

**THEB INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON SPELLING AND
GRAMMATICAL ERRORS, (SUBJECT-VERB CONCORD). A STUDY OF
LEVEL FOUR HUNDRED STUDENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
AND LITERARY STUDIES, BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO**

BY

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SPS/ 11/MEN/00016

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**INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNET ON WRITING SKILLS: SPELLING AND-
SUBJECT VERB CONCORD. A STUDY OF LEVEL FOUR STUDENTS OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES BAYERO
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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research effort, undertaken under the supervision of Prof. Bashir Muhammad Sambo, and has not been presented elsewhere for the award of a Master's degree certificate. All sources of information have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the research work for this dissertation and the subsequent preparation of this dissertation by OkwuesiNkiru Ruth (SPS/09/MEN/00016) were carried under my supervision.

Prof. Bashir Muhammad Sambo

Date

APPROVAL PAGE

This research has been read and approved by the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University, Kano as meeting the requirements of M. A. In English Language at Bayero University Kano.

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DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my parents: Mr Amos OkwuesiImahia and Mrs Blessing OkwuesiImahia. You both made me who I am today. May God's blessings continually abide with them.

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I thank God, the Almighty, for seeing me through this programme. He has been my benefactor and my protector. To him I owe all the glory and honour. To my supervisor, Prof Bashir Muhammad Sambo, words are not enough to express my sincere appreciation for his patience and understanding throughout the writing of this research work. To all the lecturers I passed through their tutorship, I will forever remain grateful for their teachings, instructions and criticisms strengthened me to face more challenges and be better in my career. To my parents and siblings, I say well done for your patience and support all through this time. Finally to all my course mates, especially my namesake Ruth I say May God Bless You all for your support and encouragement throughout the writing of this research work.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is essentially conducted to survey and find out the impact of the internet on spellings and grammatical constructions of Level Four Hundred students of the Department of English Language and Literary Studies in Bayero University Kano. Their writing skills were analysed in relation to their grammatical construction, ways in which words are spelt and the use variations in spellings when writing as a result of various internet features. The methodology employed in arriving at the data collected was based on administration of questionnaires and essay test. The students wrote essays which were analysed based on correct subject- verb concord and spelling. Data collected and analysed, revealed that students have a problem of using correct subject and verb when writing essays, they also employ the use of shortened words and wrong registers when writing. Thus the internet plays a role in the writing skills of Level Four Hundred students of Bayero University Kano, especially those in the Department of English Language and Literary Studies. From data collected and analysed, it is evident that various internet features influenced students to write more because studying on the internet is considered easier and more interesting in comparison with hard copies of text. The internet also provides ready access to diverse and relevant topics just at the click of a button. However, findings revealed that there is need to educate students on how to differentiate between singular and plural subjects and their corresponding verbs. Also there is need for students to differentiate between the use of informal words, abbreviated words and internet slangs when writing academic texts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research work investigates the impact of the internet on writing skills of Level Four Hundred students of the Department of English and Literary Studies in Bayero University, Kano. The research addresses the area of subject-verb construction and spelling. This chapter contains the background to the research, the statement of the problem, the aim and objectives of the research, the research questions. It also expatiates on the significance of the research study and the research's scope and delimitation.

1.0 Background to the Study

The introduction of modern technology into the learning process is a latest trend in educational and information technology and as such a new dimension for easy learning for students today. With the development, new instructional materials such as the computer and other technological gadgets are used to pass classroom instruction today in order to make the teaching and learning process more effective and resourceful. Electronic resources are increasingly available in Nigerian universities thereby, making it possible for students to access and make use of current and relevant literature for studies and research. This means that the computer and all its features offer new opportunities for students who write. Students use various instructional materials of which one of the most recent is the computer, to make resourceful and effective research when writing. According to Lewis(1999) computer technology provides extensive target language content, as well as with banks of information to facilitate the access to text and suggest

ways in which learners can use the computer to improve their writing skills and find answers to their own language difficulties.

The internet is one of the major and most important uses of the computer. It is used to connect millions of people from diverse countries and continents. The internet is a store house for students from all over the world, Writings and documents on politics, economy, history, religion, art, languages etc are easily accessed online. Going by this, the internet plays a role in the writing skills reproduced after the internet is consulted. Lewis(1999) further posited that the internet provides students with many opportunities for scholarly works. Day to day English learning contexts, texts and activities by providing a motivating environment where they can monitor feedback by other online users, as a result reading and studying is student centred and easier. Expectedly, their writing skill should be shaped after they have perused various writing skills online. Today, the world is referred to as a global village, as a result of information technology, which the internet is a product of. The internet offers endless possibilities of research and writing materials for students.

The four major language skills are reading, writing, listening and speaking. While all of them are interrelated, reading and writing go hand in hand. This means for writing to be successful, there must be a large knowledge on the given subject area residual in the writer. This means that knowledge can only be achieved after consulting various literatures on related subject matter. This is easily done on the internet in this contemporary age. Almost every student from junior secondary to tertiary institutions

make use of the internet and this by implication means the internet will in one way or another have an effect on their writing skill. This means the relationship between internet and writing is established since the former provides the means of reading easily to students. Writing involves discovery of meaning. The complex nature of writing attracts a good knowledge of several variables. According to Langan (2005) writing must be seen as a skill, like any other skill, driving, cooking and as such can be learned. Writing demands thinking critically and thinking critically demands a large amount of information. Borrowing from Langan's point of view it means that for writing to be efficiently mastered all power house of information (internet) must be explored. Langan (2005) further stresses that writing involves discovering a clearly stated point, providing logical support for the topic, organising and correcting supporting materials and also editing sentences to limit grammatical errors. Therefore, for writing to be considered grammatically coherent, there must be subject and verb agreement (concord).

Crystal (2001) enumerated the distinctive features of language varieties as: graphic feature, orthographic, grammatical, and lexical and discourse features. This research investigates spelling which is a feature of orthography and vocabulary use and that of concord which is a feature of grammatical feature of language. Crystal (1995) defines concord as a 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 or another. The end product of any academic writing is to provide meaning, and for meaning to be effectively communicated, the placement of subject and verb must be

conventional and correct. The subject of a sentence is the doer of the action in the sentence, the verb on the other hand tells of an action or a state of being of the subject. This means the former and the latter both have roles they play in writing and when their roles are substituted, writing becomes substandard. Thus, students that use the internet as instructional material may be influenced into changing the convention or otherwise as a result of model essays and resource materials they peruse on a regular basis. This research therefore seeks to investigate how words, texts, opinions and scholarly write-ups gotten from the internet influence the concord and spelling of Bayero University Students, especially those of Level four Hundred Students.

1.1 Statement of the problem

This research attempts to investigate the concord and spellings students use when writing essays, especially the role it plays. The internet is a major source of information for students in tertiary institutions, most especially university undergraduates. The problem of concord between subject and verb in their writing skill is also a major issue. Kamal (2010) reported that students of Bayero University Kano, have a deficient composing competence that affects meaning. This means that students mostly have a problem of coherent grammatical construction which affects the meaning they attempt to pass. This research attempt to explore the area of student internet usage and its impact on the way some words are spelt by these students.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to study the impact of the internet on students writing skills as regards to grammatical construction of subject and verb formation and the spellings of Level 400 students of Bayero University, Kano.

The objectives of this research work are:

- i) to investigate the use of internet in writing by students,
- ii) to establish the relationship and effect of the internet on spelling while writing,
- iii) identify the areas in which the internet affects students spelling and concord construction,
- iv) show based on the data gotten from subjects on the impact of the internet on students writing skills and how it influences spelling and subject verb construction,

1.3 Research Questions

The research will address the following questions:

- i) which areas do students use internet when writing?
- ii) What is the effect of the internet on students spelling while writing?
- iii) What are the areas in which internet activities impose on writing skills (albeit negatively)?
- iv) to what extent does the internet affect writing and how does it finally influence spelling and subject-verb organisation while writing?

1.4 Significance of the Research

The major significance of this research is that it will contribute to the area of grammar and address the areas in which the internet affects students writing and general spelling deviations. While other researchers have attempted to find out how the internet affects creativity by providing ready access to information, this research work is unique in the sense that, it touches the relationship and the effect of the internet in making coherent grammatical construction while writing essays. Writing has been an endeavour that students cannot escape from. The demand for students writing by their teachers and lecturers compel them to engage in data collection. Therefore, making the internet a reliable and easy access to data used when writing.

The study of the impact of the internet on writing skills is of great importance as it reveals the effectiveness or otherwise of the internet as an instructional material used by students who are also academic writers and how the internet affect spelling and concord construction of subject and verb. The research findings can also be used by other researchers as a reference material. Other researchers have attempted to analyse the impact of the internet on writing especially as it relates with helping students creativity. This research on the other hand will attempt to find out the impact of the internet on grammar especially on subject and verb. Therefore, this research is a reference material to guide the teaching and learning of variables related with subject verb organisation and spelling.

1.5 Scope and Delimitation

The research covers students of Level Four Hundred of the Department of English and Literary Studies, Bayero University Kano and limits its scope to their writing. A field work was conducted by administering questionnaires to the research subjects. The research work is not a central guide towards understanding the internet and its influence on students' writing, especially as it relates to spelling and grammar rather, the research proposes to serve as another contribution made to the field of writing.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of scholarly works on the internet and its influence on writing skills. It entails the uses of the internet, writing, concord between subject and verb and spelling. The relationship between writing and reading which is what the internet provides. This chapter analyses the work of other scholars and how it relates to writing and also how their point of views differ with this research work. Electronic resources are increasingly available in Nigerian universities thereby making it possible for students to access and use current and relevant literature for studies and research. Therefore this section covers texts and scholarly opinions on the internet and its relation with writing skills and spelling of students especially in tertiary institution.

2.1 The Internet

Crystal (2004), stated that the internet is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any central computer (or *host*) on one network to any host on any other. It developed in the 1960s in the USA as an experimental network which quickly grew to include military, federal, regional, university, business, and personal users. It is now the world's largest computer network, with over 100 million hosts connected by the year 2000, providing an increasing range of services and enabling unprecedented numbers of people to be in touch with each other

through electronic mail (*e-mail*), discussion groups, and the provision of digital ‘pages’ on any topic.

Firstly to be able to use the internet an individual must be computer literate in most case. Therefore, according to Otukenefor (2005) computer literacy refers to the level of computer knowledge of an individual and the degree to which such knowledge can be used in problem solving. Computer literacy entails the ability to be able to operate a computer and understand the language used in working with a specific system. It also involved the level to which an individual uses the computer and its related software applications to solve problems. Cyberspace has been used to capture the notion of a world of information present and possible in digital form. This suggests that the internet is a world of its own that provides accountable and reliable source of information for students and this is why this research work investigates how it affects concord and spelling, taking into consideration that most students spend a large amount of their time daily perusing the internet.

The internet has revolutionised the computer and writing world like nothing before. Philips (1986) describes the computer as “so powerful” “so deductive” “so pervasive a technology” providing both interactive and creative learning. In view of this, computers are highly needed for students study. It enables students to overcome some problems related to writing skill; this is another point which this research agrees with. The computer is so powerful a technology to be ignored; it plays a role in the outcome of students writing. This research work therefore investigates whether this ‘power’ described by

Philip (1986) affects writing negatively by influencing on subject and verb construction and the extent to which it affects their vocabulary construction through coining new words borrowing of words from the internet. All the above viewpoints agree with the point of this research because they all agree to the importance of the internet and how it cannot be ignored when it comes to the outcome of students writing. Also according to Last (1984) he agrees that the importance of the computer in the ELT classroom is innumerable. It is necessary in the teaching of students. Students all over the world use the internet for academic studies. Therefore, the internet is one of the many features of the computer. Trunk (2009) further states that, the internet is a worldwide broadcasting device, a machine for dissemination and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals without regards to geographical location. She claims that prior to the internet, most writing exercises were conducted in the classroom. This suggests that today, there is an increased amount of writing that people do outside texts and books that is significant. The modern world of online writing which students partake on in chats and on discussion threads is conversational and since human beings are naturally conversational they indulge in writing more and this influences on the final outcome of their writing skill.

Lukasiewicz (2007), observed that undergraduate students are looking for a convenient, time saving and fast response as they move from physical collections to the digital library in the various university campuses. From the above deduction, this research attempts to investigate the influence of the time spent on the internet on writing skill, especially in

the construction of subject and verb in sentences. The internet provides an easier means to reading and provides the resources for writing. According to Ewanta and Nwalo(2013) both reported that with the introduction of information and communication technology facilities in the universities, information dissemination among the university community has been tremendously enhanced. This makes it a ready tool for students, students use as instrument to consult during examinations and texts and as such it is an instructional material for gathering writing resources. It is a well-known fact that one of the major language skill is reading and to read extensively and without stress students resorts to the use of internet provided via phones, I pads and computers. Also the simple fact that the internet is comprised of a graphic interface which is most times colourful also attracts students to use it as a research tool. The internet is therefore a widespread information bank and ready infrastructure among contemporary students.

To Naughton (1999), the internet is one of the most remarkable things human beings have ever made. It harnesses the intellectual leverage which the print media gave to mankind while the .The web is therefore more of a social creation than a technical one he further stated. The internet makes literacy and reading easier through online courses and it therefore affects grammar. The internet gives students just a click away from a vast network of old and current information in every field possible. It takes up less space because a student could read e-books, online articles and research works anytime and anyplace. Also there is an issue of durability which the internet provides just by online links and websites. The internet provides medium for response from students on what

he/she might have read and this information is termed as feedback. These feedbacks on a particular online text also serve as points to other users of the internet when searching for the topic. It has also affected the productions in students writing habits. The internet provides unlimited access to different styles of writing and as such students master new writing techniques and these techniques as the case may be affects what students will produce at a later date when writing. Hence, there is no need to emphasize the fact that the internet affects writing skills. The issue of to what extent this influence happens is further analysed in the subsequent reviews in this chapter.

According to Warscheaur and Kern (2000), the internet and the worldwide web are major communication tools and networking tools. This means they provide the medium both for conveying thoughts and also for communication. The internet is therefore, particularly useful for second language acquisition. Students who use the internet to communicate with diverse people around the world are in a position of acquiring more knowledge and this is stored in the brain and is produced later when writing takes place. These thoughts are received and stored in the brain as slangs, high sounding vocabulary, abbreviations etc and reproduced subconsciously when writing and this in turn forms the basis of mixing up formal and informal words as earlier reported by Kamal (2000). Special educational programme are offered on the internet to ease up and smoothen the students' learning process. For example Network Based Language Learning as mentioned by Warschauer and Kern (2000) fosters language learning, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and also writing skills.

The internet is subdivided into various sections and almost all the sections are visited by and used by students in tertiary institutions. Crystal (2004) categorises the use of the internet into the following: electronic mail popularly called the Email, the World Wide Web also known as 'www or Cyberspace', chat sites, Virtual worlds and the like. He opined that these are the major determinants of internet language, each unique in its way and the way in which students adapt their writing to suit the agent in use.

The Electronic Mail

According to Crystal (2004), this involves the use of the internet or computer system to send or transfer messages between users of the internet. This is a major use of the internet and as such the language of the E-mail is mostly direct and straightforward. Therefore, most students who are also users of internet use the email. The diversity of the E-mail context determine rapid messaging, the features of the email transcends its many variations in audience and purpose. Dougiamas (1999) reported that "The E-mail therefore plays a role in students writing." Students that send email often, tend to use shortened words that are not academically acceptable. In the process of writing they also employ popular words "internet lingo" developed over the internet. Crystal (2004) further states that the email encourages students to summarise rather than write lengthy essays. This research agrees with this viewpoint, because most of the respondents also agree that internet usage by way of frequent email use makes a writer acclimate to brevity. Thus, while the E-mail, to begin with, is a convenient medium which gives students the

experience of authentic writing tasks, in relation to fellow-students, teachers, and native-speaker contacts, it does not encourage grammatically correct and detailed expression.

The Chat Groups

This is another way in which students use the internet. In relation to this research over 80% of the respondents agree that they are frequent internet users. Chat groups are platforms for discussion on given topics organised into groups at particular sites, in which internet users interested on the issues can participate. Users comprise of different people of diverse cultural, educational, political and religious levels. Crystal (2004) stated that the kind of language used in these groups therefore are diverse and both formal and informal. Spellings are used as deemed convenient. This is so because users of the various chat groups feel their grammatical constructions are not analysed, also, in order to enhance chat speed, they tend to coin new words and also alter spellings just the way the word sounds.

From my viewpoint and based on the data collected most users of the internet therefore inculcates these spellings when writing. Some major examples of such words usually used in chat groups are abbreviated words like 'cos' for because, 'sup' for how are you, 'aitt' and 'owite' for all right and many more. Not only is technology responsible for non-traditional encounters with the written word, it is also assisting in the growth of new words and concepts. For example, *chomper* is computer slang for loser and *cyberslacking* means surfing the net during work time. Indeed, internet technology is creating an entirely new language of its own (McCrindle, 2014).

However, despite this informal usage of words, Crystal (2001) claimed the use of language in communication technology such as chatting has led to a number of significant developments. Many elements associated with informal speech characterised mainly by abbreviations and intentional or “satiric” misspelling of words, just as they sound is a major result of these chat groups. They are not to be totally ignored as the content is not totally eradicated, rather creativity is displayed.

The Virtual Worlds

The internet offers a platform known as virtual worlds. It is used to refer to imaginary environment which people can enter to engage in text based fantasy and social interaction. Crystal (2001) further states that such platforms allow users of the internet to meet various people from any part of the world and engage in any chat topic of their choice. Such sites encourage the use of disguise by the user and as such according to an internet site, students who partake in such sites take up any character they admire in any literature work and adopt their persona. According to Wilburs(2013) virtual community is a work of few hours a day, carved into minutes and carried on from before dawn until long after dark. He described this immersion and the connection it represents as absolute and as such has the capacity of influencing writing on another platform.

These viewpoints of both Crystal (2004) and Wilburs (2013) agrees that the internet and its various units contribute to students writing skill and this they both claim are achieved via total immersion as a result of the long period of times spent on the internet.

World Wide Web

This is the major and primary function of the internet. Crystal(2004),“it is a full collection of all the computers linked to the internet which holds documents that are easily accessible through the use of a standard protocol.” The Hyper Text Transfer Protocol (HTTP). Banners (1999), creator of the World Wide Web, it is a universe of network accessible information, an embodiment of human knowledge. The World Wide Web is therefore a search tool used in searching items on the internet through the address of the host channel. Examples of such are: Google.com, Yahoo.com, Bing.com, Ask.com and a host of others. These search engines serve as sources of vital information for students. Thus, the Web is useful to this research work because it is also another area which students get reading materials from.

The web offers an unprecedented array of opportunities for both students and teachers. Whatever complaints there may have been in the past, over the lack of availability of ‘authentic materials’, there must now be a general satisfaction that so much genuine written data is readily available, with spoken data on the horizon. Another benefit is that the Web can put learners in contact with up-to-date information about a language, especially through the use of online dictionaries, usage guides, and such like – though at present these are in limited supply, with problems of access fees and copyright still awaiting solution in many instances. Web sites can provide a greater variety of materials, attractively packaged, such as newspaper articles, quizzes, exercises, self assessment tasks,

and other forms. As a publishing medium, moreover, the Web offers unlimited opportunities to students, for both individual and collaborative work.

Crystal (2001) further refers to the the Internet world as an extremely fluid one, with users exploring its possibilities of expression, introducing fresh combinations of elements, and reacting to technological developments. It seems to be in a permanent state of transition, lacking precedent, struggling for standards, and searching for direction. About the only thing that is clear is that people are unclear about what is going to happen. Naughton (1999) report which states that "The openness of the Net also applies to its future." Indicates the uniqueness and evolving nature of the internet He also agrees that the internet is not an area to be ignored as it relates with students writing because it is an area which students spend most of their time on. The protocols which govern it leave the course of its evolution open because predicting whether this new language-using situation will make use of old grammatical norms and invent fresh stylistic techniques to facilitate interaction and what the combination of this new and old language use will prove to be most effective.

Relationship between Writing and Reading Skills

The four basic skills in language are writing, reading, listening and speaking. The four skills are basically dependent on one another as they all contribute to the final reproduction which is writing. According to Crystal (2004) writing is space-bound, static and permanent. It is the result of a situation in which the writer is usually distant from the reader, and often does not know who the reader is going to be (except in a very

vague sense, as in poetry). The above statement suggests that for a student to be considered as a good writer, he/she must anticipate the audience and the rules already stated in English language and conform to it. Writing allows repeated reading and close analysis, and promotes the development of careful organization and compact expression, with often intricate sentence structure. Krashen (1984) stated that reading exposure is the primary means of developing language skills. This shows the relationship between reading and writing. The internet is a source of materials needed for studies or writing, therefore exposure to materials on the internet forms a base network for final reproduction of text by students who are also internet users.

Writing is a skill through which students' literacy can be successfully evaluated by what they reproduce in form of writing. This success depends on how well they can articulate their thoughts and ideas into making clear, concise and grammatical constructions; this is assessed through continuous assessments, assignments, and exams. To Langan (2005), Writing skill is an important part of communication. It allows for clarity of expression and message. Writing is a skill that can be learned like any other, therefore there is a need to fuel this skill in order to master it. To fuel this skill, there is a need to have constant and relevant supply of appropriate materials which are available on the internet. To Brooks and Warren (1949), writing is both the expression of thought and an instrument of thought. People express in words what they think. A good writing is therefore a function of a creative and active thought process. Eckhoff (1983) believes that the relationship between reading and writing is that of reciprocity of interdependence

.Writers that were exposed to a lot of reading produced writing with the structures and language features of their reading. So students who are exposed to extensive reading on the internet may demonstrate better use of structure (concord) than does that do not.Effective writing significantly relies upon the ability not merely to express meaning but to do it in the most effective and grammatically correct form.

From the above definitions it is obvious that writing is not only the passage of information to the reader but it is most importantly conforming to a standard of set rules and this is called concord.

Nunan (1991) observed that the National Council of Teachers of English (NTCE) believes that writing and reading are related. People who read a lot write better. Writing can also help students become better writers. For instance, at an early age children listen to the relationship of sounds to letters, this implies that the best way to help students is to make sure they have enough access to books in and outside the school. What instructional media would be easier to achieve this? No doubt, it is the internet where a student can choose varieties of articles and reading materials for their study. Kamal (2010) also agrees that reading influences writing skill it is therefore those who read frequently who are able to interpret new information better, as well as understand the significance of factual content. This suggests that constant reading facilitates effective writing skills. Students therefore resort to the internet in other to make reading easier because it offers unlimited access to various literatures that might be relevant to the student.Ntui(2009). The major role of the university as defined in the National Policy on Education (Federal Ministry of

Education, 2000) includes the provision of high level manpower for national development and this role is achieved through its programmes of teaching, learning and research. The university library occupies a significant position in every university. This is so because a good university library is one that effectively helps in galvanizing the universities' human intellectual capacity by providing adequate and timely information in support of the teaching, learning and research activity of the university. According to Uwaifo (2008), Nigerian universities are gradually joining the rest of the world in the use of information and communication technology and electronic resources in their academic and administrative activities. The amount of scientific information and the number of electronic journals on the Internet continue to increase, and researchers are increasingly making their work available online. Internet connectivity has fundamentally changed the way people work, think, and interact with others Ekwelem et al., (2009). Electronic resources have become an increasing substantial component of academic library collections over the last two decades. Electronic resources are important in libraries due to their immense benefits to students and university libraries. Electronic resources afford students the opportunities to access relevant and up-to-date information from different subject fields as suggested by Lakos and Shelly (2004).

Lakos and Shelly (2004) reported that the need to have ready access to relevant information for improving knowledge is of strategic importance to the society. The internet is a ready tool that improves this knowledge of people in the society. The true purpose of language is to reinforce the divisions between society's tribes, or at least to

make things difficult enough to understand so that every student achieves the desired aim and objective of the university. The new language of the Internet, spoken by a great number of students must be checkmated because, while the internet provides the needed materials to make the Nigerian student a world class student it also affect their vocabulary on one hand. Thus, students do not see entries on the various internet channels as listed by Crystal (2004), a lot of students do not use correct punctuations, capitalization or spelling, they have been taught how to use these aspects correctly but it is their outside communication that seems to predominate their ability to communicate.

The internet serve as both negative and positive platform for university students, most of these students are finally not able to differentiate between the informalities of the internet language seeps into their final production. They also make the mistake of mixing up American and British English in the same text. Thus, little effort is put into essential elements of spelling and grammar. Yet Crystal (2004) argues that Just because we use a restricted set of graphic characters does not stop people constructing a new social world, and some have argued that cyberspace in certain conditions permits considerable levels of sophistication.

Kamal (2010)describes academic writing by students as a communication activity. The students must conform to the discourse community and as such linguistic rules must be adhered with. These linguistic rules are grammatical rules and one of which is the subject and verb.This is an area which this research bases itself on. Brooks and Warren (1949:456) cited in Kamal (2010)that the students who write cannot learn how to write

unless he or she knows how to read. Therefore, writing involves conforming to a set of rules and also communicating clear message to the readers. These set of rules refers to grammar and communicating clearly implies meaning.

2.3 Internet and Writing Skill

The internet communicates with users by providing information they want, as such, students writing will have traces of what they collected from the internet. The impact of internet on writing skill cannot be overemphasised because contemporary students resort to the internet when faced with any assignment given at school. This implies that grammar will also be influenced either correctly or wrongly. Kamal (2010) reports an outcome of the writing of Bayero University Students in the following words “The students have a deficient composing competence that affects the meaning they want to convey to the reader, they attempt to write in the academic style, but they are not always able to achieve coherence because of the faulty use of language, which arise when they mix formal and informal registers. This report means that Bayero University students have a problem of making grammatical composition. They mix up formal and informal registers or lexicons thereby, grammatical correct composition is not guaranteed in their writings’. While Kamal (2010) did not cite the internet as a reason for the faulty constructions by students, It is relevant to the research work because the researcher attempts to investigate the cause of these errors by using the internet as a substantial variable.

Writing enables students to expand and communicate across the boundaries of space and time. It encourages abstract and analytical thought as the case may be. According to Ferris and Montgomery (1996) to ignore the computer as merely an extension of printed page is to ignore the unique nature it offers. This means that because writing involves less redundant materials and more planned subject object and well spelt vocabulary features in English. The internet is an up to date and relevant material which students always consult for their day to day academic work.

To Dougiamas, (1999) the activity of writing is a very important part of learning on the internet. The act of learning involves reading from a range of different texts relating to the concepts under study. Therefore, to help students writing skill, the internet increased use of everyday language, which Parker (1992) agrees includes development of an awareness of text structure. Structure development involves development of correct grammatical structure. The internet provides up to date information for all students, it is expected to provide relevant information and as such make students academically sound and relevant in their chosen field of study. This is not the case in recent times. In Kamal, (2010:175) “It is those who read frequently who are able to interpret new information better as well as understand the significance of factual content. The challenge for students is to sort out relevant and irrelevant information and this can only be achieved by having a good reading skill.” This means the internet enhances writing competence. The internet is a global system of interconnected computer networks used to serve millions of users worldwide. Educational material at all levels from preschool to post doctoral are

available from various website on the internet. Students tend to copy or plagiarise information from the internet. Lewis (1999) further agrees that the internet provides the learner with extensive target language usage as well as with banks of information to facilitate the access to text. This shows that writing is influenced negatively by the internet.

According to the Cambridge Pictorial Encyclopaedia “When we study English compositions, we may have one or two things in mind, we may wish to simply write clearly, correctly and effectively or we may wish to develop a natural talent and produce a natural talent and produce the vivid skilful writing which is art.” The first point relates to this research work because it addresses the issue of correctness and that is the concern of grammar. In page 308 of the above states that “If you believe you have the “ore” begin to mine it by studying good writing and great writing. The intelligent read not to copy some other man’s style but to see how words and ideas take on new paper as they pass through the filter of new minds.

From an online survey conducted by PEW Research Centre, an online research centre in of the four hundred and sixty two advanced placement and national writing project teacher agree that the internet encourages writing correctly. 96% agree that all the students work better and share their work with a wider and more varied audience. 40% agreed that the internet makes students use poor spelling and grammar, while 38% disagreed. Another area of their findings is that the “creep” of informal style into formal writing allow students creativity and personal expression. This means they

express themselves the way they deem it fit and by so doing, linguistic rules are often times misapplied. Thus, there is an increasing ambiguous line between formal and informal writing. The internet gives students reasons to always write – PEW survey, (2013) social media search engines, emails virtual words etc are very engaging for students while on the move. The informality of the written word and how students use the language is as a result of the internet, Crystal (2000) claims. Internet language according to Rumsiene, (2009) is a third medium of language next to spoken and written language, it is denoted for rapid development. He also listed a number of variant spellings as used by internet users.

Conclusively, the survey reports that students' exposure to a broader audience online provides feedback for self assessment and also enhances their writing competence. The outcome of the above survey also agrees with the viewpoint of Kamal (2010) in which he agrees that writers provide cues, which readers utilize in their effort at finding out readers hidden opinions. This he says is done by recognizing a writer's hidden style. Thus, the internet provides both formal and informal setting for improving language structure when writing. Those with digital skills or internet skills are exposed to varieties of writing patterns and the student finally decides which aspect to model his/her writing after.

To Lanham (1993), the students we teach are going to do most of their writing and much of their reading on an electronic screen; they are going to live in a world of electronic text. He calls this era “an era of composition” because new technologies like the internet are driving a greater number of people to compose with words and other media than

before and therefore must be addressed. Students will routinely learn the basics of writing wherever they write the most. To Trunk (2013), grammar's primary purpose is to remove ambiguity from communication and with more people using written communication rather than verbal; it is likely that grammar has improved significantly. This means that sometimes students of language get educational materials from news blogs, emails and any web site they find, thereby they pick up correct and incorrect grammar in the process their writing is filled with both formal and informal expressions. This is also the point behind this research, as perpetual use of technological gadgets to read has fuelled a culture of abbreviations and grammatical shortcut and this alters written grammar. This is tested on how the subject- verb concord is affected. The internet fuels students to write more, its open structure and unlimited writing sources helps students to write in a way that is concise and flexible, therefore, students are mastering more kinds of writing styles online. According to Kamal (2010) Bayero university students lack a competency with composing essay, this students reported mostly use the internet to read materials before they write. This shows the relationship between the internet and writing in Bayero University Kano.

Concord

Grammar is a branch of linguistics that deals with the principle of the use of language and specifically with the categories, functions and interrelations of words as they are used in sentences- Ismail (1999). Concord is a characteristic of grammar. It deals with agreement; this agreement is concerned with subject and predicate. Ismail (1999) further

stated that concord agreement is a change in the form of a word depending on grammatical features of other words. The agreement must be between various parts of the sentence, especially, in terms of number and person. According to Crystal (1995) “Concord is a 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.” Concord deals with the relationship between pairs of unit in such categories as number, gender and person. Agreement also involves matching the value of some grammatical category between different parts of a sentence. This agreement while it is generally classified into subject and predicate; simplified into person, number and gender.

Sentence

A sentence is a group of word expressed through a subject and a predicate. It is also a unit containing at least one independent clause. According to Matthews (1989) the sentence is the most problematic and controversial of all grammatical units. A sentence has two parts: subject and predicate. The subject is the part of the sentence about which something is told or asked. Carroll (2009), a writing student should know that subject and verbs must agree in number (singular subjects require singular verbs, plural subjects require plural verbs). Example: The seats on the bus are very comfortable. The above sentence is about the seats and as such the seats on the bus is the subject of the sentence, (seats agree with are). The subject is usually found at the beginning of the sentence, but it can also appear in other parts. The main word in the predicate is called the *verb*.

Here are a few examples:

1. The temperature

PREDICATE: dropped rapidly

VERB: dropped

2. José

PREDICATE: often visits exhibits at the natural history museum

VERB: visits

3. You

PREDICATE: Have no sense

VERB: Have

Without a verb, the predicate cannot tell or ask anything about the subject. For instance,

If the verb *dropped* is left out of the first sentence above, the resulting sentence cannot convey any clear meaning:

The predicate sheds more light on the subject and it mostly consists of a verb. A verb is an action word, it tells about the main action in the sentence. It also tells about a state of being

2.4.2 Position of the Subject

The subject is usually found at the beginning of the sentence, but it can also appear in

Other positions:

- i) SUBJECT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE:

An experienced pilot was at the controls at the time of the crash.

