



Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
University of Babylon College of Education for Human Sciences
Department of English

Concord Identification in Academic Writing

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in English Language

By: Norhan Munathel AbdulSattar

Supervised by: Prof. Dr. Qasim Obayes Al_Azzawi

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{ بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ }

{ قَالُوا سُبْحٰنَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا اِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا ۗ اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ الْعَلِیْمُ الْحَكِیْمُ } سورة البقرة (32)

"Glory to Thee, of knowledge We have none, save what Thou Hast taught us: In truth it is Thou Who art perfect in knowledge and wisdom."

Dedication

To Those Who Supported me Throughout my Education

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Abstract

The research paper discusses the concord identification in Academic Writing. It consists of four sections: the first section is an introduction about the subject and section two is a theoretical background which mentions the definitions of concord, concord types, cases in which concord occurs and cases in which it does not in academic writing. Section three is an empirical work and finally section four is a conclusion that summarizes the research paper.

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Section one

Introduction

Academic writing is the style of writing utilized in high school and college courses (Alice Oshima /Ann Hogue, 2007).

The academic writing should be coherent, in other words, It should be a logical progression of ideas. It requires a careful planning to make the reader follows the ideas easily.

Concord is a state of agreement

The agreement of ideas and may be in the contents of the sentence itself (Emelie Johansson , 2012).

English grammar and our understanding of how English sentences can be utilized to successfully represent our thoughts, ideas, feelings, and other concepts depend on the concept of concord. In order to create a complete linguistic construction.

1.1The Problem of The Study

The most common mistake or problems the student faced that , "there is a difficulty in writing a coherent paragraph" "The absence of concord between the verb and the subject when using the present simple tense", "The absence of concord between the verb and the subject in the subject being a singular noun" ends with "s"," The absence of concord between the verb and the subject in the subject being a plural noun don't end with "s" "The difficulties in dealing with collective nouns “.

This paper tries to answer the following question:

1_ What are the main types of concord that are mostly used in academic writing?

2_ What are the principles that used to achieve concord in academic writing?

3_ How does notional concord differ from other types of Concord?

1.2 The Aims of The Study

1_ Identify the main types of concord that mostly used.

2_ Clarify the principles of concord that are used in academic writing.

3_ Clarify and exemplify the idea of notional concord.

1.3 Hypothesis of The Study

1_ Grammatical and notional concord are the mostly used types of concord.

2_ Number, gender, person are the main principles that used to achieve concord.

3_ Notional concord depends on the idea of number.

1.4 The Procedures of The Study

To achieve the aims of this study and test its hypotheses, the following procedures are followed: _

1-Giving a broad view of the concept of concord and Academic writing

2-An analysis of an essay published by the University of Murcia.

3-Give a conclusion to what was previously discussed

1.5 The Limitations of The Study

The study is limited to providing a general overview of the idea of concord and explaining how to achieve it in Academic Writing, An analysis of an essay published by the University of Murcia and a conclusion.

1.6 The Value of The Study

It is hopeful that this study will be of a good value in an important aspect of language , which is writing , Teachers, students can make use of the findings of this study.

Section two

Theoretical Background

2.1 Definition of concord

The language to be effective, it is important to be familiar with its grammatical rules and structures so before we discuss what is meant by concord, we should first understand the importance of the term "sentence," which is used in every communication.

A sentence is a set of words that expresses a complete thought and includes at least one subject and one verb.

Academic writing should be formal, we should avoid using slang or contractions. Additionally, we must be careful to set the sentence components and arrange them in a specific way.

The word Concord came from Middle English; Anglo-French *concorde*, 14th century. Stems from Latin *concordia*. From “concor,” meaning “of one mind” Con- means “together”, cord meaning “heart”. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023)

Concord: _ a state of agreement

Concord: _ grammatical agreement.

Concord: _ agreement by stipulation, compact, or covenant. (Collins English Dictionary)

In linguistics, agreement or concord happens when a word changes form based on the other words it is related to. It is an example of inflection and

typically entails making the value of a certain grammatical category (such as gender or person) "agree" with different words or parts of the phrase.

Concord require the grammatical agreement among the many components of speech in a sentence.

Our sentences cannot make sense without concord. The relationships between each word in a sentence must be accurate; else, the sentence will not seem natural .

The use of accurate grammatical concord reflects the efficient use of semantics.

Contextualization is essential for semantic knowledge. Semantics conceptually pertains to the meanings of words.

Chomsky (2014) asserts that the semantic component of a phrase relates a structure produced by the syntactic component when tying semantics to grammatical concords. in this way, improper grammatical usage obstructs meaning and communication.

