ghanaian language [   ]   Nonstandard English [   ]

10 Do your teachers teach the concord aspect of grammar?

Yes [   ]   No   [   ]

11 Does the school have textbooks on concord?

Yes [   ]   No   [   ]

12 Does your teachers use teaching and learning materials when teaching concord?

Yes [   ]   No   [   ]

13 Suggest two things that should be done to improve upon your understanding of concord.

…………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

14 Does your school have adequate English teachers?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

15 Does your school have qualified English teachers?

Yes [   ]   No [   ]

APPENDIX C

Pre-Intervention Test

Choose the correct form of the verb that agrees with the subject

1. Either my shoes or your coat (is, are) always on the floor.

2. One of my sisters (is, are) going on a trip to Togo.

3. The man with all the skills (live, lives) on the street.

4. The captain, as well as the players, (want, wants) to win the match.

5. Every one of those books (is, are) fiction.

6. Nobody (knows, know) the trouble I've seen.

7. Ten Ghana cedis (is, are) the price of a good English book this days.

8. Mathematics (is, are) Adam's favourite subject.

9. The committee (debates, debate) these questions carefully.

10. All of the books, even the old one, (is, are) in this box.

11. The prime minister, together with his wife, (greet, greets) the press cordially.

12. The dog or the cats (is, are) outside.

13. Alhassan and Salam (doesn't, don't) want to see that book.

14. Good seeds (yields, yield) good crops.

15. The letter from Salifu (was, were) lost in the mail.

16. Adam (have, has) been studying English.

17. Each of the boys (is, are) playing for a trophy.

18. The father of African writers (are, is) Chinua Achebe.

19. Some of the questions (seem, seems) too tricky.

20. Many immigrants (have, has) come into Ghana.

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APPENDIX D

Post-Test

Fill in the blanks with the appropriate forms of verb. Choose the answers from the options given in the brackets.

1. No prize …...........given to the boy, though he stood first in the quiz. (was/were)

2. Either Asana or Hamdia …………..responsible for this. (is/ are)

3. Neither the minister nor his colleagues……….given any explanation. (have/has)

4. These…………pretty shoes. (is/are)

5. One of my friends……………gone to Tamale. (has/have)

6. Oil and water……………… not mix. (do/does)

7. That…………..incredible. (was/were)

8. Neither Fatawu nor Musah………………any right to the property. (has/have)

9. Each of the boys……………….given a present. (were/was)

10. Razak…………………to the field every day. (run/runs)

11. ………………………….are your books. (this/these)

12. Everybody………………a good song. (enjoy/enjoys)

13. Several of the children…………painting the wall with their fingers. (was/were)

14. All of them………………your name. (knows/know)

15. Somebody………………….eaten the food. (have/has)

16. A noble prize in literature…………..awarded to Ama Ata Aidoo. (was, were)

17. Not only the girls but also the boy……………confused by the methods. (is, are)

18. They……………….trying to solve this problem. (are, is)

19. Neither of his sons……………….like him. (looks, look)

20. Some of my classmates…………………. lazy. (is, are)