

**A STUDY OF ERRORS COMMITTED BY THARU LEARNERS
OF ENGLISH IN SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT**

**A Thesis Submitted to the Department of English Education,
University Campus, Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal
In Partial Fulfilment for the Master's Degree in English Education
(Specialization in English Education)**

**By
PRAMESHWAR CHAUDHARY**

**Faculty of Education
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal**

2008

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RECOMMENDATION FOR ACCEPTANCE

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DEDICATED

TO

My Family

whose constant

encouragement

inspired me to reach

this position.

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Prameshwar Chaudhary

ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled **“A Study of Errors Committed by Tharu Learners of English in Subject-Verb Agreement”** aims at finding out errors and proficiency of Tharu learners of English particularly ninth graders of public schools. This study is beneficial to the related and interested personnel.

For this study, the researcher utilized objective tool, such as a test item, which was administered to the target group and counted the errors and scored the proficiency as aiming at fulfilling the objectives. After analyzing and interpreting the proficiency and errors, the researcher found that proficiency was not satisfactory. In total students performed better in item ‘A’. Students committed more errors in main verbs rather than ‘be’, ‘have’ and ‘do’ verbs and boys committed more errors than girls.

This research attempt is divided into four chapters. The first chapter entitled ‘Introduction’ provides general background, English language in Nepalese context, the Tharu language, an error, importance of grammar, subject-verb agreement, definition of the terms, review of the related literature and objectives and significance of the study.

The second chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the study under which the sources of data, population of the study, sampling procedure, tools for data collection, process of data collection and limitation of the study are mentioned.

The third chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of the data under which total errors and total proficiency were analyzed and interpreted statistically and descriptively. Both errors and proficiency were vividly interpreted in terms of different variables such as sex, school and item.

The fourth chapter contains findings and recommendations of the study. On the basis of analysis and interpretation of the data, some findings were listed and some recommendations were suggested in this chapter. This chapter is followed by references and appendices.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Adj.	–	Adjective
Agg.	–	Agreement
Aux.	–	Auxiliary
C.D.C.	–	Curriculum Development Committee
E.L.T.	–	English Language Teaching
et al.	–	From Latin et al/etalia (other people or things)
e.g.	–	For example
F.	–	Female
i.e.	–	that is to say
F.M.	–	Full marks
M.Ed.	–	Master of Education
Mr.	–	Mister
Mrs.	–	Mistress
O.	–	Object
P.	–	Page
Pro.	–	Professor
Q.	–	Question
S.L.C.	–	School Leaving Certificate
S.	–	Subject
U.A.	–	Unattempted
V.	–	Verb
Sig.	–	Singular
Pl.	–	Plural
N.	–	Noun

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Background

Language is a voluntary vocal system of human communication. It is the most widely used means of communication through which human beings communicate or express their ideas, feelings, emotions, attitudes, desires, thoughts and so on. Language is the medium, which is used by human beings to think in political, social, academic, and artistic, and several other issues. It is the species-specific and species-uniform possession of human beings.

Different scholars have viewed language differently. In this connection, Crystal (2005: 255) states, “A language may refer to the concrete act of speaking, writing or singing in a given situation – the notion of PAROLE, or PERFORMANCE.” Similarly, Chomsky (1957:13) defines it as “A finite or infinite set of sentences, each finite in length and constructed out of a finite set of elements.” In the same way, Richards et al. (1985) define language as “The system of human communication by means of a structural arrangement of sounds (or their written representation) to form larger units e.g. morphemes, words, sentences.”

Language is a system of systems. Each language has its own system; grammatical system, lexical system and discourse system. All the human beings acquire their mother tongues at their childhood but learning a second language is entirely different which is supposed to be a planned activity requiring conscious efforts on the part of the learners. English language, like other languages is full of problems, for foreign learners. Some of these problems are easy to explain. For example, the formation

of simple yes/no question or wh-question, differences between that and this etc. but some problems are more tricky and ambiguous which cause difficulty not only for the junior learner's but also advanced students and teachers.

1.2 The English Language in Nepalese Context

The English language belongs to the 'West Germanic' group of the 'Proto-Germanic' dialect of the Indo-European language family. English language is the most widely used language in the history of the world which is spoken in all six continents and now it has become no longer the language of English people only. It is the native language of several European and American people. It is an international language most widely used as a Lingua-franca, across the language communities of the world. It is the most widespread and prestigious language of international communication. It is also the language of science and technology.

English is learned and taught as a foreign language in many countries including Nepal. As English is a global language of the world, Nepal has also accepted it as the main international language which occupies a large part of curriculum in Nepalese Education. English is taught as a compulsory subject upto bachelor level as well as a medium of instruction at various levels. Similarly, our educational curriculum has also managed it as a optional or major subject in campus level for any interested students. So, English Language Teaching (ELT) exists as a separate discipline since long date back in Nepal. But, even many efforts are made to improve the condition of English in Nepal. The standard of English is not maintained as expected due to multilingual situation of Nepalese speech community. However, this discipline has been playing a significant role to maintain the standard of the academic sector in a slow pace.

1.3 The Tharus

Tharu is one of the varieties of language spoken in the southern part of Nepal in mainly 22-24 districts. People with Tharu another tongue have mainly dwelt in the Terai region except the majority of people in Dang. Very few Tharu speaking people live in the hills and fewer of them live in the high mountains. (C.B.S., 2002)

Tharu is an Indo-Aryan language written in Devanagari script. Though it has a long history, it does not have its own script. Although a number of studies have been done on different aspects of the Tharu language, Linguistic work on the language and the dialect is very sparse. Many scholars have said that Tharus have no actual language of their own. They say that the Tharus speech variety has greatly been influenced by larger popular Indian languages found nearby, such as: Hindi, Bhojpuri, Maithili and so forth, and may just be the mixture of them. (Millet-Mondon 1991 and Bista 1972).

There are about 92 languages and dialects spoken in Nepal. Demographically, Tharus, according to Population Census of the year 2009 to 2011 V.S. Total population of our country speaking, the Tharu language was formed 3,59,600 from total population 82,56,625. Similarly, total population in the year 2018 V.S. were 94,12,996 and the Tharu language speakers' number were 4,06,907. In the year 2028 V.S. the Tharu language speakers were 4,95,881 from the total population 1,15,55,983. The numbers of Tharu speakers were found 5,45,685 from the total population 1,50,22,839 in the year 2038 V.S. as per 2048 V.S. Tharu speakers existed 11,94,224 from total population 1,84,91,097. And finally in 2058 V.S. Tharu speakers were 15,33,879 from total population of 2,31,51,423. (Chaudhary, 2064 V.S: 64)

According to the New Constitution of Nepal 1990, Rai mentions that Government has recommended approving and supporting the primary

schools in the mother tongue which have been established by the local people. The Tharu language is not introduced to teach formally in the primary schools. Steps have been taken to design the Tharu language curriculum with necessary textbooks. The researcher hopes to implement the Tharu language in the course of study in the days to come and this research work will help to understand to some extent where the Tharu students are likely to commit errors.

1.4 Error: An Overview

When we consult a dictionary, we find errors used synonymously as mistakes but it is a layman's term. They are treated differently by linguists. A language should follow its norms of uses and usage. Therefore, any deviation from the norm is a mistake but a particular type of mistake is an error.

An error occurs at competence level whereas a mistake occurs at performance level. A mistake may occur due to fatigue, lapses and carelessness, but errors are committed due to incomplete knowledge of the language in question. Mistakes may be major and minor. Generally, phonologically mistakes are taken as minor mistakes, whereas, grammatical mistakes are taken as major. Minor mistakes may be both controllable and uncontrollable. Slips, lapses etc. can be controlled whereas phonological mistakes due to organic disability are uncontrollable. (Allen and Corder, 1974: 123)

Mistakes are committed occasionally due to psychological reason by both native and non-native learners. They can be corrected by the learners themselves.

So far as the error is concerned, it can't be identified and corrected by the speaker or learner him/herself. The reason behind it is incomplete

knowledge of rules. The regular and recurrent mistakes are errors, which have linguistic reason. It is committed by non-native learners.

1.4.1 Stages of Error Analysis

There are mainly six stages of error analysis. They are as follows:

- a) Collection of data
- b) Recognition of errors
- c) Description of errors
- d) Explanation of errors
- e) Evaluation of errors
- f) Remediation of errors

a) Collection of Data

There are two types of data i.e. primary and secondary. Data taken by the investigator himself, is primary data and that taken by some one else is secondary one. From the other point of view, data can be of various types. They can be categorized on the basis of texts, approaches they involve, modes and tools they use.

(i) Texts: Spoken or Written

Error analysis is mainly concerned with the study of expressive errors. The expressive errors may be spoken or written. Therefore, the data for error analysis may be spoken or written. Spoken data is elicited through interview, discussion and speech and written data is collected through composition or a set of written questionnaire.

(ii) Approaches: Subjective or Objective

While collecting data, we can make use of subjective or objective approach. A subjective approach includes subjective questions. An objective approach contains objective questions. Usually the subjective questions are less in number and cannot cover the comprehensive areas of

languages. Objective test items are more in number and can cover different areas of language.

(iii) Modes: Free or Guided

On the basis of mode, the data may be free or guided. The written works produced by learners may be in the form of free writing or guided writing which are termed as spontaneous production and controlled production (Allen and Corder, 1974: 126). Free writing contains free composition – a written work by someone on his own or any give topic and guided writing may contain transaction, paraphrasing, selecting proper word/sentence from the given options etc. The main distinction between free and guided work is that in former case the learner has to create his own message and in latter case he has to process the already given message.

(iv) Tools

We can use interview, discussion and speech to elicit spoken errors and composition and questionnaire to elicit written errors.

b) Recognition of Errors

At this stage, the errors existing in the collected data are identified. Identification/recognition of errors indicated distinguishing error from what is not error. For this we have to define, and classify mistake in general and distinguish between performance mistake and errors, minor and major mistakes, lapses and uncontrollable mistakes.

Generally, mistakes and errors are taken synonymously but technically speaking, they are different since all errors are mistakes but all mistakes are not errors. Mistakes either may be at competence level or performance level. Mistakes are committed at competence level are called errors and mistakes which are committed at performance level are called

mistakes or lapses or slips. Errors occur because of lack of competence and they tend to occur time and again, so they are said to be systematic. Allen and Corder (1974: 127) have distinguished the mistake and error with the examples of native speaker and learner. He further says that the mistake made by a native speaker should be called a lapse or slip which is in his own term called ill-formed utterances. These ill-formed sentence cannot be called errors because they can be readily corrected by the speaker himself. These can be slip of tongue as well as slip of pen. There may be slip of ear, eye etc. false start means the speaker starts saying and changes in between and commits an error.

Syntactic blend refers to blending of two structures or mixing of two structures. It is a minor controllable mistake.

c) Description of Errors

At this stage of error analysis, the errors identified at the second stage are categorized and kept under different types i.e. local and global errors, inter-lingual and intra-lingual errors, overt-error and covert-error and so on. According to Richards et al. (1985), Errors are classified according to the vocabulary (lexical error), pronunciation (phonological error), grammar (syntactic and morphological errors), misunderstanding of speakers mention or meaning (receptive error), production of the wrong communicative effect e.g. through the faculty we use of a speech cut or one of the rules of speaking (Richards et al., 1985: 95). Generally, errors are classified in the following types:

(i) Group and Individual Errors

The errors common to all the members of a particular group are called group errors whereas errors committed by individuals are called individual errors.

(ii) Productive and Receptive Errors

Errors in speaking and writing are called productive errors and committed while trying to encode the message. Errors in reading and understanding are called receptive errors and committed while trying to decode the utterances.

(iii) Overt and Covert Errors

Corder (1973: 272-73) makes distinction between 'Overt error' and 'Covert error'. Explicit, open and easily detectable errors are called overt errors whereas subtle, hidden and hardly detectable errors are called covert errors. Covert errors can be detected only in context but overt in an isolation.

(iv) Local and Global Errors

Local errors are committed only one point of language element hence can be pinpointed. Global errors refer to the error to inability to make correct use of more than one language element.

(v) Inter-lingual and Intra-Lingual Errors

This distinction is made on the basis of presence and absence of mother tongue interference in learning the target language. The errors which are caused by the interference of L₁ in learning L₂ are called inter-lingual errors whereas the errors which are resulted from the interference of L₂ or the target language itself are called intra-lingual errors.

(vi) Phonological, Graphological, Lexical/Semantic, Pragmatic/Socio-linguistics Stylistic Errors

- a. Phonological errors are resulted from the inability to pronounce correctly.
- b. Graphological errors are resulted in writing or perceiving letters or alphabets.

- c. Grammatical errors are resulted from the breaking of grammatical system in morphology and syntax.
- d. Semantic/lexical errors refer to the error in the understanding or conveying meaning.
- e. Pragmatic/socio-linguistic errors are resulted from the inability to make relation between language and context.

d) Explanation of Errors

The explanation of errors depends upon the description of errors. Under this heading the researcher describes the different reasons, which are responsible for committing the errors. There are different reasons leading to errors. They are as follows:

- (i) Overgeneralization
- (ii) Analogical creation
- (iii) First language (L₁) – interference
- (iv) Hypercorrection
- (v) Inherent difficulties

(i) Overgeneralization

Speakers of different languages produce similar errors in learning the same target language. These errors do not reflect the structure of their mother tongue but faulty generalization about the rule of L₂. The learner having found a rule which appears to work well in one or more contexts, may apply it in the contexts where it is not applicable. As a result, he commits errors in language. Such error is what we call an error due to overgeneralization. The learner, thus, having found a rule which appears to work well, he is not inclined to go looking for exceptions which will only complicate matters. For example, on the basis of the words ‘quickly’, ‘slowly’, ‘fairly’ and so, the learner may create a rule:

adjective+ly = adverb and thus may produce 'fastly'. Similarly, 'oxes' and 'goed' instead of 'oxen' and 'went' may be the errors due to overgeneralization.

(ii) Analogical Creation

Analogical creation is a particular kind of overgeneralization can be regarded as a general term, which included overgeneralization and analogical creation. Errors due to analogical creation are those errors committed due to wrong analogy because all analogical creations are not errors. The learner searches for patterns and regularity in learning a second/foreign language. It is an effort to reduce the learning load by formulating rules. In case of analogical creation the learner produces an erroneous expression analogous to the correct one. For example, the expression, 'she explained me the meaning' may be based on the correct sentence, 'she told me the meaning'. Thus, analogical creation refers to the overgeneralization of the learner's rules without considering exceptions because his exposure to the language is limited and he has insufficient data from which he can derive more complex rule.

(iii) First Language (L₁) – interference

An error may be caused due to mother tongue interference. This interference may take place at all levels of language. For example, in appropriate selection of subjects in English subject verb agreement is the result of L₁ interference of Tharu language.

(iv) Hypercorrection

This implies that the learner at first learns the correct form but due to false analogical creation, s/he turns it into an erroneous form. When present learning affects the past learning negatively, then affects the past learning negatively, then it is termed as hypercorrection. For example, there may be a danger of saying 'one three' for 'thirteen' due to

over emphasis given while teaching twenty three if the child is presented with the cardinal numbers 1 to 20 for the first time and 20 to 100 after some interval of time.

(v) Inherent difficulties

It is also believed that some portions of a language are so difficult that not only the learners but also the native speakers too find them difficult to master. They are called difficulties inherent in the language. For example, it is generally agreed that English pairs /v/ - /f/ and /ð/ - / / are very hard to distinguish not only for Nepali or other language speakers but also for native speakers. English articles and prepositions are also considered to be inherently difficult items.

e) Evaluation of Error

This section concerns with the seriousness of errors. The degree of seriousness of errors is evaluated in this section. It is also termed as error gravity. It tries to find out the answer to the questions, viz. what is error gravity?, Who finds/determines it?, etc. The evaluator may be the teacher, examiner, educationist, layman, and teachers of other subjects or native speaker. But the teachers and examiners are directly involved to evaluate it. Other people also can evaluate it. The errors gravity should be evaluated very objectively. S/he should only describe the errors and their seriousness according to the teachers, mass of native speakers etc.

There are different criteria to evaluate the seriousness of errors (Ellis, 1985: 52):

- (i) Linguistic criterion
- (ii) Communicative Criterion
- (iii) Attitudinal criterion
- (iv) Pedagogical criterion

(i) Linguistic Criterion

Linguistically, inter-lingual errors are considered to be more serious than the intra-lingual ones because intra-lingual errors are comparatively light and less common but intra-lingual errors are more common and are difficult to wipe out. Lexical errors are more serious than grammatical ones because grammatical errors do not break the communication. Similarly, global errors are more serious than local ones. Global errors are more difficult to make correction than the local ones.

(ii) Communicative Criterion

It considers those errors to be more serious which break the communication. The extent to which the learners' language causes impairment of intelligibility for participants, determine the seriousness of errors. The greater the impairment, the more the error is.

(iii) Attitudinal Criterion

This criterion maintains that seriousness of an error may depend upon the attitude of the listener. For example, "For English people, English spoken by a French sounds 'sexy', by German 'naughty', by Italian 'funny'. It is found that use of nativism by foreigners irritates the native speakers. It has also been observed that pragmatic failure is also the factor to cause irritation in the listener and hamper the communication.

(iv) Pedagogical Criterion

It mentions that those errors which are related to the teaching items are serious. No error is more or less serious inherently. If we are teaching pronunciation then error in that area is certainly more serious than the error in the area of reading comprehension or so.

f) Correction and Remediation of Errors

There are different techniques of correction of the errors should be corrected. Before correcting errors the question arises "Should we correct

errors?” The answer is that if a learner acquires a language it should not be corrected and if he learns the language it should be corrected. There are some other criteria to correct the errors i.e. if an error has greater frequency then we should not correct it. But in exceptional case we should correct it. There are mainly three techniques of correction viz. self-correction, peer-correction and teacher-correction. But emphasis should be given to self-correction. The correction is a part of remediation.

1.5 Importance of Grammar

Grammar helps how to speak and write correctly. Funk and Wagnall’s (1960: 1064) define ‘grammar’, “The science that treats of the principles that govern the correct use of language in either oral or written form”. It means grammar is very important in order to manipulate the language in speech and writing.

The main purpose of grammar is to help the students to choose structures, which accurately express the meanings they want to create. Hence, the grammar is meant for improving language.

English, as compulsory subject often carries 100 full marks in all the levels in our academic programme. The item, subject-verb agreement is also asked in English subject. The area of subject-verb agreement is small but it can’t be neglected because of its importance in speech and writing.

1.6 Subject-Verb Agreement

The term ‘subject’ refers to a major constituent of clause structure, traditionally associated with the ‘doer’ of an action, as in **The cat** bit the dog (Crystal, 2003: 441). The term ‘verb’ refers to a class traditionally defined as ‘doing’ or ‘action’ words. The formal definition of verb refers to an element which can display morphological contrasts of tense, aspect,

voice, mood, person and number (Crystal, 2003:491). The term ‘agreement’ refers to a grammatical constraint requiring that if one word has particular form other words occurring in the same construction must take the appropriate corresponding form. A standard grammatical treatment states that for verbs other than be, number agreement between the subject-verb (sometimes referred to as subject-verb concern) possesses a problem only in the present tense, where third person singular forms are explicitly inflected while other forms are not.

Agreement errors may be due to phonological or perceptual factors rather than syntactic or morphological differences. One reason for this is because the sound system of their native language tends not to permit final /s/ sounds in particular or final consonants in general. Other reasons for the slow and late acquisition of the third person singular present inflection on the verb – even when there is no phonological interference from the learner’s native language – might be in lack of perceptual saliency and its low speech frequency of occurrence in native speaker speech (Celece-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman, 1976:58). The third person singular present tense inflection tends to be omitted for these reasons as well. Also, it is the only inflection in the present tense and has little communicative utility since the person/number is almost always clear from the subject noun phrase, just as it is with the other person and number’s that do not take any inflection.

Whereas some cases of subject and verb number choice are puzzling mainly to non-native speakers, several cases cause difficulty for native and non-native speakers alike. We will now review many of the problematic areas in subject and verb number choice along with the more predictable and obvious rules.

It is true that area of subject-verb agreement is small but it cannot be neglected due to its importance in speech and writing.

1.7 Rules of Subject-Verb Agreement in English

Some rules on subject-verb agreement are listed below on the basis of Celece-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1983) and Potter and Viekers (1997):

1. A singular verb is used with a singular noun and a plural verb is used with plural noun.

Ram plays volleyball.

Girls play football.

2. Two or more singular subject joined by and usually take a verb in the plural.

Renu and Shobha read in the same school.

If however, the two nouns refer to the same person or thing, the verb must be in the singular:

The horse and carriage is at the door.

3. If two or more singular subjects are preceded by either, neither, each, everyone, many a, the verb is in the singular:

Everyone of them is wrong.

Each of these boys is guilty.

4. When the two subjects are joined by as well as, together with, in addition to, etc., the verb agrees with the first subject:

They as well as I were to blame.

Your father as well as you has been invited.

5. When two or more singular nouns are joined by either ... or, neither ... nor, or, nor, the verb is in the singular:

Neither food nor water was available.

Gopal or Ramesh is to blame.

But if one of the subject is in the plural, the verb must be in the plural and the plural subject is placed nearer the verb:

The officer or his clerks were caught.

Neither Ram nor his friends have come.

6. When the subject is a relative pronoun, the verb agrees in number and person with the antecedent.

I, who am his friend, will stand by him.

I have read the book that is on the table.

7. When two subjects are joined by not only ... but also, the verb agrees with the second in number and person:

Not only you but your friend also is to blame.

Not only India but all the countries are in trouble.

8. Collective nouns take either a singular or plural verb inflection depending on the meaning. If the subject noun is conceived of as one entity, the verb carries the –s inflection.

Our school team has won all its games. (the team as a whole)

But if the subject is felt to be more than one entity, the verb takes no inflection.

Our school team have won all their games. (individual team members)

9. Some common and proper nouns ending in –s, including –ics nouns and certain diseases, are always conceived of as a single entity and take a singular verb inflection.

No news is good news.

Physics is a difficult subject.

10. Titles of books, plays, films, and such works – even when plural in form – take the singular verb inflection because they are perceived as a single entity.

Great expectations was written by dickens.

The pirates of Penzance is my favourite operetta.

11. Nouns occurring in sets of two take the singular when the noun pair is present but take the plural when pair is absent regardless of whether one pair or more is being referred to.

A pair of trousers is on the sofa.

Todd's trousers are on the sofa.

12. A number of normally takes the plural, while the number of normally takes the singular.

A number of students have dropped that course.

The number of students in this school is 2,000.

The noun number in the phrase “the number of” generally modifies or implies a single entity such as a sum or a totality, whereas the noun number in the phrase “a number of” normally modifies or implies more than one entity much as the quantifiers some, a few, or several do.

13. Lots of can take a singular or plural verb:

Lots of people are still poor.

Lots of petrol has been wasted.

14. Lots + infinitive takes a singular verb because it is a substitute for much:

There is still lots to do.

There is lots to be said on this subject.

15. A collective noun can take a singular or plural verb:

- a. It takes a singular verb when it denotes the group as a single or whole, i.e. people or things taken together:

The jury has found him guilty.

The government has decided to levy fresh taxes.

- b. In the world of games and sports the name of a state/country/institution denotes a team. It is usually considered a plural collective noun, so it takes a plural verb:

England has piled up five hundred runs.

Australia has lost the test match by six wickets.

- c. The name of capital city/seat of political power is treated as a singular collective noun; it is used with a singular verb:

The white house is going to review the bill.

The Kremlin has decided to encourage private enterprise.

16. A noun (singular or plural) denoting weights/measures/amount/quality/distance etc. takes a singular verb:

Five miles/kilometers is a long way to walk seven thousand rupees has been paid to him.

17. Indefinite pronouns

- a. Singular indefinites go with a singular verb:

Everyone likes to watch T.V.

Not all is well now.

- b. Plural indefinites go with a plural verb:

Many were injured in the accident.

Only a few were selected.

- c. Indefinites + of + plural noun/pronoun:

In this construction, too, a singular indefinite pronoun goes with a singular verb:

Each one of us wants to like long. (not want)

Everyone of the girls/them is tall. (not are)

18. It + be + noun/pronoun

In this construction the subject is it, so the verb is always singular is/was and not 'are/were':

It's me/him.

It was you who created the problem.

19. Subject + noun/pronoun in apposition:

In this construction the verb agrees with the subject, and not with the noun/pronoun used in apposition to the subject:

I, a student, am in urgent need of your help. (not, is)

You, a literary critic, have failed to appreciate modern poetry. (not, has)

20. When the + adjective denoted a plural noun it takes a plural verb:

The rich are not necessarily happy.

The blind need help.

But when the + adjective denotes a quality or substance, it takes a singular verb:

The white of an egg is good for health.

21. More than one + noun takes a singular noun and a singular verb:

More than one man was killed in the accident.

More than one scholar has been honoured this year.

(not, more than one boys are absent)

But if more + plural noun + than one, more takes a plural noun, so a plural verb is required.

More proposals than one have been forwarded. (not, has been)

22. The subject of a sentence like this is nothing, and not the noun placed after but, so it always takes a singular verb whether the latter noun is singular or plural:

There is nothing but sand in a desert.

Nothing but unfulfilled promises is what this administration has given us.

23. Fractions and percentages take a singular verb inflection when modifying a noncount noun and the plural verb inflection when they modify a plural noun; either the singular or the plural verb

inflection may be used when they modify a collective noun, depending on the speaker's meaning.

noncount: Fifty percent of the toxic waste has escaped.

One half of the toxic waste has escaped.

plural: Two thirds of the students are satisfied with the class.

Sixty-six percent of the students are satisfied with the class.

collective: One tenth of the population of Egypt is/are Christian.

Ten percent of the population of Egypt is/are Christian(s).

24. Plural unit words of distance, money and time take the singular verb inflection when one entity is implied but a plural verb inflection when more than one entity is encoded in the subject.

one distance: 1,000 miles is a long distance.

entity money: 2 million dollars is a lot of money

time: 5 years is a long time to spend on an M.A. thesis.

More distance: 10 miles are to be added to this freeway next
than year.

one money: 2 dollars are on the table in the kitchen.

entity time: 3 years are missing from this set of calendars for
the 17th century.

25. Arithmetical operations (add, subtract, multiply, and divide) take the singular because they are perceived as reflecting a single numerical entity on both sides of the equation or equal sign. For example:

addition: One plus one is/equals two.

subtraction: Four minus two is/equals two.

multiplication: Two times two is/equals four.

division: Ten divided by two is/equals five.

26. The quantifiers all (of), a lot of, lots of and plenty of take singular verb agreement if the subject head noun is non-count but plural verb agreement if the subject head noun is plural:

A lot of nonsense was published about that incident.

A lot of people were present when it happened.

1.8 Definition of the Terms

Subject:

“A noun, noun phrase or pronoun represent the person or thing that performs the action of the verb, about which something is started or, in a passive sentence, that is affected by the action of the verb.” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary: Sixth Edition, 2000)

Verb:

It (in English) refers to a word which occurs as a part of the predicate of a sentence carries markers of categories such as tense, aspect, person, number and mood and refers to an action or state. (Richards et al., 1985: 305)

Agreement:

‘A traditional term used in Grammatical theory and description to refer to a formal relationship between elements, whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another.’ (Crystal, 2003:17)

Dialect:

A variety of language spoken in one part of country (regional dialect), or people belonging to a particular social class (social dialect or socialect) which is difference in some words, grammar or pronunciation from other forms of the same language.” (Richards et al., 1985: 80)

Honorific:

Politeness formula in a particular language which may be specific affixes, words or sentence structures. (Richards et al., 1985: 131)

Inflection:

It refers to ‘the process of adding an affix to a word or changing it in some other ways according to the rules of the grammar of a language. For example, in English, verbs are inflected for third person singular: I work; he works and for past tense: I worked.’ (Richards et al., 1985:139)

1.9 Review of Related Literature

Many studies have been done to find out errors in subject-verb agreement made by those English learners who had different language backgrounds. Some people have done comparative study and error analysis on subject-verb agreement between English and other languages. Thus, an attempt is made here to review the related literature particularly carried out in Nepal.

Shrestha (1989) has studied “Errors on Subject-Verb Agreement in English”. The learners’ errors have been discussed in terms of their gravity and frequency in this study. The findings were: the highest number of errors was found in structured with 13 types of grammatical subjects such as many a N, Dummy there etc. Similarly, least number of errors were found under five structures such as Either N+pl or N-pl etc. It was a very serious study on s-v agreement.

Singh (1997) has analyzed “The Errors Committed by the Students of Proficiency Certificate Level”, studying in Thakur Ram Campus, Birgunj in the use of articles and prepositions. The study showed that students of different faculties, mother-tongue backgrounds and sex were found to commit article errors more frequently than preposition errors.

Adhikari (1999) has analyzed “The Errors Committed by Grade IX Students Studying in Gorkha District in the Use of Causative Verb.” He found that more errors were committed in ‘have’ type of causative verb.

Karki (1999) has carried out the study “Teaching Subject Verb Agreement Inductively and Deductively”. He found that the deductive method was less effective than the inductive method.

Shah (2000) has carried out on “A Comparative Study of the Subject-Verb Agreement in Maithili and English Language.” He found that in English and s-v agreement is determined with the agreement of number between subject and verb but Maithili verb agreement is determined by the inflectional affixes not only with the subjects but with the objects also.

Mahato (2001) has done “A Comparative Study on Subject-Verb Agreement in English and Tharu Language” and has concluded that both English and Tharu verbs agree with subject in a clause or a sentence.

Pant (2004) carried out a research on “The Effectiveness of Discovery Techniques in Teaching Subject-Verb Agreement in Grade IX (A Practical Study)” and found that in verb-wise comparison group ‘A’ was found to be better than group ‘B’; in subjective comparison group, ‘A’ had a better result than group ‘B’.

Corder (1973), on the other hand, says that difficulty is a psycholinguistic matter. Therefore, any feature of the target language which differs from that of the mother tongue, is not necessarily difficult to learn.

Khadka (2001) conducted a researcher on “Grammatical Errors Committed by Jirel Learners” and found many similarities and differences between English and Jirel language in ‘reported speech’ and

‘relative clause’. She had also found that so many errors were committed by Jirel learners in transforming ‘relative clause’ and ‘reported speech’.

Corder (1973) says that the study of error is a part of the investigation of the process of language learning. It provides us a picture of the linguistics development of learner and may give us indications of the learning strategies. Errors are unavoidable and very essential parts of learning. Errors do occur in the process of second language learning.

Thus, no study has been carried out to see what problems and difficulties the Tharu students face in learning English. Therefore, this research is to find out errors in subject-verb agreement committed by the Tharu learners.

1.10 Objectives of the Study

This study had the following objectives:

- (i) To find out the errors on subject-verb agreement committed by Tharu students on the basis of following variables:
 - Verb-wise comparison
 - Sex-wise comparison
 - School-wise comparison
- (ii) To find out the proficiency of the Tharu students in subject-verb agreement on the basis of the following variables:
 - Item-wise comparison
 - Sex-wise comparison
 - School-wise comparison
- (iii) To suggest some pedagogical implication.

1.11 Significance of the Study

This study will be useful for those who are involved in language teaching especially to the target group and others who are interested in grammar section of a language. It will be important for teachers, students and researchers.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

The researcher carried out the following methodology:

2.1 Sources of Data

(i) Primary Source of Data

The total population of this study was the Tharu native speakers of three secondary level schools of Saptary district were the primary sources of data.

(ii) Secondary Source of Data

In addition to the primary sources, the researcher made use of secondary source of data, viz. different books on grammar, theses, journals, documents, authentic articles and materials which have close relevance with the present study.

2.2 Population of the Study

The population of the study was the secondary level students who were in Grade IX.

2.3 Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure was 90 students of Saptary districts. Thirty students from each public school were selected by using random sampling procedure on the basis of lottery procedure. The researcher administered a test which included objective types of question to the sampled group and collected all the answer sheets.

2.4 Tools for Data Collection

The main tool for the collection of data was the test item which included objective questions on subject-verb agreement structure. These

were five items totaling 50 questions allocating 50 marks in objective tests.

2.5 Process of Data Collection

The researcher used the following procedures to collect the data from the primary sources.

At first, the researcher visited the selected schools and talked to the authority and the English teachers to get permission to carry out the research then he collected the target group to a separate room and explained the purpose of the exam and gave the tools. The test items were one and a half hours.

Then he collected all answer sheets, checked and assigned scores to them. The score of the students were tabulated systematically calculated using average and percentage.

2.6 Limitations of the Study

This study had the following limitations:

- a) This research was limited to the errors committed by Tharu students in s-v agreement in English language.
- b) It was conducted three public schools of Saptary district.
- c) The Tharu students of Grade IX were taken in the study.
- d) The primary data were only 90 students.
- e) The primary data for this study were collected from the written test.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to the objectives of the study, the responses of students were marked. The errors committed by the Tharu students of Saptary district were tabulated on the basis of the table of errors committed by the students, the analysis and interpretation carried out in this chapter has been made as accurate as possible. With a view to making the study more objective, the analysis and interpretation were done by using the statistical tools of ‘average’ and ‘percentage’. Hence, this chapter consists of the following two parts:

3.1 Analysis of Errors

The main aim or objectives of this study is to identify and analyze the errors committed by the ninth graders in the subject-verb agreement by Tharu students. This chapter is the most crucial part, which led the researcher to reach the objectives of the study.

The analysis and interpretation have been carried out under the following headings:

- a. Verb-wise analysis and interpretation of total errors
- b. Sex-wise analysis and interpretation of errors
- c. School-wise analysis and interpretation of errors
- d. Student-wise analysis and interpretation of errors

3.1.1 Verb-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Total Errors

Table 1: Distribution of Errors

S.N.	Types of Errors	No. of Errors	Percentage
1.	Errors in be verbs	831	34.74
2.	Errors in have verbs	337	14.08
3.	Errors in do verbs	60	2.50
4.	Errors in main verbs	1083	45.27
5.	Unattempted items	81	3.38
	Total	2392	100.00

The above table records the different types of errors in the given subject-verb agreement on the whole. The table indicates that the students committed the highest number of errors (45.27%) in the selection of appropriate verbs except 'be', 'have' and 'do' types. The other types of errors i.e. 34.74 percent were committed in the selection of appropriate 'be' verbs in the given test. The total informants committed 14.08 percent errors in the use of 'have' verbs. In the same way, the least number of errors were committed in using 'do' verbs i.e. 2.50 percent. At last, 3.38 percent questions were left unattempted.

The students were asked to make the singular and plural forms of s-v agreement in various sets of questions but they were found unfamiliar with those terms and committed the errors.

a. Error in 'be' Verbs

One of the most frequently used verbs in the English language is 'be' verb. It has different forms: am, is, are, be, was and were. They are used in sentences according to the subjects. The students could not understand the context of using 'be' verbs appropriately in the sentences and committed errors.

Table 2: Errors in 'be' Verbs

S.N.	Items	Examples	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Item 'A'	* There <u>is</u> 100 students studying in this class. (is, am, are) * Both of them <u>was</u> playing football. (is, are, was)	47	5.65
2.	Item 'B'	* All of the animal in the zoo <u>was</u> well-fed. (be) All of the animal in the zoo <u>are</u> well-fed. * Fifty cents <u>are</u> not enough for the train fare. (be)	251	30.20

3.	Item 'C'	* The information you gave us were not true. The information you gave us was true.	178	21.41
4.	Item 'D'	* Wonder world, a new and exciting, amusement park <u>are</u> now open to the public. * The principal and the department heads <u>be</u> having a meeting. (be)	264	31.76
5.	Item 'E'	* The boy <u>are</u> playing for two hours. The boy <u>is</u> playing for two hours. * A pair of trousers <u>are</u> on the sofa.	91	10.95
Total			831	100.00

The table 2 shows that the highest number of errors in 'be' verbs was committed in item number 'D'. They were not able to change 'be' verbs in subject-verb agreement appropriately. Whereas in item 'A', is the lowest number of errors in 'be' verbs. They were able to choose subject-verb agreement appropriately. Similarly, in item number 'B', students were asked to complete the correct form of singular or plural verb. In this item also, they used singular subject to plural verb and plural subject to singular verb. In item 'C' students felt difficult to find the errors of the sentences. In this item, they were not able to write C on the line whether the sentences were correct. In item number 'E' also, students were not able to make the subject-verb agreement appropriately. Hence, they committed 5.65 percent errors in item 'A', 30.20 percent errors in item 'B', 21.41 percent in item 'C', 31.76 percent errors in item 'D' and 10.95 percent errors in item 'E'.

Many Tharu students were not clear to use appropriate structure in the use of subject-verb agreement. They frequently committed the following types of errors.

Q. The principal and the department heads ___ having a meeting. (be)

Ans. The principal and the department heads be having a meeting.

The above example proves that the students did not know which structure should be used appropriately in the ‘be’ verbs. They frequently committed to change the ‘be’ verb of the singular plural form on the s-v agreement.

b. Errors in ‘have’ Verbs

Some of the students committed errors in ‘have’ verbs also. It is the verb which is frequently used in the English sentences. They used ‘have’ in singular subject and ‘has’ in plural subject. The following table clearly presents such cases.

Table 3: Errors in ‘have’ Verbs

S.N.	Items	Examples	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Item ‘A’	* Each child <u>have</u> an ice-cream. (have, has, had) * I <u>are reading</u> my text book since morning. (am reading, have been reading, are reading)	85	25.22
2.	Item ‘B’	* Each of the students <u>have</u> got a notebook and pen. (have) Each of the students <u>has</u> got a notebook and pen.	53	15.72
3.	Item ‘C’	* <u>Are</u> all of your homework finished? <u>Have</u> all of your homework finished?	141	41.83

4.	Item 'D'	* <u>Have</u> either Sangita or Susan got time to help Ram with his homework? (have) <u>Has</u> either Sangita or Susan got time to help Ram with his homework?	38	11.27
5.	Item 'E'	* The clock is rang for one minute. * We <u>shall have studying</u> hard before examination.	20	5.93
Total			337	100.00

The table 3 given above presents a clear picture that 337 out of 2392 errors were committed in 'have' types of verbs. The students were found the least number of errors in item number 'E' and the highest number of errors in item number 'C'. They committed 25.22 percent errors in item 'A', 15.72 percent errors in item 'B', 41.83 percent errors in item 'C', 11.27 percent errors in item 'D' and 5.93 percent errors in item 'E'.

The questions were prepared for their level but they failed to use correctly due to false concept hypothesized. Similarly, lack of practice, lack of using the suitable teaching techniques, approaches materials and teachers' negligence etc. were found to commit such errors of the Tharu students.

c. Errors in 'do' Verbs

The students were requested to fill up a suitable 'do' verbs in item 'A' and to complete the sentences with the correct form of the 'do' verbs in item 'D'. But they could not do so nicely and committed so many errors as shown in the table given below:

Table 4: Errors in ‘do’ Verbs

S.N.	Items	Examples	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Item ‘A’	* Where <u>do</u> she live now? (does, do, done) Where <u>does</u> she live now?	17	28.33
2.	Item ‘B’	* <u>Does</u> your aunt and uncle live in Canada? (do) Do your aunt and uncle live in Canada?	43	71.66
		Total	60	100.00

The above table indicates that the highest numbers of errors were found in item ‘D’. Likewise, they committed the least number of errors in item ‘A’. Only 28.33 percent errors were found in item ‘A’ and 71.66 percent errors were found in item ‘D’.

The above examples responded by the students has shown that the students could not use correct structure. They have mainly converted wrong order of s-v agreement on the question types of the sentences.

d. Errors in Main Verbs

The students were asked to concord subjects and verbs in items ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’, ‘D’ and ‘E’. They did so many errors. They could not make grammatically correct statements using the given clues. It can be shown in the following table.

Table 5: Errors in Main Verbs

S.N.	Items	Examples	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Item ‘A’	* A bird <u>fly</u> in the sky. (fly, flies, flown) * Either Ram or Shyam <u>study</u> in the 6 class. (study, studied, studies)	186	17.17

2.	Item 'B'	* A tour group from Japan <u>arrive</u> at ten O'clock tonight. (arrive) * Everyone in our family <u>help</u> with the housework. (help)	209	19.29
3.	Item 'C'	* Both Tom and his brother works hard. * Nobody live in that old house anymore.	232	21.42
4.	Item 'D'	* Neither I nor my friend <u>thinks</u> that money is the most important thing in life. (think) * This gold and platinum watch <u>costs</u> a lot of money. (cost)	196	18.09
5.	Item 'E'	* Ram write a letter to his friend. * Did he left Delhi yesterday?	260	24.00
Total			1083	100.00

The table 5 shows that 1083 errors out of 2392 were made due to the wrong order of subject-verb agreement. Among 1083 errors, 186 or 17.17 percent errors were committed in item 'A', 209 or 19.29 percent errors were committed in item 'B', 232 or 21.42 percent errors were committed in item 'C', 196 or 18.09 percent errors were committed in item 'D' and 260 or 24.00 percent errors were committed in item 'E'. They frequently committed the following types of errors.

- a. *A bird fly in the sky.
in place of
A bird flies in the sky.
- b. *A tour group from Japan arrive at ten O'clock tonight.
in place of
A tour group from Japan arrives at ten O'clock tonight.

- c. *Nobody live in that old house anymore.
in place of
Nobody lives in that old house anymore.
- d. *Neither I nor my friends thinks that money is the most important thing in life.
in place of
Neither I nor my friends think that money is the most important thing in life.
- e. Did he left Delhi yesterday?
instead of
Did he leave Delhi yesterday?

e. Unattempted Items

The students left some questions unattempted. These unattempted items are follows:

Table 6: Distribution of Unattempted Items

S.N.	Items	No. of Unattempted Items	Percentage
1.	Item 'A'	1	1.23
2.	Item 'B'	19	23.45
3.	Item 'C'	28	34.56
4.	Item 'D'	30	37.03
5.	Item 'E'	3	3.70
	Total	81	100.00

The above table shows that 37.03 percent or the highest number of questions were left unattempted in item number 'D' against 1.23 percent or the lowest number of unattempted questions in item number 'A'. Similarly, 23.45 percent, 34.56 percent and 3.70 percent questions were left unattempted in item number 'B', 'C' and 'E' respectively.

The students could not attempt all the questions or exercises due to lack of confidence, and the poor writing speed. One of the most important reasons to leave questions unattempted was found to be the degree of difficulty. They could not write fast and left the questions unattempted. Improving writing speed, regular practice, self-confidence and rigorous practice are the most important factors to solve this problem.

3.1.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Errors in Terms of ‘Sex’

Table 7: Comparison of Total Errors with Different Variables

Variables	Sample Size	No. of Errors	Percentage
Boys	50	1295	54.13
Girls	40	1097	45.86
Total	90	2392	100.00

The table shows that 54.13% errors were committed by the boys against the 45.86% errors of the girls. Hence, the tendency in committing more errors was found in boys in comparison with girls.

According to the table, boys were committed more errors than girls due to the lack of care and confidence.

3.1.3 School-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Errors

Table 8: School-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Errors

S.N.	Name of the School	Item A	Item B	Item C	Item D	Item E	Total	%
1.	Masilal Janta Secondary School	73	150	174	149	72	619	25.87
2.	B.S.R.P.H.S School	131	175	204	188	164	862	36.03
3.	K.S.J.M.S School	132	206	201	234	138	911	38.08
	Total	336	532	579	571	374	2392	100.00

The above table shows the total errors in five different items committed by the students of three different government schools. The table indicates that 38.08 percent or the highest numbers of errors were committed by the students of K.S.J.M.S. School against 25.87 percent or the lowest number of errors by the students of Masilal Janta Secondary School. Like this, the students of B.S.R.P.H.S. School Kalyanpur committed 36.03 percent errors similarly. Hence, the students of K.S.J.M.S. School were found to commit more errors in comparison with other two schools.

While comparing different schools of Saptary district, the students of K.S.J.M.S. school were found to commit more errors in comparison with other two schools. The students were found having only the partial knowledge about s-v agreement. Many students recognized the sentences but did not know how to use appropriately in the correct sentence form. The students could not choose the right verb in the s-v agreement sentences because they are not well acquainted with the subject-verb agreement. Even though they know that the subjects were singular or plural, they could not select the right verb. Some students were found lack of knowledge of singular and plural nouns. Examination oriented teaching tradition was found another reason to make such errors. Different language activities such as contextual teaching, creation of more opportunities for practice, appropriate vocabulary games but not examination oriented teaching should be adopted to increase that poor comprehensive power of the students.

3.2 Analysis of Proficiency

This part of the chapter deals with the total proficiency of the students in the subject verb agreement. The analysis is further divided into the following sub-headings.

3.2.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Total Proficiency

Table 9: Analysis and Interpretation of Total Proficiency

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	46.84	29	42.45	61	57.54

Table 9 is a kind of summary of the total proficiency of 90 students in the given objective questions. The total average of the ninety students was 46.84. Only 42.45 percent of the students were above the average whereas 57.54 percent were below it.

It suggests that in totally, the achievement was found satisfactory.

3.2.2 Item-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Total Proficiency

Table 10: Total Proficiency in Item No. A

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	62.66	34	77.65	56	22.34

The table above shows the total proficiency of the sample of 90 students in 'Filling up' items; choosing the correct verbs given in the brackets. There were 10 questions in item number 'A' carrying 10 marks. The average of 90 students was 62.66 percent. 77.65 percent of the students scored above the average and below it were 22.34 percent. Hence, the total proficiency in item number 'A' was found satisfactory.

Table 11: Total Proficiency in Item No. B

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	40.88	19	34.78	71	65.21

The table above shows the total proficiency of the sample of 90 students in item 'B'. There were 10 using the correct singular or plural

form of the verb in item number ‘B’ carrying 10 marks. The average score was 40.88 percent. Out of the total sample, 34.78 percent were found above the average in using correct form. Hence, the proficiency in total was not satisfactory.

Table 12: Total Proficiency in Item No. C

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	35.66	9	18.38	81	81.61

The table above shows the total proficiency of the sample 90 students in item ‘C’. There were 10 finding errors questions in item number ‘C’ carrying 10 marks. The average score was 35.66 percent. Out of the total sample, 18.38 percent were found above the average in item ‘C’. Hence, the proficiency in total was not satisfactory.

Table 13: Total Proficiency in Item No. D

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	36.55	19	41.03	71	58.96

The table above shows the proficiency of the sample of 90 students in ‘Filling up’ items; completing the correct verb given in the brackets. There were 10 questions in item number ‘D’ carrying 10 marks. The average of 90 students was 36.55 percent. Out of total sample, 41.03 percent were found above the average in item number ‘D’. Hence, the proficiency in total was not satisfactory.

Table 14: Total Proficiency in Item No. E

Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
		No. of students	%	No. of students	%
90	58.44	44	66.15	40	33.84

The table above shows the total proficiency of the sample of 90 students in item 'E'. There were 10 multiple choice questions in item number 'E' carrying 10 marks. The average score was 58.44 percent. Out of the total sample, 66.15 percent were found above the average in item number 'E'. Hence, the proficiency in total was satisfactory.

3.2.3 Sex-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Total Proficiency

Table 15: Comparison of Total Proficiency with Different Variables

Variables	Total Sample	Total Average	Above Average		Below Average	
			No. of students	%	No. of students	%
Boys	50	46.84	18	46.30	32	53.69
Girls	40		11	37.32	29	62.67

Table 14 shows a sample size of different variables and the total average of all of them, i.e. 46.84 percent. It further shows that 46.30 percent of boys and 37.32 percent of girls were above the average and 53.63 percent and 62.67 percent were below the average respectively. Thus, in general the proficiency of boys was found better than that of girls as regards the achievement in the subject-verb agreement given to them.

3.2.4 School-wise Analysis and Interpretation of Total Proficiency

Table 16: Total Proficiency of Three Different Schools

S.N.	Name of the School	Item A	Item B	Item C	Item D	Item E	Total	%
1.	Masilal Janta Secondary School	227	149	126	151	288	881	41.79
2.	B.S.R.P.H.S School	169	125	96	112	136	638	30.26
3.	K.S.J.M.S School	168	94	99	66	162	589	27.94
	Total	564	368	321	329	526	2108	100.00

The table above shows the total proficiency of the students in five different items of the three different schools. The total proficiency of the students of Masilal Janta Secondary School was 41.79 percent which was the highest whereas the lowest proficiency was the students of K.S.J.M.S. School i.e. 27.94 percent followed by B.S.R.P.H.S. School (30.94 percent), respectively. Thus, the students of Masilal Janta Secondary School were found better than the student of other two schools.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Findings

From the analysis and interpretation of the data, the findings of the present study were summarized as follows:

1. The students committed more errors in main verbs. Such as;
 - Everyone in our family help with the housework.
 - Does your aunt and uncle live in Canada?
2. The boys committed more errors in comparison with girls.
3. Most of the questions or items were left unattempted in the item number 'C' in finding the errors and rewriting the sentences correctly.
4. Students performed the best in item number 'A' in 'Fill-up items' and performed the worst in item number 'C' in 'Finding errors' questions.
5. In totality, the proficiency of boys was better than that of girls because Tharu girls are mainly involved in house-hold work and lack of time.
6. While comparing school-wise performance, the students of Masilal Janta Secondary School performed the best and the student of K.S.J.M.S. School performed the worst. The students of M.J.S. School were more confident and on the rules of s-v agreement but the students of K.S.J.M.S. School were less confident.

4.2 Recommendations

Having summarized the findings of the present study, the researcher would like to make the following recommendations:

1. Generally, teachers do not go beyond prescribed books. So, while, selecting the new language items like sub-verb-agreement, a lot of examples and exercises should be included in the textbook.
2. Appropriate teaching materials should be used in teaching.
3. Give more emphasis on main verbs rather than 'be', 'have' and 'do' verbs.
4. Intensive teaching is needed to boys rather than girls in objective tests.
5. Make the Tharu students practice all kinds of sentences of subject-verb agreement especially complete the sentences with correct form of the verb.
6. Give more practice and exercises on teaching interrogative subject-verb agreement because the students find them more difficult than affirmative subject-verb agreement.
7. Use sentences from grammars written by English native speakers and others (non-English) writers as reference books for teaching subject-verb agreement.
8. Extra curricular activities in English medium can be conducted as spelling contest and other language games about the formation of singular or plural verbs etc. to minimize errors on such aspects of grammar in subject-verb agreement so that students are able to form correct structures.

Finally, similar research works should be carried out on the other areas of grammar mainly on those areas in which the Tharu learners of English are likely to commit errors in their performance.

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APPENDIX - A

QUESTIONNAIRE

School Name:

Time: 1:30

Student Name:

Class:

Roll No. :

A. Fill up a suitable verb from the bracket. 10

1. I my book yesterday. (finish, finished, finishing)
2. I my text book since morning. (am reading, have been reading, are reading)
3. A bird in the sky. (fly, flies, flown)
4. There 100 students studying in this class. (is, am, are)
5. Each child an ice-cream. (have, has, had)
6. Both of them playing football. (is, are, was)
7. Either Ram or Shyam in the 6 class. (study, studied, studies)
8. Where she live now? (does, do, done)
9. Sita and Ram one another. (love, loves, loved)
10. Slow and steady the race. (win, wins, won)

B. The sentences below are all in the present simple tense. Use the correct.

Singular or Plural form of the verb in brackets to complete them. 10

1. Everyone in our family _____ with the housework. (help)
2. All of the animal in the zoo _____ well-fed. (be)
3. A tour group from Japan _____ at ten O'clock tonight. (arrive)
4. Neither of my sisters _____ married. (be)
5. Each of the students _____ got a notebook and pen. (have)
6. Some of us _____ to go to ocean park this weekend. (want)
7. All of the news _____ to be bad these days. (seem)
8. Fifty cents _____ not enough for the train fare. (be)
9. None of thee toys _____ safe for children. (be)
10. My father's company _____ parts for computers. (make)

C. Some of the following sentences contain errors. Find the errors and rewrite the sentences correctly on the lines below. (If the sentence is correct, write *C* on the line.

Example: Shopping for clothes are my favourite pastime.

Shopping for clothes is my favourite pastime.

1. Both Tom and his brother works hard.

2. Are all of your homework finished?

3. I think \$2000 are too much to pay for that coat.

4. Nobody live in that old house anymore.

5. Neither rice nor potatoes costs very much.

6. The information you gave us weren't true.

7. Kelvin, a top student and a member of the tennis team, was given an award.

8. Either of the two choices seem acceptable.

9. Happiness and prosperity comes only after hard work.

10. Have all of the equipment been checked?

D. Complete these sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets. 10

Example: That red and green jacket _____ nice. (look)

That red and green jacket looks nice.

1. _____ your aunt and uncle live in Canada? (do)

2. Equipment for tennis, squash, and other sports _____ sold at that shop. (be)
3. Both my little sister and my niece _____ to St. Mary's Primary School. (go)
4. _____ either Sangita or Susan got time to help Ram with his homework? (have)
5. Neither I nor my friends _____ that money is the most important thing in life. (think)
6. This gold and platinum watch _____ a lot of money. (cost)
7. Wonder world, a new and exciting, amusement park, _____ now open to the public! (be)
8. I'm afraid neither Hari nor Shyam _____ to come to our party. (want)
9. The Principal and the Department Heads _____ having a meeting. (be)
10. News and entertainment _____ both important parts of our new television programme. (be)

E. Tick the correct statement.

10

1.
 - a. Ram writes a letter to his friend.
 - b. Ram write a letter to his friend.
 - c. Ram written a letter to his friend.
 - d. Ram writing a letter to his friend.
2.
 - a. Sita does not works hard.
 - b. Sita does not worked hard.
 - c. Sita does not work hard.
 - d. Sita doesn't worked hard.
3.
 - a. Did he left Delhi yesterday.
 - b. Did he leave Delhi yesterday.
 - c. Did he left Delhi yesterday?
 - d. Did he leave Delhi yesterday?
4.
 - a. I had wrote to my friend before I went to school.
 - b. I had write to my friend before I went to school.

- c. I had writes to my friend before I went to school.
 - d. I had written to my friend before I went to school.
- 5.
- a. Will you helped me to solve this sum?
 - b. Will you helping me to solve this sum?
 - c. Will you helps me to solve this sum?
 - d. Will you help me to solve this sum?
- 6.
- a. We shall have been studying hard before examination.
 - b. We shall have studying hard before examination.
 - c. We shall been studying hard before examination.
 - d. We shall have been study hard before examination.
- 7.
- a. The clock is ringing for one minute.
 - b. The clock has rung for one minute.
 - c. The clock have ring for one minute.
 - d. The clock is rang for one minute.
- 8.
- a. A man who is studying in the school is a student.
 - b. A man who was studying in the school is a student.
 - c. A man who were studying the school is a student.
 - d. A man who studies in the school is a student.
- 9.
- a. The boy are playing for two hours.
 - b. The boy is playing for two hours.
 - c. The boy was playing for two hours.
 - d. The boy were playing for two hours.
- 10.
- a. A pair of trousers are on the sofa.
 - b. A pair of trousers is on the sofa.
 - c. A pair of trousers have on the sofa.
 - d. A pair of trousers were on the sofa.

APPENDIX – B

Total Proficiency of Masilal Janta Secondadry School Kushaha, Saptary

S.N.	Sex	Item A	Item B	Item C	Item D	Item E	Total
1.	M	6	5	5	5	9	30
2.	M	8	6	2	2	5	23
3.	M	8	3	7	5	8	31
4.	M	8	4	5	3	5	25
5.	M	9	9	5	7	8	38
6.	M	8	4	4	6	8	30
7.	M	4	6	5	7	8	30
8.	F	9	5	2	4	8	28
9.	F	9	8	6	9	8	40
10.	F	7	4	3	4	8	26
11.	F	6	3	4	2	8	23
12.	F	6	6	5	5	8	30
13.	M	4	7	1	4	6	22
14.	M	6	4	3	9	9	31
15.	M	7	5	5	6	7	30
16.	M	6	1	3	6	7	23
17.	F	8	3	3	3	7	24
18.	M	8	3	4	1	2	18
19.	F	9	5	2	5	9	30
20.	F	9	7	4	6	9	35
21.	F	9	5	2	6	9	31
22.	F	9	4	3	1	8	25
23.	F	7	2	4	9	5	27
24.	F	6	5	4	1	9	25
25.	M	9	8	5	9	8	39
26.	F	9	5	5	5	9	33
27.	F	9	5	5	2	9	30
28.	M	10	9	7	8	10	44
29.	M	7	4	8	2	8	29
30.	M	7	4	5	9	6	31
	Total	227	149	126	151	228	881

APPENDIX – C

Total Proficiency of K.S.J.M.S. School Tikuliya, Saptary

S.N.	Sex	Item A	Item B	Item C	Item D	Item E	Total
1.	F	6	5	1	2	4	18
2.	F	6	6	2	1	3	18
3.	F	5	6	1	2	3	17
4.	F	5	5	2	1	4	17
5.	M	9	5	3	2	5	24
6.	M	3	4	4	2	3	16
7.	M	4	6	3	3	4	20
8.	M	6	4	4	5	3	22
9.	M	3	3	4	1	7	18
10.	M	6	1	3	5	4	19
11.	M	4	2	4	4	4	18
12.	M	9	2	2	1	4	18
13.	F	5	3	2	3	3	16
14.	M	4	2	4	3	2	15
15.	M	7	4	5	2	10	28
16.	M	4	3	3	3	10	23
17.	M	6	2	5	1	8	22
18.	F	7	3	5	0	9	24
19.	F	7	3	1	3	4	18
20.	M	7	3	1	3	4	18
21.	M	6	3	3	2	3	17
22.	F	6	3	5	1	8	23
23.	F	4	3	7	0	10	24
24.	M	8	1	3	3	4	19
25.	M	4	3	4	1	7	19
26.	M	7	3	4	2	10	26
27.	M	7	3	7	3	7	27
28.	M	6	0	4	3	6	19
29.	F	4	1	2	1	4	12
30.	M	3	2	1	3	5	14
	Total	168	94	99	66	162	589

APPENDIX – D

Total Proficiency of B.S.R.P.H.S. School Kalyanpur, Saptary

S.N.	Sex	Item A	Item B	Item C	Item D	Item E	Total
1.	M	5	5	1	2	4	17
2.	M	7	6	0	5	4	22
3.	M	4	4	3	4	2	17
4.	F	6	6	6	3	6	27
5.	F	5	6	5	3	5	24
6.	M	5	6	4	3	5	23
7.	F	5	5	5	3	6	24
8.	F	5	3	1	1	5	15
9.	F	4	3	2	0	5	14
10.	F	5	2	0	3	4	14
11.	M	8	5	5	5	4	27
12.	M	7	5	3	6	6	27
13.	M	6	5	4	4	4	23
14.	M	6	5	3	6	4	24
15.	M	7	6	3	6	3	25
16.	M	5	3	2	7	4	21
17.	M	9	4	2	4	5	24
18.	M	8	4	3	5	7	27
19.	F	6	2	3	4	5	20
20.	F	4	3	3	3	6	19
21.	F	4	6	4	7	4	25
22.	F	6	4	2	3	4	19
23.	F	6	3	4	2	4	19
24.	F	4	2	3	2	4	15
25.	F	6	5	4	5	3	23
26.	F	4	0	3	2	4	13
27.	F	5	0	5	3	2	15
28.	F	2	8	3	2	3	18
29.	M	7	4	6	8	8	33
30.	M	8	5	4	1	6	24
	Total	169	125	96	112	136	638