In traditional grammar , concord is seen as subject-verb agreement, which mean in order for a sentence to make sense, the verb and the subject must hold grammatical agreement with one another. So it indicates that if the subject or the phrase is singular, only the singular verb will be used, if the subject is plural, only the plural verb will be.

Dada is of the view that, “concord should be the basic idea or fundamental principle behind a sentence”. This is to say that the rules of concord are important and basic to the mastery of the English language.(Adigun, Eleojo, 2022).

Linh notes that “abiding by the rules of grammar in sentences is what makes the language interesting and gives it a flow.” This suggests that certain principles exist for proper communication, be it spoken or written. Ignoring such principles, however, results in errors, some of which are of concord types.

There are many rules and principles in the English language. One of them is the use of concords, where the subject and the verb must agree grammatically, is one of these rules. According to Woods (2010, 125). "The verb is believed to be the centre of the sentence and it has to take the same grammatical form as its controller, the subject".

2.2 Types of concord in English language: _

1_ Grammatical concord: _ it is the easiest type of subject- verb agreement to grasp, and it is always the one we learn first.

The first requirement of subject-verb agreement is that the verb and the subject must agree in number.

The most common used of concord is as a noun, the second one is as a verb which mean to arrange by agreement" and its rare usage.

¹ -Singular subjects take singular verbs

¹ The student is smart.

² -Plural subjects take plural verbs

¹ The students are smart.

So here we depend on the number which the subject indicates to choose a suitable verb.

³ -Contrary to this rule, if we have a phrase that starts with "there" the true subject typically comes after the verb.

¹ If the phrase starts with "there is" the subject will be singular

-There is a problem with setting priorities.

² If the phrase starts with "there are" the subject will be plural

-There are many factors affecting teacher retention.

So here the verb will decide the subject that should be used.

⁴ -If the subject acts as a noun phrase it counts as a singular

-The change in male attitudes is most obvious in industry.

⁵ -Finite and non_finite clause count as singular

¹ Smoking cigarettes is dangerous to their health.

² How they got there does not concern us.

⁶ -Adverbs and prepositional phrases that serve as subjects are considered singular

¹ In February is the celebration.

² Slowly does it!

⁷ -If there is a phrase between the subject and the verb we do not care about it and choose the verb depending on the subject number

¹ The student, as well as the committee members, is excited.

² Strategies that the teacher uses to encourage classroom participation include using small groups and clarifying expectations.

⁸ -Multiple subjects "two words connected by and" take a plural verb

-The doctoral student and the committee members write everyday.

There are exceptions to this rule.

-When both subjects are the same person or thing, take singular verb

¹ The singer and songwriter is Adam Thorn.

Here we use a singular verb because they are the same person or thing not a separate one.

⁹ -When two objects are consistently associated in people's brains, to the extent that when they are mention together, we perceive them as a single entity, take a singular verb

-The hammar and the sickle was flying from a tall flag pole.

¹⁰ -Collective nouns such a "family" "government " can take either a singular or plural verb depending on the context.

When collective nouns are treated as a singular unit , we use the singular verb. But if the emphasis is on the individuals in the group, we use plural verb. (Bryan Garner)

¹ The committee agrees on the quality of the writing.

² The committee participate in various volunteer activities in their private lives.

Both of them are acceptable.

¹¹ -Single words end with "s" like (news,mathematics) even they have a plural form, they have a singular meaning and only take singular verbs

-The news is being broadcast by all major TV stations.

It is wrong to say (The news are being broadcast by all major TV stations) because not every word that ends with "s" should be plural.

¹² -The words "no", 'each', or 'every' take a singular verb

-No one is right.

-Each of the participants was willing to be recorded.

-Every man, woman and child needs love.

¹³ -Indefinite subjects end with body, one, thing take a singular verb

- Nobody is honest.

- Everyone is responsible of his manner.

-Nothing is useful like reading

¹⁴ -Non count nouns take a singular verb

Education is the key to success.

2_ proximity concord: it is a technique that depends on the noun that is closest to the verb to decide whether we use a singular or plural verb.

It is known as an "agreement by proximity, attraction, and blind agreement". As noted In A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language (1985) . (Weiner, 2022)

The conjunctions "either/or" and "neither/nor" are frequently used in sentences to indicate proximity between two subjects.

So how do we deal with them?

¹ -If the two subjects are singular they take a singular verb.

- "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all" Helen Keller.

-Neither our families nor our friends know what we need.

² -If there is a singular and a plural subjects here we will use the principle of proximity

-Either the bag or the books are important items for the student.

-Neither the singer nor the composers are good.

In these sentences we depend on the closest noun to the verb, which is plural and use "are".

³ -If these sentences were reversed, with the singular subject coming second , the verb would adopt the singular form.

-Either the books or the bag is important item for the student.

3_ Notional concord : _ It describes the agreement of pronouns with their antecedent nouns and the agreement of verbs with their subjects based on meaning rather than grammatical form,

Known as a synesis (Brenner, 2012).

We depend on the idea of number not the actual present of the grammatical marker.

¹ - In British English, collective nouns are treated as a notionally plural.

-The government have broken all their promises.

² -Indefinite pronouns are significantly impacted by notional agreement and frequently take singular verbs, but plural pronouns

-Everyone is required to show their identification.

³ -Nouns that are written in the plural form but actually refer to singular things. This occurs frequently with words that refer to areas of study like politics, civics, or economics.

-Simple economics determines how much something costs.

⁴ -Amounts shown as unit quantities in an abstract form take singular verb

-Three plus five makes eight.

-Six miles to walk is too far.

⁵ -Plural names, titles, and quotations take singular verbs if the reference is to a Single thing (a country, a newspaper).

-That the United States does not respect international law.

-The New York Times was, as usual, dryly factual.

We don't frequently pay attention to notional agreement because it comes naturally to us and is a part of our everyday speech patterns. In addition, it's more typical in British English than American English and is not a defined rule in itself.

2.3 Other types of concord

1-Subject _complement concord

It means that there is an agreement between the subject and the complement (in number not in person). (Quirk,1973:181)

¹ He was instructor

² They are instructors.

So here we chose the suitable auxiliary verb and the suitable adjectives depend on the subject.

We have an equivalence type of concord which is between the object and the object complement

¹ He thinks these men the best actors.

Since the object denotes the plural, its complement becomes plural.

2-Subject _object concord

Type of concord when it is necessary for the subject to agree with the object in number, person and gender. (Quirk,1973,181)

It occurs when we have a reflexive pronoun.

-They should give themselves another chance.

3-pronoun concord

It means that the pronoun will agree with its antecedents in number and gender, and also requires the selection of the correct person. Especially for third person (Quirk,1973,181)

Most noun phrases (the student, the war) are third person, and are replaced by a third person pronoun (they/he/it).

-Each day will bring its own challenges

The student spent the weekend writing her paper occurs when we have a reflexive pronoun.

4- Concord of person

It is the agreement between the subject and verb depends on the person indicated by subject

In Standard English, one may say " They are , I am, but not "I are" or "they am". This is because English grammar requires that the verb and its subject agree in person.

It can be first, second, third person, the choice of verb or the verb or auxiliary verb will depend on it. (Quirk,1973,180)

¹ We proud of ourselves.

² The student need to believe in himself more.

2.4 Concord with tense

In tenses we notice the occurrence of the agreement between the subject and the verb, but also we have some tenses which the verb does not change its form.

¹ The concord appears clearly when we use the present tense in all cases (simple, continuous, perfect), as changes occur in the form of the verb depending on the subject used.

-the woman loves flowers.

-Women love flowers.

-People were following their dream.

-New York have more than 1000 cities.

We note here that the auxiliary verbs change according to the subject, especially the verb be.

²- we remark the agreement in past continuous. Especially in verb be like the previous tense.

-They were always quarrelling.

-The town was changing quickly.

³- In the past simple there was no agreement between the subject and the verb, all the kinds of subject will take the same form of the verb.

-People paid much more to make cell phone calls in the past.

-Everyone became obsessed in technology.

-People became obsessed with technology.

⁴- in the past perfect there was no agreement between the subject and the verb.

-He had written three books and he was working on another one.

-Up until that moment, people had never believed in astrology.

Whether the subject is indicate the singular or plural , the verb keeps in the same form.

⁵- In future tenses there is no agreement between the subject and the verb

-They will learn a new language.

-People will take advantage of this situation.

⁶- If the sentence contains a modal verb such as (should, can, could), the base form of the verb must come after the modal, regardless of the number and person of the subject.

-People must be quiet In the library.

-You ought to study more if you want to pass the test.

-She would never give up on her dreams.

Section three

Data Analysis

3.1 Data

Analysis is a form of literary criticism in which the structure of a piece of writing is analyzed.

We will analyze an essay published by the University of Murcia. to see if what was previously explained has been applied or not.

"Why you should not smoking"

I am sure that you know that smoking harms your body. Then why do you continue smoking? Maybe you do it because you have not really become conscious about all the effects that smoking has. There are a lot of reasons why you should not smoke. Some of them are that smoking affects your health, that you spend a lot of money on cigarettes, and that when you smoke you are not respecting people around you.

The first reason why you should not smoke is that smoking affects your health. If you smoke, your physical condition will be negatively affected, so It will be very difficult for you to succeed In sports. Also, smoking produces lethal diseases like cancer and reduces the length and quality of your life. Maybe you do not notice all the physical effects of smoking immediately, but you surely will be sorry one day.

The second reason why you should not smoke is because of all the money that you spend on it. Maybe you start smoking only when someone offers you a cigarette, but there will be a day when you will feel the need of a

cigarette. By this time, you will pay whatever to smoke, and each time you will smoke more, so you will spend more money. All the money you would spend on cigars could have be spent in something better, do not you think.

The last reason why you should not smoke is out of respect for the people around you. When you smoke, you not only harm yourself, but you also harm all the people around you. So you must. not be selfish; you should at least avoid smoking in front of people who do not smoke. Also, many people do not like the cigarette's smell, so they will not enjoy your company. Would you like that? I have said just some reasons of why you should not smoke, so I hope that now those of you who smoke are able to think a little and try to make a smart decision.

In addition to all the reasons I have said, I would like you to think about how much you love yourself and then whether you want to continue harming yourself. Think also about all the people who love you, like your family who does not want to see you suffering or sick. If you decide to continue smoking, what a pity. But if you decide to stop smoking, congratulations! Remember that "If you can dream it, you can do it.

3.2 The analysis

In this essay, the most important condition of concord has been achieved, which is the harmony and compatibility that prevail in the essay, as the essay, from beginning to end, talks about the issue of smoking and its harms with a series of interconnected sentences in terms of meaning.

In this essay, many principles of concord were achieved.

Grammatical concord is the most frequently used in the essay, being used 43 times because it is the easiest type of concord.

the word "smoking" treated as a singular thing as in "smoking has," "smoking harms your body".

Collective nouns are treated as plural, depending on the meaning; the writer means by "family" the family member. In this phrase, "like your family, who do not want to see you suffer,".

We find that the use of concord with tenses is very common, especially with the simple present tense in general and with the auxiliary verb "be".

Where the simple present was used 31 times. simple present with "be" 6 times

And we have one case of achieving concord with the auxiliary verb in the present continuous tense. "You are not showing respect".

We also note the use of the present perfect tense; note how the pronoun "I" took "have" in "I have said".

The agreement in both number and person, plays an important role in communicating the true meaning.

3.3 The Results of the Test

| Concord Type | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Grammatical concord | 43 | 55% |
| Notional concord | 6 | 7% |
| Principal of proximity | 0 | 0% |
| Pronoun concord | 11 | 15% |
| Other types of concord | 18 | 22% |
| Lack of concord | 22 | 27% |

Grammatical concord was used in a large proportion in this essay because it is the most common and easiest type of concord, as its conditions are easily achieved, unlike the principle of proximity, which was never mentioned in the essay because it needs the presence of (either, or _ neither,nor) which are used sparingly in the language.

And we have the third type of concord, nominal concord, which was used in some sentences because it deals with the idea of the number and not the actual present of the grammatical marker. we use it to refer to a group of people or things, and we use it when we talked about "family".

And in concord with number, pronoun, and person, this also occupies a large part, because it explains the sentences that have been written.

We notice here that we have some cases in which concord was not achieved because the sentences were written in the future tense or using modal verbs.

We often use the future simple while speaking in essays because we direct the speech to the future, the intention, and the things that will happen.

Section Four

Conclusion

Concord is a general concept, and it must exist in academic writing due to the importance and accuracy of academic writing.

Concord is one of the most important elements of the language; it plays a major role in conveying the true meaning. The agreement of the elements of the sentence with each other makes the language more effective and powerful for influence, which is what we need in academic writing. As the harmony of the part affects the harmony of the whole.

Concord means harmony with regard to ideas and grammatical elements, and this is what we notice in the components of sentences in academic writing, where the verb agrees with the subject used or with the close noun of the verb according to proximity concord.

Concord depends on number, person, and gender, which makes it more accurate to describe things to give them their true meaning.

Without specifying the gender or number, the reader will not be able to understand what has been written, and without a sequence of ideas, the reader will feel bored because there is no idea or meaning to what has been written.

Academic writing should be clear and well-structured because it talks about important topics and contains information for readers. Therefore, concord must be present in each sentence, whether it is an essay or research. Because Concord plays a major role in academic writing.

Despite the ease of the idea of concord, there are some difficulties that the writer may face, which are represented in the meaning that the name describes, such as the word "news, family". which is treated as a singular, plural noun, and how to deal with them, and we have cases of lack of concord that occur in some tenses.

Without harmony of ideas and vocabulary in my research, you will not be able to understand me and know what I want to say. And therein lies the importance of concord; it is what makes the writing more accurate and easier to understand for the reader.

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