

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Investigating Problems Pertaining to Concord as Encountered by the Second Year Students in the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Aden University.

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Dedicationn

**To My Mother
And In Memory Of My Father**

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 PREFACE

This study tries to investigate the problems pertaining to concord (agreement) as being faced by Second Year Students in the Department of English Language, Faculty of Education, Aden University. Generally speaking, there is great uncertainty and confusion about English concord between subject and verb. This confusion is a consequence of various conflicting principles of English concord. This study intends to explore the various problems of English concord and to find out why students tend to violate English concord rules.

1.2 Theoretical Background and Statement of the Problem

Concord embraces a formal agreement of the person, number, gender or tense (or more than one of these combined) between two or more grammatical items in a sentence.

Quirk et al (1985:755) define concord (also termed 'agreement') as "the relationship between two grammatical units such that one of them displays a particular feature (*e.g. plurality*) that accords with displayed or (semantically implicit) feature in the other".

The normally observed rule is very simple:

A singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb.

Concord has three concepts which are illustrated as follows:

Grammatical Concord is a phenomenon in which word forms co-occurring in a clause are sensitive to each other. Inflected forms often agree in their value of number, gender, person or case.

Notional Concord is the concord of verbs with their subjects and of pronouns with their antecedent nouns on the basis of meaning rather than form.

Proximity concept, also termed '*attraction*', denotes agreement of the verb with a closely preceding noun phrase in preference to agreement with the head of the noun phrase that functions as subject.

There are different areas of concord such as concord of number, person, gender, and case. The most important type of concord in English is concord of number.

An important rule of English Language is that the verb must agree with subject in number and person. But sometimes even advanced learners violate some of the concord rules. Quirk et al (1985:757) maintain that English speakers are often rather uncertain about the rules of concord.

Difficulties of English Concord emanate from the conflicting concepts of grammatical concord, notional concord, and proximity concord. Problems of concord occur with notional subject and with coordinate subject. Pronoun agreement problems occur when a pronoun

refers back to singular collective nouns, coordinate subjects or compound indefinite pronouns. