

## The Difficulties Ghanaian Senior High School (SHS) Students Encounter in Studying English Grammatical Concord

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### Abstract

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The major problem investigated in this study was the difficulties senior high school two students of Islamic and Wa senior high schools encounter in the use of English grammatical concord. The purpose of the study was to identify these concord learning challenges. The instruments used to collect data were intervention tests and questionnaire. The research design included pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention. The study discovered that most of the students could not apply the rules of concord correctly. They had very serious problems with subject-verb concord. Most students applied concord rules correctly to a very large extend after they were taken through the rules guiding concord in the intervention procedure. In conclusion, this research has proved that an intervention procedure is very important in assisting students to overcome their concord learning challenges.

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**Keywords:** concord, pre-intervention, intervention, post-intervention, subject-verb concord, difficulties, concord learning challenges.

### Background to the Study

In Ghana, English is used as an official language and the medium of instruction in our schools from the upper primary level to all higher levels. Sey, K.A (1973 p.8) says, “A single grammatical error in the speech of a public speaker, even if it is immediately corrected, is an almost indelible stigma on his public image”. The need to study English is, therefore, crucial for students as well as sectors of the population since it is the main medium of instruction for official work and international communication. English language at the senior high school (SHS) level is to give students the confidence as they communicate in the language. Students at the senior high school level are to study some essential rules governing the use of English language.

In fact, the general aims of teaching English as a subject at the senior high school level according to the Ministry of Education Teaching Syllabus for English (Senior High School), September 2007, include among others, to:

1. Reinforce language skills and competence acquired at the Junior high school level
2. Develop further, the language skills and competence which were acquired at the Junior High School Level.
3. Improve the communicative competence of the students and give them confidence to communicate.
4. Raise students’ level of proficiency in English usage and their ability to communicate with other users of English.
5. Enable all Senior High School products deal effectively with the accumulated knowledge of their chosen fields and be able to communicate such knowledge through the speaking and writing of English.

As G. Broughton et al (1968) puts it: “Certainly, repeated errors become confirmed and unless the learner is made aware of them he cannot learn from them.” Our failure to identify the causes of this menace and feverishly find antidotes to them will stagnate the growth of English grammar among students.

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Surely, the fact is undeniable that language can be learnt without errors as Nelson Brooks (1964) puts it: “It is just as unrealistic to reckon on language learning without errors as to reckon on existence without sin. “Similarly, according to S. Pit Corder (1969), “Language learning is a creative goal oriented, developmental process., errors are, therefore, unavoidable”. However, it is equally a fact that the language learner can rise above grammatical errors if a number of critical factors are observed.

### Statement of the Problem

Researchers have debated whether grammar should be taught in the classroom and students, for their part, have generally looked upon grammar instruction as a necessary evil at best, and an avoidable burden at worse. Concord, a central aspect of English grammar, has become very problematic among the students of today in general and the senior high school students in particular. Relating verbs correctly with their subjects in sentences has been the problem of many SHS students.

### The student’s knows their rights.

This is a gross violation of the rules of English grammatical concord. Among other violations of concord rules, the researcher in his interaction with English students (as he teaches English language) observed the following:

1. *I does all my homework, sir!*
2. *Two thousand cedis are not enough for me.*
3. *A group of students have arrived for the inter – school debate competition.etc.*

This is exactly the situation among our senior high school students today. It is very worrisome, given that the English language is the spring board on which all other subjects can be learnt. It is the official language of instruction in Ghana and if students fail to grasp its rudiments such as concord, then one would be right to conclude that the entire educational system is in jeopardy.

Similarly, Sey K.A (1973) remarks that:“Our grammar at the pre –tertiary level is in orisis”. Sey opines further that some of the grammatical scandals that pre-tertiary students commit are difficult to comprehend in the eyes of the average English user. He sighted a few of such constructions as:

- *This man is a magician.*
- *Jones seeked my help in class yesterday*
- *Two thirds of British politicians cherish their integrity.*

A learner of the English language must learn the rules with precision so that he or she does not soil his/her image whenever the person expresses himself or herself. These errors do not exclude concord.

Another confirmation of this problem is the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE) (school candidates) May/June 2006 Chief Examiner’s Report. In a summary of candidates’ weaknesses, the chief examiner for English has the following to say: The general performance of the candidates revealed that many of them have still not grasped the rudiments of English Language. The performance of the majority was disappointing.

They observed among others, the following:

- A. Poor syntactic structures or faulty constructions.
- B. Wrong application of subject-verb and pronoun antecedent agreements.
- C. Use of wrong tenses.

The conclusion drawn from the above revelation attests to the fact that the difficulties students have as regards the study and use of concord is, undeniably, a contributory factor to the poor performance in core English Language at the senior high school level in general.

### Research Questions

This study, aimed at finding solutions to the following key questions:

1. What linguistic difficulties do Senior High School students encounter in studying English grammatical concord?

2. Which social/non-linguistic factors hamper the smooth mastery of the rules of English grammatical concord among SHS students?

### **Theoretical Framework**

By the nature of the subject concord, which is a rule-governed enclave within the terrain of English grammar, one would easily and rightly so, conclude that the topic belongs to the traditional grammar theory in which language is prescriptive rather than descriptive as early on indicated. With the operations of the rules of concord, it is abundantly obvious that concord depends on the Dependency Grammar Theory.

He goes on to classify concord under traditional grammar. In like manner, Beason(2005) in his book *Handbook of English Grammar*, indicates 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.

Relatedly, concord is concerned with the rightful combination of lexis or words in a sentence to make both social and grammatical sense. Across the five dimensions of concord, word-order dependency is the key thing and hence, the application of the dependency grammar theory in this work.

### **Literature Review**

“Concord or agreement,” according to Mark Aronoff and Kirsten Fudeman (2010), “Occurs when one element in a sentence takes on the morphosyntactic features of another element.” In basic terms, concord refers to agreement between two or more words in a sentence. English grammatical concord is very important for correct English usage. The unpardonable manner in which English students, especially in contemporary times, violate the rules of grammar in general and concord in particular, gives cause for worry.

Lutrin and Pincus (2004) in their work “English Handbook and Study Guide” (Page 36) define concord as that in which the words in a sentence must match or agree with one another. Concord, according to Duskova (1977) is agreement in gender, case, number or person between different words that share a reference. Tuurosong (2012) in his book “Grade A English Language” Rev. Ed., Defines concord (subject – verb) as a grammatical relationship in which a predicate/verb must agree with the subject 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. Damasus’ definition is aspect – specific of concord, that is subject and verb concord.

Yankson (1994), in his work “Better English through concord for West African students”, sees concord as the necessary agreement/coherence needed in a sentence/statement to yield a flawless grammatical structure. As to what informs this unfortunate attitude of non-adherence to the rules of concord on the part of both native and non-native students, one has to probe through research.

As early on indicated, the works of many English grammar scholars on grammatical concord such as Kofi Yankson (1994), Damasus Tuurosong (2012), Nelson Brooks (1964), Heid C. Dulay and Marina K. Burt (1997), I.C. Richards (1976), Duskova (1977), S. Pit Corder (1969), G. Broughton et al (1968), Latin (1996), Labov and William (1999), Cambell (2006) and Beryl Lutrin and Marcelle Pincus(2004), Litty Kudjoe David (2011), Anto Sylvester Kwabena (2004), Sekyi-Baidoo (2000) among other scholars, have all basically identified grammatical concord in English as a major problem among SHS students.

### **Research Design**

According to Quirk et al (1973), a research design is the framework that outlines the direction and organization of any study. Speaking on the same issue, Wiredu, J. F. (1996) says that the design of any research describes in detail, all the procedures and methods the researcher employs in his work.

This study used the mixed method research. This is the type of research that involves the mixing of qualitative and quantitative methods. It is also known as the multi, convergence, integrated or combined method and it gives greater strength to a study than using just one approach (Creswell & Clark 2007). Specifically, it is the concurrent mixed method of research where qualitative and quantitative data are merged in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

The population under consideration included students and teachers of English language at the Senior High School level. Students' written grammar exercises were analyzed and concord errors in them identified. Teachers of English were given a carefully composed questionnaire to answer. The outcomes of the analyses of students' grammar exercises and responses of English teachers to the questionnaire were interpreted with the help of tables and charts. The mixed design suited my work most since the work did not deal with only numeracy or numbers but also took into consideration information provided by the students in the form of their responses to questions and answers in the intervention teachings. That apart, the researcher also had one-on-one interactions with some of the students on concord and carefully noted some key observations.

Seventy (70) students each from Wa Senior High School and Islamic Senior High School, Wa were given grammar exercises from which concord errors were identified and analyzed. The sample population was therefore all English language teachers in the sample schools and one hundred and forty (140) English students.

### **Pre –Intervention Test**

The researcher conducted a class test for students based on concord. The test was made of fifty (50) questions covering all the nineteen (19) identified sub aspects of the subject concord. The reason for this high number of questions was to give enough opportunity for students to show what they knew and what they didn't know about concord. The rationale for this test was to diagnose the exact concord challenges of students. The level of the test could be described as average or moderate. See Appendix 2. Each of the 19 sub aspects of concord had at least 2 questions on it.

### **Intervention Test**

From the outcome of the pre –intervention test the researcher observed that some of the students did not have much problem with some aspects of concord, particularly, point of time past – verb concord. Their performance on questions pertaining to this aspect of concord was fairly impressive. The level of the test was equally moderate as the pre-intervention test and it was basically purported to assess the students' understanding of the guiding concepts of concord. See Appendix 3. There were still some challenges on some aspects of the topic, notable among which was subject-verb concord. See Appendices 8(a) & 8(b).

### **Post Intervention Test**

The last elicitation exercise, post-intervention test, was carried out on Wednesday May 20, 2015 in similar manner as was done in the pre and intervention tests. It was the same 50 grammar questions on all aspects of concord. The rationale for this third and final test was to enable the researcher ascertain students' level of knowledge on concord after the first two tests. He wanted to know whether students could improve upon the performance in the intervention test and if they did, what extend of improvement.

### **Questionnaire**

The researcher carefully designed a set of questionnaire to enable him collect data from the tutors. Having examined the challenges that students encounter in exploring the topic "concord", the researcher found it necessary to hear from the tutors as well. The questionnaires, written in simple plane language, were given to tutors for two weeks within which they were to carefully study and answer all the questions on it. The questionnaire had a total of 13 items on it, pertinent to the objectives of this study. Question 12 has (a) and (b); the (b) being a follow up on (a). See Appendix 1.

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants**

The respondents were made up of one hundred and forty (140) students from eight different ethnic groups with an average age of fifteen years as well as fourteen (14) English tutors, including the English Heads of Department of the two schools.

<u>STUDENTSTUTORS</u>			
ETHNIC GROUP	NUMBER	ETHNIC GROUP	NUMBER
Dagaaba/Waala	44	Dagaaba/Waala	08
Sissala	21	Sissala	02
Fante	09	Asante	02
Asante	20	Dagomba	01
Mamprusi	07	Birifor	01
Kusasi	08	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14</b>
Dagomba	17		
Birifor	14		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>140</b>		

The researcher used the ethnic groups to represent some of the Ghanaian languages spoken and written and are used as the medium of instruction in the lower primary schools in our formal education sector. The searcher randomly selected those subjects to create a sort of balance and fairness as far as the Ghanaian languages are concerned.

### Data Analysis

#### Difficulties SHS Students Encounter In Studying English Grammatical Concord Grammatical Concord and Proximity Concord

Firstly, the data in the use of the intervention test indicated that the students did not fully internalize the formation rules. This rule states that a singular verb requires a singular subject. A verb should, therefore, agree in an English sentence with the subject in number, person and gender. For example, under this category of concord, Ebenezer of Wa SHS committed mistakes such as:

- 1) She *makeus* happy always.
- 2) Dakurah *know* where to go tomorrow.

See Appendix 8(a), Qn. 1&2.

Again, these same mistakes were committed by Sherifa of Islamic SHS in the pre-intervention test as follows;

- 1) Her uncles *teaches* her morals always.
- 2) He *understand* Dagaare.

See Appendix 6(a), Qn. 3&8.

This therefore shows that the concord system had not registered on the student's memory firmly.

Secondly, in the area of proximity concord, the verb agrees with the noun that is closer or nearer to it (i.e, the verb). The researcher realized, however that the use of "either....or" and "nether....nor" posed a lot of problems to most students. They thought "either....or" and "nether.....nor" are always singular and so needed singular verbs. The data in the use of the pre-intervention test again, showed students committing such errors. Janet of Islamic SHS committed the following errors:

1. Either the president or his ministers *has* come to the Independence Square. The verb 'have' should have been used instead of 'has' because of the plural noun "ministers" which is closer to the verb.

2. Neither the pastor nor his congregants *is* criminal. The verb "is" is used instead of "are" in the sentence. It should have read: Neither the pastor nor his congregants are criminal.

See Appendix 6(b), Qn.3&4.

Similarly, Gordon of Wa SHS committed the following errors in the post-intervention test:

1. Either the children or their father *are* doing the cleaning.
2. Neither Ama nor her classmates *comes* to school late

See Appendix 10(a), Qn.31&32.

In sentence (1), the verb should have been a singular verb "is" because it comes immediately after a singular subject "their father". The sentence, therefore should have read: "Either the children or their father is doing the cleaning. The students obviously did not know that when one subject /noun is singular and the other is plural, the problem is resolved by resorting to what is known as proximity concord; that is whichever subject or noun comes last determines the number of the verb. In other words, if the second subject or noun is singular, the verb will be singular and vice versa. Next to grammatical and proximity concord, the data also showed that students had serious problems with headword identification in complex noun phrases and demonstrative pronouns.

### Headword identification in complex noun phrases and demonstrative pronouns

It was observed by the researcher also that students were unable to identify the headwords in complex noun phrases during the intervention test. This caused the errors they committed in noun-verb concord exercises. For instance, Ebenezer of Wa SHS committed such errors as:

- i) Indiscipline among students *are* on the increase. The correct sentence is indiscipline among students is on the increase.
- ii) All the members of my family *is* rich. Instead of: All the members of my family are rich.

See Appendix 8(a), Qn.24&25.

On her part, Sherifa of Islamic SHS committed the following errors in the pre-intervention test:

- iii) The deaths of two students of our school *have* made the district director come to the school. Instead of: The death of two of our students has made the district director come to the school.
- iv) A box full of pens *were* found outside the classroom. The correct construction is rather; A box full of pens was found outside the classroom. See Appendix 6(a), Qn.26&27.

The researcher observed that students failed to realize that it is the headword in a subject NP which determines noun-verb, determiner-noun, noun-pronoun concord, etc. The researcher also noticed that it is very necessary, therefore, for the language teacher to introduce his students to English noun modification before he or she teaches them concord.

Further analysis of data revealed that another problematic area was the use of demonstrative pronouns. The researcher observed that the students had difficulty distinguishing between 'this' and 'these' as well as 'that' and 'those'. Students seemed confused about whether 'this' is singular whilst 'these' is plural and 'that' is singular whilst 'those' is plural. They therefore failed to select appropriate nouns to make it grammatical.

In the pre-intervention test, Janet of Islamic SHS for instance, committed the following errors :

1. This *men* makes a lot of fun.
2. These *sheep* lost *its* shepherd.

See Appendix 6(b), Qn. 28&29.

In the post-intervention test, Gordon of Wa SHS, on the other hand also made the following mistakes:

1. *These* days, there was no technology.
2. These *phenomenon* are known as weathering.

See Appendix 10(a), Qn.8&9.

### Verb-verb concord and semi-conjunctions

On verb-verb concord, the researcher also realized in the pre- intervention test that a number of students did not know that English, like many West African languages, maintains the sequence: verb/present-verb/past within clauses in sentences. As a result, Sherifa of Islamic SHS constructed sentences such as:

- a. It was believed that in those days these same men went and *prevent* them from being beaten.
- b. They those days met once a month and *discuss* matters affecting them”.

See Appendix 6(a),Qn.25&36.

On his part, during the intervention test, Ebenezer of Wa SHS committed errors as follows:

- a. Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they *can* pass their final examinations well.
- b. I sat for the last year’s private WASSCE and *perform* well.

See Appendix 8(a),Qn.49&50.

Another thing the researcher realized was that students did not know that when semi- conjunctions (I .e intervening expressions) such as: together with, as well as, including, no less than, along with, in addition to, in conjunction with, with, in the company of accompanied by, etc, follow a singular subject , a singular verb is required. In the post-intervention test, Gordon of WaSHS committed this error:

1. My father as well as my mother *are*kind ;instead of: My father as well as my mother *is* kind.

See Appendix 10(a),Qn.17.

On her part, Janet of Islamic SHS, in the pre-intervention test committed the error below:

1. The farmer with his dogs *are* going to the farm” ;instead of :The famer with his dogs *is* going to the farm.

See Appendix 6(b),Qn.44.

Hamzaof Islamic SHS, in the intervention test ,also committed the error below:

1. The pastor no less than the members of his church *are* hypocritical; instead of: The pastor no less than the members of his church *is* a hypocrite.See Appendix 8(b),Qn.30.

### Two titles for one thing and adjectives as headwords

Apart from the challenges of the verb –verb concord discussed above, the data also suggested that most students could not construct grammatical sentences with titles and adjectives as headwords. The rule states that if the two items that are joined refer to two different titles for one person the subject is considered singular and therefore the verb is also considered a singular verb. The researcher realized however that this posed a serious problem for the students. They thought they were to use plural verbs and so constructed wrong sentences. In the post-intervention test,Mauricia of Wa SHS committed such errors as:

- B. My father and pastor *come* here on Mondays.
- C. Our literature tutor and form master *come* from Nandom.

See Appendix 10(b),Qn.39&40.

Similarly, during the intervention test,Hamza of Islamic SHS committed the following errors:

- D. The aspiring Member of Parliament for Wa West and minster of local government and rural development *worship* with the church of Pentecost, Wa.
- E. Your daughter and secretary *leave* for London.

See Appendix 8(b),Qn.21&28.

As far as adjectives taking the position of headwords is concerned, students were also faced with the problems of using appropriate verbs for adjectives that are used as headwords. Examples: the poor, the rich ,the deaf ,the aged ,the blind, etc. They did not know that when adjectives are used as headwords in noun phrases they have a generic reference and so are regarded as plural subjects/nouns and therefore take plural verbs. In the pre-intervention test, Sherifa of Wa SHS committed the under listed errors:

1. The poor *needs* help. Instead of: The poor *need* help.
2. The blind *is* miserable. Instead of: The blind *are* miserable.

See Appendix 6(a),Qn.42&43.

In like manner, Janet of Wa SHS in the intervention test committed the following errors:

1. The deaf *shouts* when talking. Instead of: The deaf *shout* when talking.
2. The rich *does* not worship God well. Instead of: The rich *do* not worship God well.

See Appendix 6(b),Qn.42&45.

**The indefinite pronouns “all” and “some” and intervening prepositional phrases**

Data generated from the study also showed that most students thought “all” and “some” are always plural. Gordon of Wa SHS in the post-intervention test therefore constructed sentences such as:

- a. All the kerosene *aresold*. Instead of: All the kerosene *is* sold.
- b. All the water in the barrel *are* finished. Instead of: All the water in the barrel *is* finished.

See Appendix 10(a), Qn.30&4.

Also, Mauricia of Wa SHS in the post-intervention test made the following mistakes:

- c. Some of the oil *are* stolen. Instead of: Some of the oil *is* stolen.
- d. Some of the kerosene *aresold*. Instead of: Some of the kerosene *is* sold.

See Appendix 10(b), Qn.34&35.

Whilst “some” and “all” were problematic for most students, it seemed that challenges with the use of inflectional concord and some indefinite pronouns were even more serious. Indeed, it was also noticed in this research that some subjects with the plural inflection mark “s” are often confused for plural subjects. Thus, Sherifa of Islamic SHS in the pre-intervention test made such statements as:

- (i) Emphasis *were* laid on the “verb”.
- (ii) Statistics *show* that women live longer than men.

In (i) the verb “were” should be “was” and in (ii) the verb “show” should be “shows”.

See Appendix 6(b), Qn.47&48.

Indefinite pronouns, apart from “all” and “some”, such as none, each, every, anyone, someone, etc, also confused some students in this study when they stand in subject position in a sentence. Hamza of Wa SHS in the intervention test made such scandalous statements as:

- a) None of the *boy* are here.
- b) Anyone in this room *need* to pray.

In (a) “the boy” should have been “the boys” and the verb “are” should be “is”. In (b), the verb “need” should be “needs”.

See Appendix 8(b), Qn.10&16.

Finally, fractions were shown to be problematic for most students who used them to construct sentences. Some of the mistakes committed by Ebenezer of Wa SHS in the intervention test include:

- (i) *Two thirds* of Ghanaians *are* illiterates.
- (ii) *One sixteenth* of my father’s property *belong* to me.

The verb “are” in (i) should have been “is” whilst “belong” should have been “belongs” to match their corresponding singular subjects “Two thirds” and “One sixteenth” respectively.

See Appendix 8(a), Qn.46&47.

**Table 3: Performance of Students on Subject-verb Concord in Pre-intervention Test**

CONCORD CHARACTERISTICS	Wa SHS=70				Islamic SHS=70				Total	Percentage
	Error Frequency		Percentage		Error Frequency		Percentage			
	M=	F=	M=	F=	M=	F=	M=	F=		
	35	35	35	35	35	35	35	35		
Grammatical concord	19	14	54	40	23	21	66	60	77	55
Proximity concord	16	15	45	43	16	11	46	31	59	42
Headword identification	17	15	49	43	26	22	74	63	80	57
The “s”-inflection	16	15	46	43	16	11	46	31	58	41
There + Verb+NP	21	14	60	40	15	13	43	37	63	45
Semi-conjunctions	20	18	57	51	19	13	54	37	70	50
Two titles for one subject	18	18	51	51	18	16	51	46	70	50
Adjectives as headwords	09	11	25	31	16	14	46	40	50	35
“All” and “some”	06	08	17	23	10	10	29	29	34	24
Intervening prepositional phrases	14	13	40	37	07	09	20	25	43	30
Plural inflectional concord	10	08	29	23	15	13	43	37	46	32
Indefinite pronouns	15	16	43	46	08	06	23	17	45	32
Notional concord	17	16	49	43	16	11	46	31	60	42



In the intervention test, subject-verb concord continued to record the highest number of errors. Grammatical concord and two titles for one subject topped the list with the highest number of subject-verb concord errors committed. They both recorded totals of 37 errors each, representing 26% each of total errors committed in that test. They are closely followed by proximity concord which had 36 total number of errors, representing 25% of total number of errors committed in that test. The least number of errors were committed under ‘all’ and ‘some’ which had a total of 20 errors, representing 14% of total errors committed in this test. The second lowest of total number of errors was recorded under intervening prepositional phrases which had 24 error, representing 17% of total errors committed in that test.

In total, subject-verb concord again topped the list in this test with 37 errors representing 64% of all the errors committed in the post-intervention exercise. Twotitles, proximity and headword identification recorded the highest error ratio of 4 each, representing 3% each of total number of errors committed in that test .Notional concord, plural inflectional concord, semi-conjunctions, There+verb+NP as well as grammatical concord each recorded a total of 3 errors, representing 2% of total errors committed in that test. The s-inflection, “all” and “some”, intervening prepositional phrases and indefinite pronouns were aspects which recorded the lowest error ratio of 2 each, representing 1% each of total number of errors committed in that test.

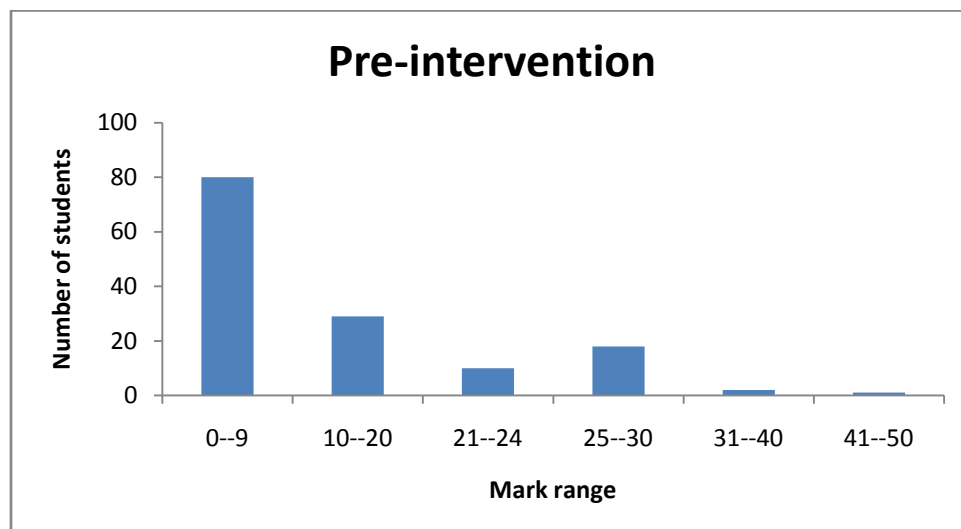
**Performance Analysis of Students in the Intervention Tests**

**Table 4: Students’ Performance in Pre-intervention Test**

MARK RANGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS		Total	Percentage
	Wa SHS = 70	Islamic SHS = 70		
0-9	38	42	80	57
10-20	16	13	29	21
21-24	02	08	10	07
25-30	11	07	18	13
31-40	02	00	02	01
41-50	01	00	01	01
<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>				

It is clear from table 19 above that 80 out of the total of 140 students scored below 10 marks, 21 scored 25 marks and above and 39 of them scored between 10 and 24 marks inclusively. Therefore, only 21 of them, representing 15% of the 140 students passed in that test. See table 19 above. This is graphically represented below.

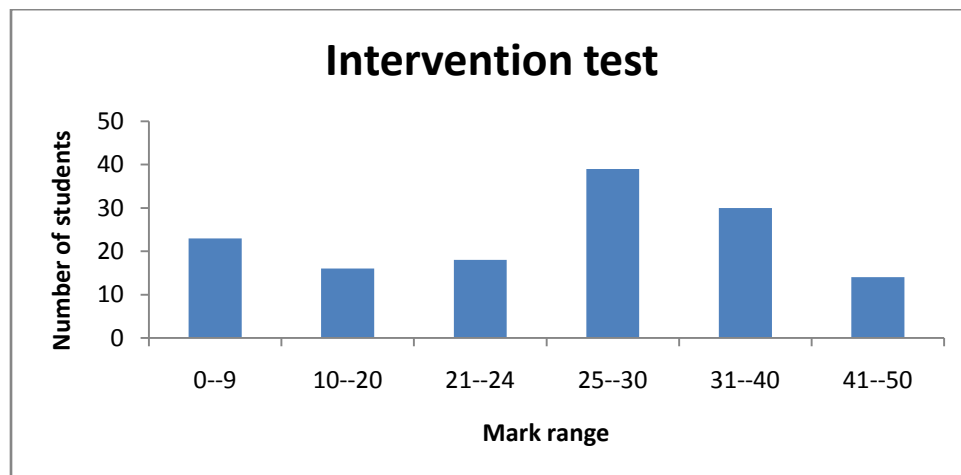
**Figure 1: Bar Chart Showing Students’ Performance in the Pre-intervention Test**



**Table 5: Students' Performance in Intervention Test**

MARK RANGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS		Total	Percentage
	Wa SHS = 70	Islamic SHS = 70		
0-9	09	14	23	16
10-20	07	09	16	11
21-24	09	09	18	13
25-30	24	15	39	29
31-40	11	19	30	21
41-50	10	04	14	10
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

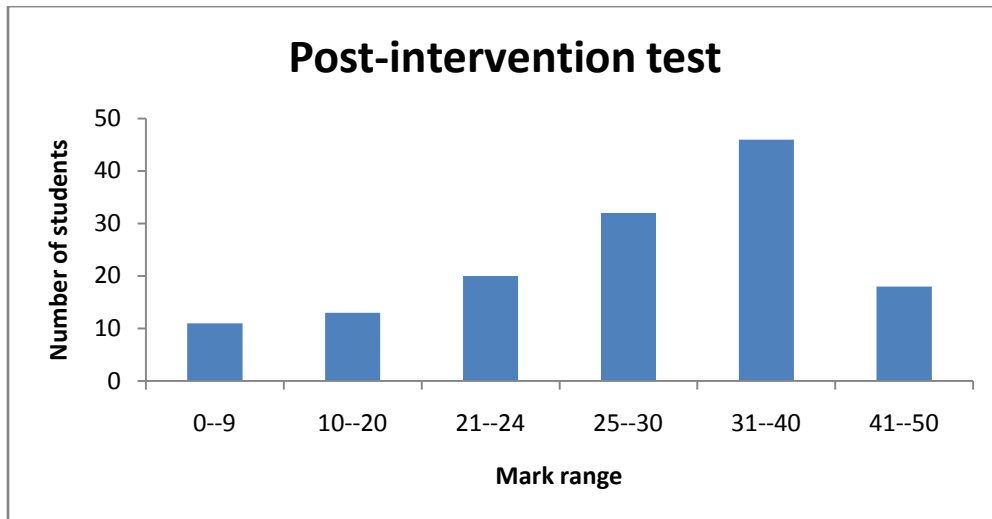
From the above table, 83 students out of the 140 scored 25 marks and above, representing 60% of the total number of students whilst 23 of them also scored below 10 marks. 34 of them scored between 10 and 24 marks inclusively. Remarkably, 14 of the total number of students scored above 40 marks. This is graphically represented below.

**Figure 2: Bar Chart Showing Students' Performance in the Intervention Test****Table 6: Students' Performance in Post- intervention Test**

MARK RANGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS		Total	Percentage
	Wa SHS = 70	Islamic SHS = 70		
0-9	03	08	11	08
10-20	04	09	13	09
21-24	09	11	20	14
25-30	15	17	32	23
31-40	29	17	46	33
41-50	10	08	18	13
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Ninety six(96) of the total of 140 students in this test scored 25 marks and above as can be seen from the table above, 11 scored below 10 marks whilst 33 scored between 10 and 24 marks inclusively. A remarkable number of 18 students scored above 40 marks, an improvement over the previous test. This is represented graphically below.

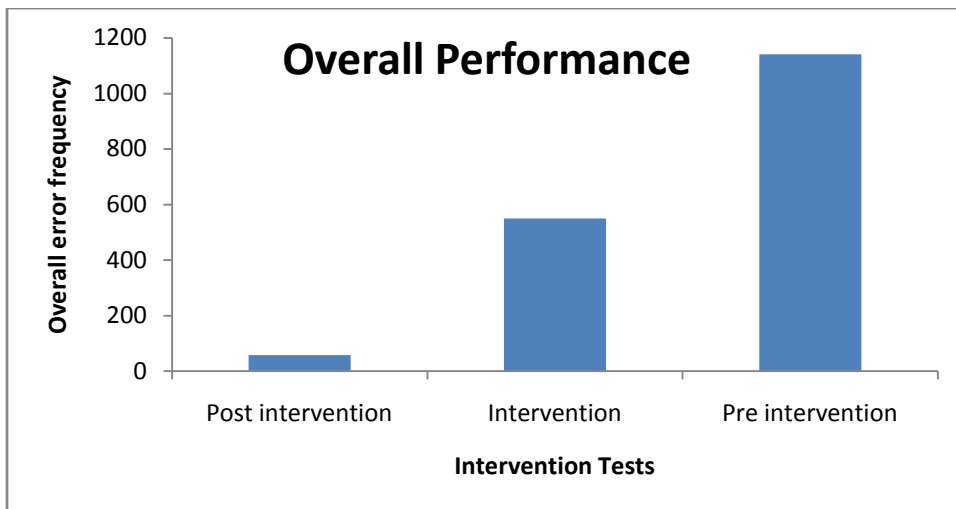
**Figure 3: Bar Chart Showing Students' Performance in the Post-intervention Test**



**Overall Performance Index**

The outcome of the intervention tests with regards to error frequency is graphically represented below. The figures 1141,550 and 58, which are the total error frequencies of the pre-intervention, intervention and post intervention tests respectively (as can be found on the preceding tables), form the statistics in this chart. Clearly from the chart, there is a consistent rate of improvement from one test to the other. See figure 4.

**Figure 4: Bar Chart Showing the Overall Error Index in the Intervention Tests**



**Conclusion**

The concord learning challenges of students were revealed through the intervention tests and the questionnaire. The main challenges include L1 interference, limited instructional hours, and inadequate number of qualified teachers, large class sizes and inadequate teaching/learning resources. These were the social/non-grammatical reasons why students of SHS perform poorly in English grammatical concord. The grammatical factors included: grammatical and proximity concord, headword identification in complex noun phrases and demonstrative pronouns, verb-verb concord and semi-conjunctions, two titles for one thing and adjectives as headwords, and finally, the indefinite pronouns ‘All’ and ‘Some’ and intervening prepositional phrases.

Aside from these difficulties identified in students, the study revealed the fact that the intervention tests are very relevant in stemming the problem of English grammatical concord. As can be seen in the overall performance index chart above, the error frequency recorded a sharp fall in the intervention test. The pre-intervention test which was a diagnostic one had a very high error ratio.

In the post intervention test, there was another sharp fall in terms of error frequency. It suggests therefore that intervention exercises are necessary in checking the difficulties SHS students encounter in studying English grammatical concord.

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## **APPENDIX 5 (a)**

### **Answered Research Questionnaire for Teachers**

NB: This questionnaire is used by the researcher, who is a final year MPhil student of the English Department, UEW, to enable him collect data to complete his thesis. The responses given shall be used for academic purposes only and kept confidential.



Name: ABIBATU ALHASSAM Age: 46 YEARS  
 Form(s) Taught: 2 A, B, C, D, 3 A, B School: ISLAMIC SHS, KWA  
 Position: HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

1. What is your current highest academic qualification? \*Post-Secondary\* DBS \*HND \*First Degree  Second Degree \*PhD

2. What is the present state of teaching /learning materials in your department?

Our English textbooks are full of errors and do not cover many vital aspects of the syllabi.

3. Did your students grasp all the concepts you taught on concord? Yes/No

4. What basically does concord in English grammar mean?

Concord refers to the accepted manner in which words are ordered.

5. List the types of concord you know.

(a) Subject/verb (b) Verb/verb (c) Noun/Pronoun.

6. Mention three main difficulties your students encounter on concord.

(a) Large classes (b) The time allocation for English is inadequate (c) We have very limited TLMs.

7. Give three major reasons why in your opinion students commit errors in concord.

(a) Students don't practice the numerous rules of concord (b) Students don't read widely (c) Students find it difficult to assimilate concord rules because they are many.

8. State three key ways by which you think students could be assisted to overcome their concord learning problems.

(a) We teachers must make extra time for English (b) We need to give students more exercises on concord (c) Gov't should train more English tutors Adequate TLMs should be provided.

9. With the help of an illustration, does the student's mother tongue (L1) influence the student negatively or positively in English concord?

The L1 has both negative and positive influence.  
 Eg: (a) ba laara. (Dagaare). Meaning: He doesn't laugh. (Correct)  
 (b) ba ba laara. (Dagaare). Meaning: They don't laugh. (Correct)  
 "ba" means "doesn't" or "don't" and can agree with both singular and plural subjects

10. Do your students read extensively so as to improve upon their English? Yes/No

11. How adequate is the number of teachers in your department?

We have a total of 823 students with only 6 English teachers.

12. (a) Is the time allocation on your school timetable for English language enough? Yes/No

(b) Suggest one way of solving the problem if your response to 12. (a) above is "No"

The core subjects should be given more periods on the timetable.

13. How many students each do you have in all the English classes in SHS 2?

2a = 61 2b = 68 2c = 59 2d = 64



APPENDIX 5 (b)

Answered Research Questionnaire for Teachers

NB: This questionnaire is used by the researcher, who is a final year MPHIL student of the English Department, U.E.W to enable him collect data to complete his thesis. The responses given shall be used for academic purposes only and kept confidential.

Name: Shaibu Issahaku Age: 39 yrs  
 Form(s) Taught 2, A, B, C, D, E School: Wa Sec.  
 Position: English Tutor

1. What is your current highest academic qualification? \*Post-Secondary\* DBS \*HND  First Degree \*Second Degree \*PhD

2. What is the present state of teaching /learning materials in your department?  
The textbooks that we are using to teach are not current enough because they don't cover important areas like comprehension and summary.

3. Did your students grasp all the concepts you taught on concord? Yes  No

4. What basically does concord in English grammar mean?  
It is the agreement between words in sentences based on their functions.

5. List the types of concord you know.  
Subject - Verb, Noun - Pronoun, Verb - Verb, Point of time part - Verb.

6. Mention three main difficulties your students encounter on concord.  
(1) Interference of the Mother tongue (L1) (2) Inadequate number of qualified teachers (3) Inadequate teaching/learning resources

7. Give three major reasons why in your opinion students commit errors in concord.  
a. Poor reading habit of students b. Difficulty in identifying subjects in sentences c. The exceptions that go with some of its rules of concord.

8. State three key ways by which you think students could be assisted to overcome their concord learning problems.  
(i) More English tutors should be trained (ii) Students must read broadly to polish their English (iii) More time should be allocated for teaching English.

9. With the help of an illustration, does the student's mother tongue (L1) influence the student negatively or positively in English concord?  
The L1 influences students both negatively and positively in concord. Eg: (1) Zaameng, n da ba di bondirii. (Dagaare) Meaning: Yesterday, I did not eat. (Correct) (2) Zaameng, n ba di bondirii (Dagaare); Meaning: Yesterday, I not eat. (Incorrect)

10. Do your students read extensively so as to improve upon their English? Yes  No

11. How adequate is the number of teachers in your department?  
The school has 8 English tutors. We need about 18 more hands in the English department.

12. (a) Is the time allocation on your school timetable for English language enough? Yes  No  
 (b) Suggest one way of solving the problem if your response to 12. (a) above is "No".  
The school should organise extra classes for the students.

13. How many students each do you have in all the English classes in SHS 2?  
2A -> 58 stds, 2B -> 63 stds, 2C -> 66 stds, 2D -> 61 stds, 2E -> 59 stds

APPENDIX 6 (a)

ANSWERED PRE - INTERVENTION TEST FOR STUDENTS 1.5 HOURS



Name: Sherifa Sungumo Class: 2A School: Islamic SHS

**PRE - INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 HOURS**

**APPENDIX 6 (a)**

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

- The trees in our orchard (are/is/have) attractive.
- A group of boys (live/living/lives) here.
- Her uncles (teach/teaches) her morals.
- Neither the pastor nor his congregants (is/are) criminal.
- That bundle of sticks (was/were/have) brought by mum.
- Some sugar (need/needing/needs) to be added to the gari.
- The downtrodden in our society (deserve/deserves) our help.
- He (understand/understands) Dagaare.
- My secretary and typist (have/having/has) fast fingers
10. Our outgoing S.P and presidents of the Debating club (speak/speaking/speaks) fluent English
- Kenkey and fried fish with hot pepper (makes/making/make) a good lunch for me
- The colonial government (did/does/do) not establish more schools
13. Back at the J.H.S, I (using/use/used/uses) to top my class in English
- Yesterday, Hawawu (cuts/cutting/cut) her hand with a knife
- The news was (broadcasted/broadcasting/broadcast/broadcast) from Radio Ghana, Accra.
16. The pastor as well as his followers (fear/fears) God
- In the company of other ministers, the president (travel/travelling/travels) to Ethiopia for the AU. Summit.
- My uncle in addition to his wife and children (were/was/have being) involved in an accident.
19. The angry soldier jumped down from the car, loaded his gun and (fired/firing/fire/fires) the thief.
20. Pregnant women were made to lie prostrate so that they (could/can/will/should) be spared.
- He goes to school early but often (returned/returning/return/returns) late.
- There (goes/going/gone/go) Dakurah again; he is still angry.
23. There (was/were) signs that everybody understood it.
- There (live/lives/living) a man who has no hometown.
- It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.
- The death of two students of our school (have/has) made the District Director come to the school.
- A box full of pens (were/was) found outside the classroom.
- This (man/men/men's) makes a lot of fun.
- (These/this) sheep lost its shepherd.
- (This/Those/That/These) days, there was no technology.
31. Derry is one of the farmers who (win/wins/winning) Best farmer Awards almost every year.
32. One of the issues of life that (frighten/frightens) me is the Judgment Day
- His daughter is one of the girls who (are/is) selected for the Miss Wasee Beauty competition.



Name: Janet Bayel Class: 2D School: ISLAMIC SHS

**PRE – INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 HOURS**

**APPENDIX 6 (b)**

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. The trees in our orchard (are/is/have) attractive.
2. A group of boys (live/living/lives) here.
3. Either the pastor or his Ministers (has/have) come here.
4. Neither the pastor nor his congregants (is /are) criminal.
5. That bundle of sticks (was/were/have) brought by mum.
6. Some sugar (need/needing/needs) to be added to the gari.
7. The downtrodden in our society (deserve/deserves) our help.
8. The aged (knows/known/know) their end is near
9. My secretary and typist ( have/having/has) fast fingers
10. Our outgoing S.P and presidents of the Debating club (speak/speaking/speaks) fluent English
11. Kenkey and fried fish with hot pepper (makes/making/make) a good lunch for me
12. The colonial government (did/does/do) not establish more schools
13. Back at the J.H.S, I (using/use/used/uses) to top my class in English
14. Yesterday, Hawawu (cuts/cutting/cut) her hand with a knife
15. The news was (broadcasted/broadcasting/broadcast/broadcast) from Radio Ghana, Accra.
16. The pastor as well as his followers (fear/fears) God
17. In the company of other ministers, the president (travel/travelling/travels) to Ethiopia for the AU. Summit.
18. My uncle in addition to his wife and children (were/was/have being) involved in an accident.
19. The angry soldier jumped down from the car, loaded his gun and (fired/firing/fire/fires) the thief.
20. Pregnant women were made to lie prostrate so that they (could/can/will/should) be spared.
21. He goes to school early but often (returned/returning/return/returns) late.
22. There (goes/going/gone/go) Dakurah again; he is still angry.
23. There (was/were) signs that everybody understood it.
24. There (live/lives/living) a man who has no hometown.
25. It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.
26. The orphans (eats/eating/eat) form the hands of philanthropists.
27. Their young ones (misbehaves/misbehave) because of them.
28. This (man/men/men's) makes a lot of fun.
29. (These/ this) sheep lost its shepherd.
30. (This/Those/That/These) days, there was no technology.
31. Derry is one of the farmers who (win/wins/winning) Best farmer Awards almost every year.
32. One of the issues of life that (frighten/frightens) me is the Judgment Day
33. His daughter is one of the girls who (are/is) selected for the Miss Wasec Beauty competition.

## APPENDIX 6 (b)

ANSWERED PRE – INTERVENTION TEST FOR STUDENTS  
1.5 HOURS

- ~~24.~~ These (phenomena/phenomenon) is known as weathering.  
~~25.~~ The departure of my father (has/have) left me needy.  
~~26.~~ They those days met once a month and (discuss/discussed) matters affecting them..  
~~27.~~ Either the children or their mother (knows/know) the reason.  
~~28.~~ Neither the commander nor his men (shoot/shoots) poorly.  
~~29.~~ Either Abu or Cynthia (lacks/lack) good manners.  
~~30.~~ We (make/makes) use of natural resources.  
~~31.~~ My uncle and I (use/using/used) to live here.  
~~32.~~ The deaf (shout/shouts) when talking.  
~~33.~~ The <sup>poor</sup> (is/are) miserable.  
~~34.~~ The farmer with his dogs (are/is) going to the farm.  
~~35.~~ The rich (does/do) not worship God well.  
~~36.~~ I (hate/hates) lazy people.  
~~37.~~ Emphasis (were/was) laid on the "verb".  
~~38.~~ Statistics (show/shows) that woman live longer than men.  
~~39.~~ None of the (students/student/students) (has/have) a red pen.  
~~40.~~ Each one of you (does/do) your own thing at home.


  
 08  
 ———  
 50

## APPENDIX 7

### Intervention Exercise Leading to the Intervention Test

After the pre-intervention test, which was purely diagnostic, the researcher noticed that the students generally did not understand the fundamental principles of concord and so he spelled out some remedial guidelines aimed at helping students to understand the concepts underpinning the topic “concord”. These are explained below.

#### a. Subject-verb concord

1. Grammatical concord: singular subjects, e.g. child, boy, tree etc. take singular verbs, e.g. eats, **walks**, goes, etc. E.g.: *Kofi reads a lot at home*. If the verb were to be “read” it would be wrong.
2. Proximity concord: When “Either...or” and neither...nor” are used with twin subjects, the subject closer to the verb should agree with the verb. E.g: *Either Olu or his parents know the road*. If the verb were to be “knows” it would be wrong.
3. Indefinite pronouns: Indefinite pronouns such as everyone, none, each, etc. are singular by nature and should take singular verbs. E.g: *Each of the boys has a pen*. If the verb were to be “have” it would be wrong.
4. Headword identification in complex noun phrases: In noun phrases, the headword should be made to agree with the verb. E.g: *The demise of three family members has confused him*. If the verb were to be “have”, it would be wrong.
5. Subjects with s-inflections: Subjects ending with “s” but which are singular in nature should take singular verbs. E.g. *Statistics shows that Africans are stronger than Europeans*. If the verb were to be “show”, it would have been wrong.
6. There +Verb +Noun Phrase: When this structure is used, the middle element (verb) should be singular. E.g: *There has been misunderstanding between the two parties*. If the verb were to be “have” it would have been wrong.
7. Semi-conjunctions/Intervening expressions: When these expressions, e.g together with, as well as, accompanied by, etc are used with twin subjects the first subject should agree with the verb. E.g: *John in the company of his siblings, studies Mathematics*. If the verb were to be “study” it would have been wrong.
8. Two titles for one thing: If two titles or descriptions refer to one subject in a sentence, the verb to agree with that subject should be singular. E.g: *His uncle and mentor teaches him morals*. If the verb were to be “teach”, it would have been wrong.
9. Adjectives as headwords: When adjectives, e.g the poor, the blind, the religious, etc are used as subjects they take plural verbs. E.g: *The wealthy find it difficult to be religious*. If the verb were to be “finds” it would be wrong.
10. The indefinite pronouns “All” and “some”: Although these two pronouns suggest plurality by their nature, they take singular verbs when made to go with non-count nouns, e.g water. E.g: *All the salt was used*. If the verb were to be “were” it would have been wrong.
11. Intervening prepositional phrases: The subject of a sentence can never be the object of a preposition, hence in prepositional phrases the element other than the object of the preposition should be made to agree with the verb. E.g: *The beauty of the flowers attracts me*. If the verb were to be “attract” it would have been wrong.
12. Use of fractions: When fractions stand in subject position in a sentence, they are singular subjects and should take singular verbs. E.g: *Three quarters of them knows them*. If the verb were to be “knows” it would have been wrong.
13. Notional concord: Some subjects can be matched with either plural or singular verbs depending on the perception of the speaker, e.g police, PNC, staff, etc. E.g: *The audience keep enjoying the programme*. If the verb were to be “keeps” it would have been wrong.

**Exceptions:** The subjects “you” and “I” in subject verb-concord do not follow the rules spelled out in grammatical concord.

1. You: The pronoun “you” can be used to replace either singular or plural nouns. However, whether it is used to replace singular or plural noun, it takes plural verbs. E.g: a. *You hate lazy people*. (correct) b. *You hates lazy people*. (incorrect)

2. I: This pronoun is singular by nature and therefore, in conformity with the rule in grammatical concord, should take singular verbs. However, it takes plural verbs.

E.g: a. *I pray every morning.* (correct)  
 b. *I prays every morning.* (incorrect)

### **b. Noun-Pronoun Concord**

1. Pronoun and its antecedent concord: When a pronoun is used to replace a noun (its antecedent), the verb should agree with the antecedent and not any nominal element before the antecedent. E.g: Joojo is one of the traders who sell faster. If the verb “sell” were to be “sells”, it would have been wrong because the antecedent of the pronoun “who” is traders and not Joojo

2. The demonstrative pronouns : *This, That, Those, These*: “This” and “That” are singular pronouns and require singular verbs whilst “These” and “Those” are plural pronouns and require plural verbs. E.g:

a. *This boy*.....(correct).  
 b. *This boys* .....(incorrect).  
 c. *These houses*....(correct).  
 d. *These house*.....(incorrect), etc.

3. Nouns and corresponding pronouns: Singular nouns should be replaced with singular verbs and vice versa. Also, a masculine noun should be replaced by a masculine pronoun and vice versa.

E.g: a. *Ama lost her book.* (correct)  
 b. *Ama lost his book.* (incorrect)  
 c. *The students left his pens here.* (incorrect)

### **c. Verb-Verb Concord**

When verbs in a grammatical structure are two or more, they should maintain the structure : present-present or past-past.

E.g: a. *He came and went back home.* (correct)  
 B. *He came and goes back home.* (incorrect)

### **d. Point Of Time Past-Verb Concord**

When points of time past references are used in sentences , the verb(s) in those sentences should be in the past tense.

E.g: a. *Last year, she bought a car.* (correct)  
 b. *Last year, she buys a car.* (incorrect)



## APPENDIX 8 (a) ANSWERED INTERVENTION TEST FOR STUDENTS 1.5 HOURS

Name: EBENEZER DABUO Class: 2C School: WA SHS

## INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 HOURS APPENDIX 8 (a)

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. Dakurah (know/knows/known) where to go tomorrow
2. She (make/making/makes) us happy always.
3. He (understand/understanding/understands) Dagaare.
4. I (read/reads/reading) the Bible every day.
5. Either the president or his ministers (has/have) come to the independence square.
6. Neither the pastor nor his congregants (is/are) criminal.
7. Indiscipline among students (are/is/have) on the increase.
8. Her uncles (teaches/teach/teaching) her morals always.
9. The death of two students of our school (have/has) made the district director come to the school.
10. None of the (boy/boys) is here.
11. One of subjects that (give/gives/giving) me problem in mathematics.
12. My parent (doesn't/don't) know.
13. They (eats/eat/eating) a lot.
14. The students (misbehaves/misbehave) towards our teacher always.
15. There (have/has) been misunderstanding between the two political parties.
16. Anyone in ~~this~~ room (need/needs) to pray.
17. It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.
18. Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they (can/could) pass their final examination well.
19. They those days met once a month and (discuss/discussed) matters effecting them.
20. My father as well as my mother (are/is) kind.
21. The father with his dogs (are/is) go to farms.
22. The pastor no less than the member of his church (are/is) hypocritical.
23. In the olden days, our grandparents (suffered/suffers/suffer) a lot.
24. Indiscipline among students (are/is) on the increase.
25. All the members of my family (are/is) rich.
26. My father and pastor (comes/come/coming) here on Mondays.
27. Our literature tutor and form master (come/comes) from Nandom.
28. The aspiring member of parliament for Wa West and minister of local government and rural development (worship/worshipping/worships) with the church of Pentecost.
29. The poor (needing/need/needs) help.
30. The pastor no less than the members of his church (are/is) hypocritical.
31. Either the children or their father (are/is/have) doing the cleaning.
32. Neither Ama nor her classmates (comes/coming/come) to school late.
33. All the water in the barrel (are/is) finished.
34. Some of the oil (have/are/is) stolen
35. The color of the roses (please/pleases/pleasing) us.
36. The flowers for the garden (is/are) pretty.
37. Mathematics (is/are) a difficult subject.

- ~~38.~~ Statistics (show/shows/shown) that women live longer than men in Ghana.
- ~~39.~~ Emphasis (was/were) placed on summary writing.
- ~~40.~~ None of the (house/houses) (has/have) blue paint.
- ~~41.~~ Everyone (know/knows/known) the right thing.
- ~~42.~~ Each of us (thinks/thinking/think) about retirement.
- ~~43.~~ Ghana underutilizes (it/her/it's/his) natural resources.
- ~~44.~~ The hero in this play was born with a golden spoon in (his/her/their) mouth.
- ~~45.~~ Three quarters of the earth's surface (is/are) covered with water.
- ~~46.~~ Two third of Ghanaians (are/is) illiterates.
- ~~47.~~ One sixteenth of my father's property (belongs/belong) to me.
- ~~48.~~ (This/These) books belong to our teacher.
- ~~49.~~ Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they (can/could) Pass their final examinations well.
- ~~50.~~ I sat for the last year's private WASSCE and (perform/performed) well.

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Good!

### APPENDIX 8(b) ANSWERED INTERVENTION TEST FOR STUDENTS 1.5 HOURS

Name: HAMZA FUSEINI Class: 2A School: ISLAMIC SHS

#### INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 HOURS APPENDIX 8 (b)

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. Dakurah (know/knows/known) where to go tomorrow
2. She (make/making/makes) us happy always.
3. He (understand/understanding/understands) Dagaare.
4. I (read/reads/reading) the Bible every day.
5. Either the president or his ministers (has/have) come to the independence square.
6. Neither the pastor nor his congregants (is/are) criminal.
7. Indiscipline among students (are/is/have) on the increase.
8. Her uncles (teaches/teach/teaching) her morals always.
9. The death of two students of our school (have/has) made the district director come to the school.
10. None of the (boy/boys) is here.
11. One of subjects that (give/gives/giving) me problem in mathematics.
12. My parent (doesn't/don't) know.
13. They (eats/eat/eating) a lot.
14. The students (misbehaves/misbehave) towards our teacher always.
15. There (have/has) been misunderstanding between the two political parties.
16. Anyone in this room (need/needs) to pray.
17. It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.
18. Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they (can/could) pass the final examination well.
19. They those days met once a month and (discuss/discussed) matters effecting them.
20. My father as well as my mother (are/is) kind.
21. Your daughter and secretary (leave/leaves) for London.
22. The pastor no less than the member of his church (are/is) hypocritical.
23. In the olden days, our grandparents (suffered/suffers/suffer) a lot.
24. Indiscipline among students (are/is) on the increase.
25. All the members of my family (are/is) rich.
26. My father and pastor (comes/come/coming) here on Mondays.
27. Our literature tutor and form master (come/comes) from Nandom.
28. The aspiring member of parliament for Wa West and minister of local government and rural development (worship/worshiping/worships) with the church of Pentecost
29. The poor (needing/need/needs) help.
30. The pastor no less than the members of his church (are/is) hypocritical.
31. Either the children or their father (are/is/have) doing the cleaning.
32. Neither Ama nor her classmates (comes/coming/come) to school late.
33. All the water in the barrel (are/is) finished.
34. Some of the oil (have/are/is) stolen
35. The color of the roses (please/pleases/pleasing) us.
36. The flowers for the garden (is/are) pretty.
37. Mathematics (is/are) a difficult subject.
38. Statistics (show/shows/shown) that women live longer than men in Ghana.
39. Emphasis (was/were) placed on summary writing.



- ~~40.~~ None of the (house/houses) (has/have) blue paint.  
~~41.~~ Everyone (know/knows/known) the right thing.  
~~42.~~ Each of us (thinks/thinking/think) about retirement.  
~~43.~~ Ghana underutilizes (it/her/it's/his) natural resources.  
~~44.~~ The hero in this play was born with a golden spoon in (his/her/their) mouth.  
~~45.~~ Three quarters of the earth's surface (is/are) covered with water.  
~~46.~~ Two thirds of Ghanaians (are/is) illiterates.  
~~47.~~ One sixteenth of my father's property (belongs/belong) to me.  
~~48.~~ (This/These) books belong to our teacher.  
~~49.~~ (These/This) minister is actually hard working.  
~~50.~~ These (day/days) civilization has reached everyone.

$$\frac{27}{50}$$

fair!

## APPENDIX 9

### Intervention Exercise Prior To Post-Intervention Test

After the intervention test, the researcher identified nine (9) areas which still posed great challenge to students. They included grammatical, proximity, verb-verb, s-inflection, nouns and corresponding pronouns, Demonstrative pronouns, pronoun and antecedent, semi-conjunctions as well as two titles for one subject concord. The researcher revised the guiding rules on these aspects of concord as in Appendix 7 above with them and gave them a take-home assignment. This was the assignment:

*In your own words, explain each of the following areas of concord with the help of an example:*

1. Grammatical concord
2. verb-verb concord
3. Concord with s-inflection subjects
4. Concord with nouns and corresponding pronouns
5. Concord with demonstrative pronouns
6. pronoun and its antecedent concord
7. concord with semi-conjunctions
8. concord with two titles for one subject
9. proximity concord.

The researcher told the students that each one of them was going to answer a question verbally in class when they bring the homework. On Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 2015, the students in both schools were merged at the assembly hall in Wa SHS. They brought their work and the researcher randomly asked them questions on these aspects and the lesson went as follows:

**Researcher:** Mary, what do you understand by noun and its antecedent concord?

**Mary:** Sir, it means that when you have a sentence in which a demonstrative pronoun is used, the noun closest to the demonstrative pronoun, i.e. the antecedent, should be made to agree with the verb and not any other noun.

**Researcher:** Excellent! Please, clap for her! (Students clapped for Mary)

**Researcher:** Reuben, give an example of a sentence in which we have noun and its antecedent concord.

**Reuben:** It is one of the goats that destroy the plants.

**Researcher:** Is Reuben right?

**Students:** Yes, sir! (In chorus)

**Researcher:** Yes, he is very right. "Goats" is the antecedent of the pronoun "that" and it is plural, therefore the plural verb "destroy" is the right verb to match it.

**Researcher:** Hamza, what is your understanding of proximity concord?

**Hamza:** It is the situation where when you have two subjects in a sentence, joined by semi-conjunctions like as well as, togetherwith, along with, etc. the first subject is made to agree with the verb.

**Researcher:** Good. Clap for him! (Students clap for Hamza)

**Researcher:** Can any volunteer give us an example of this type of concord? (Several students raised their hands)

**Researcher:** Yes, let's listen to Cynthia.

**Cynthia:** The teacher as well as her pupil's works hard.

**Researcher:** Yes, Salifu, is she right?

**Salifu:** No, sir.

**Hawii:** Sir, she is right!

**Students (in chorus):** Yes...., sir!!

**Researcher:** Salifu, she is right because the singular subject "the teacher" is the first subject in that sentence and must be made to agree with a singular verb, hence the use of the verb "works".

**Researcher:** O.k?

**Salifu:** Yes, sir.

**Researcher:** My next question: Sherifa, what is your understanding of verb-verb concord?

**Sherifa:** It means that when more than one verb are found in a sentence, the verbs should either all be in the past tense form or present tense form and not a mixture of the two.

**Researcher:** Correct! Ebenezer, give us an example quickly!

**Ebenezer:** I went to the market, bought some ingredients and returned home.

**Researcher:** Janet, is Ebenezer right?

**Janet:** Yes, sir!

**Researcher:** That's true.

**Researcher:** Sampson, explain the meaning of grammatical concord.

**Sampson:** This means that singular subjects in sentences take singular verbs whilst plural subjects take plural verbs.

**Researcher:** That's correct. But, Aboagye, can you give us an exception to this rule?

**Aboagye:**No idea,sir.

**Researcher:**Can anyone help Aboagye?

**Students** (in chorus with many hands raised):Yes....,sir!

**Researcher:**Ok,Stanley, please help him out.

**Stanley:**The subject “P” is singular but takes plural verbs.

**Researcher:**Good!George,explain to us the meaning of concord with two titles for one subject.

**George:**Sir, this is the situation where two descriptions of one thing are given as subject in a sentence,e.g,My friend and brother...

**Researcher:**That’s correct.Banzie,give us an example of such concord.

**Banzie:**Our father and role model does wonderful things.

**Researcher:**Is Banzie right,class?

**Students**(in chorus):Yes...sir!

**Researcher:**Right,right, he is perfectly correct.I’m highly impressed by your responses this morning.I hope in the next intervention test you will all score 100%.

**Students**(in chorus):Yes...sir!

**Researcher:**If there are any questions on any aspect of concord,please ask them.(class remained silent for about a minute)

**Researcher:**Are we all o.k with this topic?Can you answer every questions on it?

**Students**(in chorus):Yes..,sir!

**Researcher:**Alright,please continue to revise your notes on this topic in preparation for our next intervention test on Wednesday May 20,2015.

**Students:**Yes.....,sir!!!

**Researcher:**Enjoy the rest of your lessons and have a nice day!!

**Students:**Tha..n..k you,sir!!!!

**NB:**The students appeared to have understood the basic rudiments of concord by their responses in this intervention lesson.

#### Appendix 10 (A) Answered Post-Intervention Test For Students 1.5 Hours

## APPENDIX 10 (b)

## ANSWERED POST-INTERVENTION TEST FOR STUDENTS 1.5 Hours

Name: Gordon Dan Dibuc Class: 2E School: KASEC

## POST-INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 hours APPENDIX 10 (a)

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. I (work/works) hard in school.
2. Children (like/likes) playing with toys.
3. Bayor and I (come/comes) from the same village.
4. All the water in the barrel (is/are) finished.
5. Our father as well as his wives (take/takes) good care of us.
6. The ministers in the company of the president (depart/departs) for the U.S.
7. My friend together with her parents (were/was) at the graduation ceremony.
8. (Those/These) days, there was no technology.
9. These (phenomenon/phenomena) are known as weathering.
10. At the SHS, I (using/use/used/uses) to top my class in Physics.
11. Last Tuesday, Rose (cuts/cutting/cut) her hand with a blade.
12. The news was (broadcasted/broadcasting/broadcast/broadcast) from Radio Ghana, Accra.
13. The confused passenger jumped down from the car, loaded his pistol and (fired/firing/fire/fires) the driver.
14. Young women were made to stand up all day so that they (could/can/will/should) be exonerated.
15. She goes to school late but often (returned/returning/return/returns) early.
16. There (goes/going/gone/go) Francis again; he is still an
17. My father as well as my mother (are/is) kind.
18. There (live/lives/living) a citizen who has no country.
19. Their colleagues (believe/belief/believes/beliefs) in them.
20. The jobless (eats/eating/eat) from the hands of the working class.
21. Our young ones (misbehaves/misbehave) because of us.
22. These (man/men/mens) make a lot of observations.
23. The poor (getting/gets/get) help
24. Indiscipline among students (are/is/has) on the increase.
25. All the members of my family (is/are/do) rich.
26. The death of two students of our school (have/has/is) made the district director come to the school.
27. A box full of pens (were/was/have) found outside the classroom.
28. The blind (appear/appears) miserable.
29. The deaf (demonstrates/demonstrate) when talking.
30. All the kerosene (are/is) sold.
31. Either the children or their father (are/is) doing the cleaning.
32. Neither Ama nor her classmates (come/comes) to school.
33. The colour of the roses (attracts/attracting/attract) us.
34. Some of the kerosene (is/are) sold.
35. Some of the oil (is/are) stolen.
36. Statistics (reveal/reveals/revealing) that women live longer than men in Britain.
37. Emphasis (was/were) placed on the rules of concord.
38. None of the (door/doors) have red paint.
39. My father and pastor (come/comes) here on Mondays. Instead of: My father and pastor

comes here on Mondays.

40. Our literature tutor and form master (come/comes) from Nandom.

41. The aspiring Member of Parliament for Wa West and minister of local government and rural development (worship/worships) with the church of Pentecost, Wa.

42. Your daughter and secretary (leaves/leave) for London.

43. One sixteenth of all Nigerians (is/are) actively involved in business.

44. The flowers in our yard (are/is/have) nice.

45. A group of boys (live/living/lives) across the road..

46. One bundle of sticks (was/were/have) bought by the pedestrian.

47. It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.

48. They those days met once a month and (discuss/discussed) matters affecting them".

49. Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they (can/could) pass their final examinations well.

50. I sat for the last year's private WASSCE and (perform/performed) well.

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V. Good!

### Brief Autobiography

I am Justine Bakuuro, a 34 year old first year PhD English student of the University of Ghana, Legon. Born on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October, 1983 in Tuopari-Nandom in the Upper West Region of Ghana, I had my basic and secondary education in the Upper West Region-Tuopari Primary School, Ga L/A Junior High School and Lassia Tuolo Senior High School. Upon completion of senior high education in 2001, I proceeded to the University of Cape Coast in 2002, where I read my Bachelor's Degree in Education and continued to the University of Education, Winneba in 2013 where I obtained an Mphil degree in English language, graduating in 2015.

I am happily married with two male children and one wife based in Wa, the Upper West Regional capital in Ghana. Presently, I am specialising in English Syntax (Systemic Functional Linguistics-SFL) at the department of English, University of Ghana. I am hardworking, god-fearing, dedicated to duty and very purposeful in life.

### Declaration

I declare that no part of this manuscript has been presented either in part or in full to any institution for any purpose. I should be held liable for any breach of your policy guidelines on publishing articles in this Journal



- ~~39~~ My father and pastor (come/comes) here on Mondays. Instead of: My father and pastor comes here on Mondays.
- ~~40~~ Our literature tutor and form master (come/comes) from Nandom.
- ~~41~~ The aspiring Member of Parliament for Wa West and minister of local government and rural development (worship/worships) with the church of Pentecost, Wa.
- ~~42~~ Your daughter and secretary (leaves/leave) for London.
- ~~43~~ One sixteenth of all Nigerians (is/are) actively involved in business.
- ~~44~~ The flowers in our yard (are/is/have) nice.
- ~~45~~ A group of boys (live/living/lives) across the road..
- ~~46~~ One bundle of sticks (was/were/have) bought by the pedestrian.
- ~~47~~ It was believed that in those days these same men went and (prevent/prevented) them from being beaten.
- ~~48~~ They those days met once a month and (discuss/discussed) matters affecting them".
- ~~49~~ Students were made to write several mock examinations so that they (can/could) pass their final examinations well.
- ~~50~~ I sat for the last year's private WASSCE and (perform/performed) well.

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V. Good!

Name: Mauricia Dakurah Class: 2b School: Wla SHS.

POST-INTERVENTION TEST 1.5 hours APPENDIX 10 (b)

From the options provided in brackets in each question below, select the most appropriate option to complete each sentence.

1. I (work/works) hard in school.
2. Children (like/likes) playing with toys.
3. Bayor and I (come/comes) from the same village.
4. You (know/knows) the rules of the game.
5. Our father as well as his wives (take/takes) good care of us.
6. The ministers in the company of the president (depart/departs) for the U.S.
7. My friend together with her parents (were/was) at the graduation ceremony.
8. Banku and fried fish with hot pepper (makes/making/make) a good lunch for me.
9. My father as well as my mother (are/is) kind.
10. At the SHS, I (using/use/used/uses) to top my class in Physics.
11. Last Tuesday, Rose (cuts/cutting/cut) her hand with a blade.
12. The news was (broadcasted/broadcasting/broadcast/broadcast) from Radio Ghana. Accra.
13. The confused passenger jumped down from the car, loaded his pistol and (fired/firing/fire/fires) the driver.
14. Young women were made to stand up all day so that they (could/can/will/should) be exonerated.
15. She goes to school late but often (returned/returning/return/returns) early.
16. There (goes/going/gone/go) Francis again; he is still angry.
17. There (was/were) signs that nobody liked it.
18. There (live/lives/living) a citizen who has no country.
19. Their colleagues (believe/belief/believes/beliefs) in them.
20. The jobless (eats/eating/eat) from the hands of the working class.
21. Our young ones (misbehaves/misbehave) because of us.
22. These (man/men/mens) make a lot of observations.
23. The poor (getting/gets/get) help.
24. Indiscipline among students (are/is/has) on the increase.
25. All the members of my family (is/are/do) rich.
26. The death of two students of our school (have/has/is) made the district director come to the school.
27. A box full of pens (were/was/have) found outside the classroom.
28. The blind (appear/appears) miserable.
29. The deaf (demonstrates/demonstrate) when talking.
30. All the kerosene (are/is) sold.
31. All the water in the barrel (are/is) finished.
32. Some of the oil (have/are/is) stolen.
33. The colour of the roses (attracts/attracting/attract) us.
34. Some of the kerosene (is/are) sold.
35. All of the oil (is/are) shared.
36. Statistics (reveal/reveals/revealing) that women live longer than men in Britain.
37. Emphasis (was/were) placed on the rules of concord.
38. None of the (door/doors) have red paint.