- ii) SUBJECT AT THE END OF THE SENTENCE:

At the controls at the time of the crash was an experienced pilot.

- iii) SUBJECT WITHIN THE SENTENCE:

At the time of the crash, an experienced pilot was at the controls.

To find the subject of a subject is to answer one or the other of these questions:

- About whom or about what is the sentence saying or asking something?
- Who or what is doing, or has done, or will do something. Examples:

The score at the end of the quarter was 12–12.

Procedure: Ask yourself: “About what is the sentence saying something?”

Answer: The subject is The score at the end of the quarter.

(The subject tells *about what* the sentence is saying something.)

Question 2: What is the subject of the following sentence?

The orchestra members tuned their instruments.

Procedure: Ask yourself: “Who did something?”

Answer: The subject is the orchestra members.

(The subject tells *who* did something.)

Question 3: What is the subject of the following?

Wait outside, please.

Procedure: Ask yourself: “Who is to wait outside?”

Answer: The subject is you (understood).

(You) wait outside, please. The subject *you* is not expressed but understood.

Question 4: What is the subject of the following?

Is the door to the basement locked?

Procedure: Ask yourself: “Is what locked?”

Answer: The subject is the door to the basement.

(The subject tells *about what* the sentence is asking something.)

Finally, according to anDougmiass.com, an online source, students usually mismatch subjects and verbs and this is due to a number of factors. Some students who are also internet users are not well grounded on grammar rules, some make the mistake of mixing informal and formal context because they use some substandard materials found on the internet.

2.5 Internet and Spelling of Words

The fact that the internet influences language cannot be overemphasized, one of the aspect this research work focuses on is vocabulary students use in writing and how new words are formed as a result of frequent use of the internet as a research tool by students. According to Dougiamass (1999) “the internet brings people from different cultural, educational, and social groups together and most importantly people that speak different mother tongues.” By coming together via different services available on the internet, words, phrases, sentence are altered just to pass meaning. Before new words are changed Mahoney(2013) opines that speakers and mostly users of the internetspread them through virtual communities and chat sites. The internet plays a major role in spelling outcome today, to Sam (2003) the internet has spilled over into so much of students writing. Facebook, Twitter etc and other channels of the internet influence writing outcome, students who use these channels are oblivious to the outcome of their writing. While texting affects writing simply by the way of employing shortening and wrongly spelt words to formal contexts, the internet plays a larger role. Some of the services of the internet have popularized some old abbreviation. The use of ‘c’ for see ‘u’ for you are

few examples. There are also cases where students ignore capitalisation rules. The internet has also led to the increased cases of repeated letters when writing, examples are ‘ I am sooooo happy’ the variation increases as the internet evolves. Furthermore, Crystal 2004 states that the case of variations in spelling is as a result of the unconscious desire for simplified spelling by students. It is difficult to find an agreed set of principle to simplify years of orthographic history. Spelling conventions, as a result of the advent of the internet in the end, come down to majority usage. Spelling according to Crystal (2004) exists to express identity and intelligibility. This desire to express identity and intelligibility led students who are also regular users of the internet to spell words, look for word families, root of words and this influences shortening, wrong spelling, intentional omission of words, mixing of American and British spelling styles, creativity etc

A survey of 2642b Advanced placement teachers and National Project teachers in America, finds that the digital age of computer is shaping student in various ways. They claim that networking sites and internet related functions generally facilitates students to spell informally. ‘Informal’ as they claim refers to the fusion of spoken words into spelling. This means spelling a word just the way it sounds. They also claim that these variant spellings do not tamper with meaning, thereby agreeing with crystal (2004).

Theoretical Framework

Crystal (2004) points out that language is on the brink of the biggest revolution ever. He opines that online language which he calls “netspeak” is not a monolithic creation but a disparate set of communication method which includes the electronic mail, chat rooms, virtual worlds and other social networking activities carried on the internet. He therefore agrees that internet language be regarded as a species of interaction. He theorizes that online use of language is not illiterate and domed down language. He states that it is a language which is fascinating by its varieties and innovation in form of variations in spelling and slangs coined from use by different online users. Online participants he claimed use all types of shortened form to combat limiting conditions of the medium of writing itself. To further clarify the impact of the internet on writing skill. He further claimed that as with traditional written expression, the medium will influence the general character of the language to be used – whether it is information, education, entertainment, edutainment, advertising, buying and selling, onscreen guides, teletext services, or any other domain. Crystal (2004), further posits that language includes written and spoken outputs and the internet marries these outputs and comes out with internet English which is increasingly used in students writing.

Finally Crystal (2004) has the following to say “There is no indication, in any of the areas I have examined, of Netspeak replacing or threatening already existing varieties. On the contrary, the arrival of new, informal, even bizarre forms of language extends the range of our sensitivity to linguistic contrasts, in speaking and writing.. Formal languages,

and other kinds of informal language, are seen in a new light, by virtue of the existence of Netspeak. Thus Crystal (2004) Netspeak theory will form the basis for the research.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the methodology that is employed in conducting this research. It includes the research procedure, the sampling procedure, subjects used, the essay, questionnaire method, the problem encountered during the research process and the variables. The choice of method depends largely on the type of the research such as: the topic of the research dissertation and the population under study. There are two major approaches in research methodology. These are the quantitative and the qualitative methods. It involves eliciting data from respondents through the questionnaire.

3.2 Research Procedure

The experimentation design is aimed at testing the reliability and validity of the methodology used for the study. The error analysis of the students' essays is considered based on grammar. As stated the study showed the influence of internet on writing skill as it affects spelling and subject-verb concord. The task of data collection will be gotten from level four hundred students of Bayero University Kano students; this is a step to authenticate the data collected. Age is not considered in the selection process because Level four hundred students of Bayero University students cut across various ages ranging from eighteen and above.

3.3 Experimental Design

In order to determine the use of the internet by undergraduate students and the influence of the internet on grammatical concord in writing, the following experimentation designs were used to gather information. The random sampling method was adopted. A random sampling is a way of choosing a particular group of people from a larger set (a population) to give information or answers to questions. Each individual is chosen entirely by chance. The questions were to:

- i) determine whether the internet impacts writing.
- ii) determine the area of the internet students use the most and its effect on writing skill
- iii) find out whether the internet contributes to spelling and grammatical errors.

A survey of the aspect of the internet used by level four hundred students of English and Literary students in Bayero University, Kano was conducted through the questionnaire method. An essay was also given to the students to test their grammatical and spelling errors.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The research focuses on Four hundred level students of both genders from the Department of English and Literary Studies in Bayero University Kano. Age specification will not be considered because the age has no impact on their writing. The study focused on both sexes. The total number of the four hundred level students are one

hundred and fourteen. One third of the number of the students were tested. Therefore a questionnaire as well as an essay test was administered to thirty eight students. This is because thirty eight of these students constituted one third percent of the entire level four hundred student. These thirty eight students were randomly selected by skipping some rows in the class. Only thirty three of the respondents returned the questionnaire. The reason for using both tests was to ascertain the aspect of the internet and the writing skill of the students. The questionnaire was intended to determine the level to which level four hundred students use the internet when faced with writing. The test was administered to the subjects to test their grammatical placements of subject and verbs in sentences and the spelling of words used in writing essays and how the internet affect students vocabulary. The students conducted searches on the internet before writing short essays which were marked by the researcher. The questionnaires contained structured responses. This is in order to get the needed responses before administering the test. This structured part will elicit response in form of suggestions and it will enable the researcher curtail divergent responses envisaged and to achieve the desired results.

3.4 Instrument

In collecting data for the study, the researcher chose the instrument of essay writing as guided by the title of the research topic in order to have some samples of the students writing which later in chapter four would be analysed to assess the levels at which the internet influences writing skills and correct grammatical formation. Questionnaires were also administered as another instrument of data collection.

3.5 The Questionnaire Method

Questionnaires were administered to students of the Department of English and Literary Studies. The tertiary institution and the department were chosen because they deal with language and the students in the department deal with language and make use of the internet and they also write essays on a regular basis for various tests, assignment and examinations. The questionnaire was designed to extract information from the students in line with this research work.

3.5.1 Responses

Two types of techniques were employed:

- i) structured Responses
- ii) Open ended questions

The structured responses are in form of suggestions to enable the researcher streamline irrelevant responses to the research. This is also to enable the researcher determine the reactions to the questions and ask questions relevant to the research questions. The open ended questions on the other hand are framed to give respondents free atmosphere to express their opinion on the impact of the internet on writing skill and the effect it has on spelling and grammar.

3.6 The Essay Test

In both secondary and tertiary education, essays are used as testing methods to judge the mastery and level of understanding or comprehension of topics, materials or situation. Essay writing demands knowledge of the subject matter. Students are expected to explain or assess a topic in form of an essay. Academic essay is done in a logical, factual and correct grammatical order. A good essay should be well structured and coherent. This research therefore adopted the instrument of the essay writing to test the writing skill of level Four Hundred Students of the Department of English Language and Literary studies. The resultant effect was to test the students' placement of subject and verb in sentences and also the way words are spelt. The researcher marked the essays, placing emphasis on grammatical errors, specifically in terms of subject and verb placement. Topics were therefore presented to the respondents and each of them was asked to write on any of the topic selected by him or her.

3.7 Variables

The research variables include:

- i) internet and its influence on writing skills in general
- ii) good grammatical construction
- iii) spelling

The essays were analysed from the grammatical point of view, especially in line with subject-verb placement and spelling of words. All these are the variables which

influenced the outcome of data gotten and the final outcome of the research. Finally, the research methodology adopted was considered suitable and geared towards eliciting the necessary response.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter the analysis of the collected data carried out through various method of data collection such as the essay, the questionnaire are presented. This is in relation with the use of the internet on writing skills by students of Bayero University Kano. Data collected were analysed on the basis of the research questions, the use of the internet and the effect of the internet on the grammatical concord and vocabulary spelling in English among the selected students of Bayero University Kano.

In presenting the data for this study, the following procedures were used to explain the ways the results relates with the internet and the effect on students writing skills.

4.2 Data Presentation

The students' essays were analysed and the main focus was on grammatical cohesion between subject and verb, spelling was also considered. The students wrote essays on three topics presented by the researcher which are:

- i) A society is defined by the quality of education of educated elites it can boast of. Discuss
- ii) Education plays a major role in curbing violence. Discuss
- iii) The impact of social networking on students academic performance.

Few subject-verb errors were noted. There was also wrong spelling as a result of the use of the internet by students. The impact of this is that the internet plays a major role in altering wrong spelling. On the other hand subject-verb errors were not as a result of the internet because most materials on the internet are grammatically correct. The data gotten are presented in a tabular form. The data collected under each section of the questionnaire are tabulated and the scores shown and after each table the researcher analyses the outcome. The questions cut across the various uses of the internet. Some of the options were guided and as such the students just ticked as it applied to them. The questions are aimed at ascertaining the level of their contact with the internet and the instrument they use to consult the internet. This research seeks to test the influence of the internet on the students writing skills; therefore ten questions were tailored to achieve this aim. Respondents were asked how often they used the internet as an academic research tool and how useful the internet serves their purpose.

Finally, some questions attempted to test whether students get direct materials for their intended research by using the internet and how social sites contributed to the way they structure their grammar. The last question is open and it allows respondents to give a remark on how they think the internet influence their general writing skills, especially in the area of grammar. All the information are summarised in tabular forms. The tables are designed in sections and tailored towards related questions and answers by the respondents. The second data collection method is essay test. Three essay topics were given to the respondents and they were asked to choose any question of their choice.

They were instructed to write the test completely in anonymity. They were assured that their names would not be included in the final research work. The subjects were advised to be factual in writing the essay question chosen. The sample of the questions and some responses are attached in the appendix page. The analysis and presentation commenced with the grammatical analysis of the essays the student wrote. The students wrote an essay on any one of the topics given by the researcher. Most of the spelling of words in most of the essay was accurate because of the opportunity given to the students to use the internet and proof read their works after writing before the texts were collected. Though there were instances of wrongly shortened word and usage of informal vocabulary which can be attributed to the constant use of various internet related features as earlier enumerated by crystal (2001).

In terms of concord, the researcher discovered some mistakes in placement if subject and verb during sentence construction. The table below shows the total number of essays written and number of respondents.

TABLE 4.2.1 tabular summary of essay analysed by respondents

Number of respondents	Topic
8	“A society is defined by the quality of educated elites it can boast of.” Discuss
09	“Education plays a major role in curbing violence.” Discuss

16	The impact of social networking on student's academic performance.
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The above table shows the number of respondents that attempted each question out of the three questions presented to the respondents. Most of the respondents wrote on the influence of social networking on students academic skills. From a total of thirty eight respondents that the essay questions and the questionnaire were shared to, only thirty three (33) wrote the essay

Table 2: below shows the summary of the errors and corrections made in the text

Words used by the respondents	Correction	Wrong tense	Correction	Wrong language use	Correction
Accoding	According	processes	Process	Demselve	Themselves
Subconcionsly	Subconsciously	Deal	Deals	Can be used to be sent	Can be sent
		Uses	Use		
Total	8				
Overall total correction (%)	100%				

From the above table a total of 8 errors were recorded, which represents 11.76% of the text. The errors indicate that the internet affects spelling while it places no negative

impact on the subject verb arrangement. The respondent has problem of using the present simple form to express habitual action. The respondent's essay analysis shows a problem of subject verb agreement and the use of wrong spelling.

Table 3 Analysis of respondents essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong Tenses	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections	Internet influenced words
Becoz	Because			get a means	Settle a problem	Dia for there
Lyf	Life			Brainaics	Brilliant	Lyf for life
						Razz; term used for a violent person
Odas	Others			A early age	An early age	Odas for others
Total	10					
Overall total correction (%)	100%					

The above essay analysis contains a total of 12 errors were noted. This constitutes 26.4% of the total essay. There was no subject-verb error. The errors were mostly related with major abbreviation noticed on most internet chat sites. This agrees with Crystal (2004) theory of ‘netspeak’ which opines that netspeak or internet language is characterised by shortened words and also by colourful use of language like the writer’s use of the word ‘razz’ for a violent person. This word is both a pidgin word and a popular word used on the internet among Nigerian online chat users.

Table 4 Analysis of respondent essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong subject-Verb	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Sys	System	How education influenced	How education influences	Been in talks (informal use)	Debated or explained
&	And				
D	The				
Total error in the text	5				
Overall Total Correction	100%				

The above table contains a total of 10% errors. the above essay was also submitted by another respondent and this act proves that students while they employ the internet to get materials they also lift directly and as a result any online article, write up or material that does not conform with correct grammatical convention are also use like that. Thus this point agrees also with the theoretical framework adopted for this research.

Table5 analysis of respondent essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong subject-verb use	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Btw	Between	Customs and tradition deeply affect	Customs and tradition deeply affects	Teck	Sophisticated/civilised
Lyf	Life			Go hand in hand	Go together
Individual	Individuals				
Total error in the text	6				
Overall Total Correction	100%				

The total percentage error in the above text is 1%. Some of the errors were wrong spelling of word and use of informal contexts to explain the writer's point. Another error noted was the use of internet shortened words in formal context. The respondent also made a mistake of using a noun subject where a plural word was more correct.

Table 6 Analysis of respondent essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong subject-verb	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Frnd	Friend			Spot on	Clear
Stress	Stress	The educated elites is	The educated elites Are	Dey	They
School	School				
Pray	Prey				
doy	They				
Total	9				
Overall total correction (%)	100%				

The above table contains 13.5% error of the text. There is use of wrong spelling, which changes the word class as a whole. Also there is use of internet associated language which Crystal (2004) argued, does not change or affect meaning. The use of the phrase ‘spot on’ which means ‘correct’ or something right also indicates use of internet language.

Table 7 Analysis of respondent essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong Subject-verb	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Violenc	Violent				
Vill	Vile	Eccentric youths likes violence	Eccentric youths like violence	Acting anyhow	Misbehaving
Puge	Purge	They Does	They do		
Rinder	Render	These is	These are		
		Nigeria youths were always violence fill	Nigerian Youths Are always violent		
Total	10				
Overall total correction (%)	100%				

The above table contains a total of 11 errors which makes up 24% of the essay. The major errors recorded in this essay are with concord. From the above analysis, the respondent has problem with matching the correct verb the subject. Another issue is the composing competence which is deficient. The essay was poorly written. Thus going by

this essay it proves that some students of Bayero University, Kano students lack correct composing competence as reported by Kamal (2010).

Table 8 Analysis of respondents essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong Tenses	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Registered	Registered			stuffs	Issues
Wia	Where			glam	Sophisticated
inconsquential	Inconsequen tial				
Total errors 5					

The table shows the respondent employ the use of words used on the internet. This is as a result of constant use of internet related features. For example the word glam is mostly used to say a lady is sophisticated, beautiful and well articulated.

Table 9 Analysis of respondents essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong Tenses	Corrections	Wrong WordChoice	Corrections
Dem	Them	This are d problems	These are the problems		
D	The				
De	They				
Total Error	4				

The table contains 6% error and it was as a result of shortened and altered word choice as used by most internet users today. Crystal (2004) attributed this factor to the mixture of spoken language with written language. He attested that internet language is mostly as a result of people typing their thoughts and not differentiating the language of speech and that of written text.

Table 10 Analysis of respondent essay

Words used by the respondents	Corrections	Wrong Tenses	Corrections	Wrong Word Choice	Corrections
Wit	With	Affect	affects	Wham bam	Instantly
Info	Information			This students	These students
		They claims	It claimed	To heavily influenced	To be heavily influenced
Dem	Them	Play	Played	The ones	Those
Total Errors	10				
Overall Corection	100%				

The above essay contains only 4% percentage error. There is an indication of direct lifting from the internet. This shows that the material is correct in terms of subject verb agreement and the usage of abbreviation which in most cases always seem subconscious and while it does not affect meaning as stated by Crystal (2011) the word does not belong to any grammatical class and cannot be regarded as grammatically correct. The text also contains the use of ‘dem’ for ‘them’ as noted in most of the respondent’s essay.

Table 11: Tabular analysis of students response to questionnaire

Questions	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Do you consult the internet?	30	03	0
The internet provides readily available materials for students.	22	8	3
Do you belong to a social network group?	30	03	0
When searching for materials online students copy directly instead of changing the words?	21	10	02
Students spend more time on the internet reading than they do reading books on hard copies.	28	05	0
Students employ words and popular slangs used on the internet when writing.	20	10	03
When consulting works on the internet do you check for spelling errors?	28	05	0
Do you always consider the agreement between subject and verb before citing an internet material?	10	20	03
The internet helps students improve in general writing skills	28	5	0

From the above analysis, it shows that 90.9% of the students consult the internet, while 6.1% do not use the internet. This shows that almost all the students of the Department of English and Literary Studies consult the internet. Also 66.7% consult the internet almost on a daily basis while 30% use it on weekly basis. The rest 4.3% use the internet once in a month. In total, all the students use the internet for academic purposes. Also 90.9%

belong to a social network and 9.0% do not belong to any social site. 63.6% agree that the internet provide readily available materials for assignments, test and general work done in school. 21.6% claimed they do not copy directly from the internet,79% claimed they copy from the internet and 5.71% were undecided. Almost all the students agree that the internet provides ready materials for their writing. More number of students copy directly from the internet. This means they write mostly what they see on the internet without any change done. 60.60% agreed that the internet affects writing skills, 30% disagreed and 9.4% were undecided.

One of the area in which the students agree that internet affect writing skill is on the issue of spelling, with 80% agreeing and 20% disagreeing. Slangs are another aspect of grammar which 57.1% agreed are used by students, 28.6% disagreed that internet slangs are applied when writing their essays and general academic prose.Pertaining to concord, as shown in the table 28.6% of the students disagreed that they consider agreement between subject and verb before using a research done online, 57% claim they do not consider agreement. This means most of the respondents find any relevant material and cite it without proof reading for grammatical mistakes.From the above deductions, it is clear that effective use of the internet by students enhances writing skills. They also agreed that most of the materials found on the internet present correct details and relevant to their various writing needs.

Table 12: further analysis of students' response to the questionnaire

Questions	Agreed	Disagreed	Undecided
Spellings mistakes and word choice used when writing has no bearing with the internet	20	5	8
The internet provides varied registers related to particular topics.	30	3	0
The internet plays a major role in shortening of words	31	2	0
Students always adhere to grammar rules after consulting the internet to write	28	2	3
The internet hinders originality in writing because most students lift directly from internet sources.	30	3	0
Works pasted on the internet do not always conform with subject verb rule	14	2	17

From the responses in the above table, 60.6% of the respondents agreed that spelling mistakes and choice of words used by students has no bearing with the internet, 12.2% disagreed. This imply that the internet plays a major role in the vocabulary choice of most students while writing academic essays. Also 90.9% agreed that the internet provides most of the words they employ while writing. 9.0% disagreed. According to Crystal (2004) users of the internet are faced daily with use of shortened or summarise languages. According to him this is mostly as a result of the limit placed by popular chat sites on status feeds. Individuals are therefore forced to resort to shortening and

abbreviations of words. From the essays analysed, it was observed that these shortened words are spelt just the way they sound. On this basis, 96.9% of the respondents agree that the internet is a major cause of spelling errors due to their daily encounter with the internet. also, the need to type fast and to type words the way they sound make contribute to the spelling mistakes recorded. 2.0% of the respondents were undecided on the issue.

Crystal (2004) argued that the internet does not threaten language. He claimed that this intricate misuse of grammatical structure is rather colourful. He further stated that users of the internet rather look for meaning instead of addressing grammatical faults and mistakes. From the analysis gotten from the questionnaire, 84.8% of the respondents do not necessarily use an internet source because it conforms to grammar rules. 6.15% of the students claimed they use materials online mostly if it is considered relevant to their area of concentration or topic under discourse. This shows that the internet influence rather negatively in terms of spelling and plays little or no impact on the grammatical aspect related with subject and verb placement.. On the question if works pasted on the internet conform to the rules of subject verb agreement. 42.5% agreed while 6.1% disagreed, 56.10% were undecided. This implies that most students do not necessarily look for subject-verb agreement before using materials or sources from the internet. Instead, most students use internet source in as much as it is related to their topic of interest.

Table 13: The influence of the internet on vocabulary choice and total summary of errors

Total respondents essay affected by wrong spelling	33
Total number of respondents that applied wrong abbreviated words used on the internet.	20
total number of respondents that employed the use of internet slangs	25

From the above table, all respondents made mistakes of employing wrong spelling of words. This points to the fact that most students have a problem of spelling words wrongly. 57.1% of respondents abbreviated words wrongly. From this research work, it is obvious that those that made such mistakes tried to use abbreviations to summarise. These set of respondents employed these words because they subconsciously assumed that everyone is used to such words..57.1% of respondents employed the use of some popular internet slangs like: SPOT ON, WOW, COZ , DIA. DEM etc and most of the respondents that used these slangs used them more than twice in their write-up to show they are used to internet slang words.

Table 1 4. Major spelling variations commonly used by the respondents which are influenced by regular internet usage.

Dia, eir	Their
D	The
Coz, bcoz, becoz	Because
Lyf	Life
<u>eir</u> , dere	Their
Teck,	Correct, standard, sophisticated
&	And
Ping	Send a message, chat

Most of the words on the left column were used by the students to substitute words on the right. Most of these words are used the way the students used them on different internet featured sites. From the student writing, most of the students applied these errors without knowing because they are used to using the internet and the words attached. These words were also cited by Baron (2008), Rumsiene (2209) and Crystal (2004) as examples of shortened words or misspelt words on the internet or ‘internet lingo’

4.3 Findings of the Research

Below are the findings of the research:

- 1) Most students do not check the grammatical content of online materials before citing or using them.
- 2) The internet affects spelling variations and spelling mistakes to a very large extent.
- 3) Writing is affected in terms of spelling, however meaning is retained.
- 4) The internet does not encourage creativity of thought as most of the students either copy directly or plagiarize.
- 5) Bayero University students have a problem of making coherent grammatical constructions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

Writing is one of the four language skills; the others are reading, listening and speaking. This research focused on the influence of the internet on writing skills, especially on vocabulary, spelling and subject-verb agreement in writing. Writing which is one of the major task oriented aspect of the four language skills is that way because, one is expected to bring the knowledge other skills to play. The success of the other three is usually measured by the effectiveness or otherwise of writing skill. This is mostly measured in terms of meaning production or grammatical competence. This research work is restive on the latter with regards to subject and verb which is just an aspect.

5.1 Chapter Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the entire study. It gives the summary of the students writing and the influence of the internet on writing. The state of the grammatical concord especially in terms of subject and verb is also given. The conclusions derived from the findings of the study and the resultant effect. The incidence of concord errors in writing and in speech of the users of English language in Nigeria is a matter of great concern, especially when it comes to students. Also the world today is called a global village. Information is gotten online just by the stroke of a button. Thus by implication does the internet lead wrong grammatical construction instead of enhancing writing

skills? This research was borne from the need to correct students' grammatical errors after observing how the use of the internet influenced writing

The first chapter dwelled on the impact of the internet on writing skill. The internet use in research purpose is a trend in learning process especially at the university level. Significantly, the use of the internet in our educational system is very important; its impact is seen in all aspects of writing. Materials are gotten from the internet easily and used by academicians. The second chapter reviewed related literature. Alongside this, the concept of internet, writing, subject, object and verb were all defined by various scholars. Examples of subject verb constructions in the correct order were presented; also errors and wrong placements were shown. This was shown to explain the works of other scholars and how they directly and indirectly contributed to writing in general. In chapter three, the methodology adopted was analysed, the design, sampling procedure, subject and the questionnaire method, the responses analysis and the variables were all discussed. The research work was carried out by issuing questionnaires to students and by administering essay test on the randomly selected students from the department of English and literary studies in Bayero University Kano. The instrument of data validation was also stipulated

Chapter four contained the data presentation and the analysis. The analysis was detailed; the researcher presented the students essay scripts and marked them. Errors were also tabulated and presented in percentage that is according to the sample selected. The questionnaire responses were all analysed and recorded. Generally the research data was

presented in order of collection and all properly analysed. The last chapter i.e. chapter five contains detailed explanation of the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 Conclusion

From the research carried out, it is imperative to note that the use of the internet influences negatively to a large extent. It is a tool employed at almost all levels of education, especially at the tertiary level. The internet is supposed to help in improving writing competence and skill. Students reproduce what they assimilate and from the analysis of the research, it shows that most information gathered from the internet though are relevant do not necessarily improve their writing competence. Thus from the responses of respondents, it shows that the students contribute mostly to the faulty grammatical mistakes they make. Most students have no patience to learn and master the subject-verb rule, they also copy directly sometimes without checking for grammatical coherence

Also most of the students employ the use of informal chat room and internet language when speaking because they feel meaning is still passed. The internet influence the alterations in spelling of words, words are shortened or abbreviated by students and this most of them do subconsciously. Also new words are generated through chat platforms and while most of these words are not standardised in terms of dictionary contexts they are used to make writing colourful. Therefore the internet influences spelling negatively by bringing about the use of words that might be termed 'non-academic'. On the positive

side, the internet help to build more words, today there are many words that have been incorporated into Standard English dictionaries and these are words gotten from the internet and developed earlier on as slangs.

The use of language in communication technologies such as Internet chatting, has led to a number of significant linguistic developments (Crystal, 2004). Recently, the local linguistic scene has also witnessed the proliferation of written language produced in a medium where traditional conventions are not followed. With regard to the relationship between spelling ability and Internet chatting, the result of this research illustrate a trend which disfavours those who chat every day, as illustrated by the relatively low mean scores obtained by these participants. Notwithstanding this pattern, the results also indicate that a definite conclusion cannot be drawn, and that consequently, further studies investigating other variables, such as the relationship between the age when students are first exposed to chatting and spelling performance should ensue, to obtain a better understanding.

Finally, this research was conducted to find the problem associated with students writing skills especially, with their grammatical agreement between subject and verb. The researcher hopes that it has answered some of the questions and further research will be done to nail the issue of concord in writing as a whole. This research has shown that the influence of the internet on spelling and concord is an issue that cannot be neglected because the internet is a revolution that has come to stay, especially as a channel for communication and source of research and writing. It is also an endeavour that students

will keep indulging in till time to come, thus they both go together; the former will always play a gigantic role in the outcome of the latter. As many contemporary online contributors noted, the internet has really impacted on the way students produce writing by either ignoring spellings or spelling words just as they sound and this fact they attributed to social networking sites and groups.

5.3 Recommendations

In this section, recommendations are offered that would help in improving the influence of the internet on writing skill. The recommendations are based on the findings of the research and they include the following:

- 1) investigating the tangibility of materials found on the internet. this involves investigating the academic tangibility of texts and materials used by students as reference materials.
- 2) establishment of the differences between singular and plural verbs and their relative subjects. This is because most students from the findings recorded mix up their tenses and verbs
- 3) areas in which the internet enhances originality and creativity in writing. This is because some of the texts written by the students bore similarities, which mean they lifted directly instead of analysing the materials and drawing their own conclusions

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APPENDIX A

Department of English and Literary Studies,
Bayero University Kano,
P.M.B 3011

Dear Respondent,

I am a post graduate student of Department of English and Literary studies currently conducting a research titled “**The Influence of Internet on writing Skills: subject-verb placement and spelling**” you are selected as one of the respondent for this study. You are therefore kindly requested to respond to this questionnaire which is designed to elicit relevant information about the study .Also, be assured that all information will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Yours faithfully

OkwuesiNkiru Ruth

SPS/11/MEN/00016

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

SECTION A: Demographics of the respondents

1. Name of Institution _____
2. Faculty _____
3. Department _____
4. Level _____

SECTION B: USE OF THE INTERNET

- 1) Do you consult the internet? YES NO

2. If yes how often do you consult the internet daily? A) Weekly B) monthly

C) Only when necessary D) No idea

- 3) What do you use to access the internet?

A) Laptop B) phone C) Internet Cafe D) Others

- 4) Which area of the internet do you use the most?

A. Search engines B) social media C) Others Please Specify.....

5) Do you belong to a social network site? YES NO

6) If yes, tick the one you belong to A) Facebook B) BBM C) Badoo D) Wechat E) WhatsApp F) Others

7) When searching for research material on the internet which search engine do you use?
.....

8) Do you believe the internet provides readily available material for students study? A) YES B) NO

9) When searching for materials online do you copy directly or write it in your own words? A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

10) Do you think students spend more time on the internet reading than they do reading books on hard copies? A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

SECTION C: INTERNET AND WRITING SKILL

11) The internet affects grammatical construction of sentences.

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

12) Students employ words and popular slangs used on the internet when writing. A)

YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

13) When consulting works on the internet do you check for spelling errors?

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

14) Works on the internet are generally regarded as non-academic

A) Agree B) Disagree C) Undecided

15) Do you always adhere to grammatical rules when writing?

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

16) Do you always consider the agreement between subject and verb before citing an internet material? A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

17) Works pasted on the internet do not always conform to subject Verb rule.

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

18) The internet helps students to improve grammar in writing skills

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

19) Grammatical correctness has no role to play in writing

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

20) Do you think the internet plays a major role in shortening words? A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

21) The use of the internet regularly influences spelling of words and choice of vocabulary negatively A) YES B) NO c) UNDECIDED

22) Does the internet provide varied word choice for students and make them more skilful in their vocabulary development?

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

23) What are the contemporary chatrooms slangs you know? List at least five and state their meaning

.....
.....
.....

24) Student choice of vocabulary has nothing to do with the internet.

A) YES B) NO C) UNDECIDED

SECTION D: RESPONDENT OPINION

25) The internet has really influenced my writing skills, state how and why

.....
.....
.....
.....

Please attempt the question below after writing the essay question

26) Did you consult the internet while answering the essay question below

A) YES B) NO

APPENDIX D

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Please attempt any ONE from the questions below. You are free to use the internet as reference source. You are advised to write in total confidence as names or any form of identification will not be published in the final research.

- 1. Analyse the effects of social networking on academic performance.**
- 2. “Every society is defined by the quality of its educated elite.” Discuss**
- 3. “Education plays a role in curbing violence.” Discuss**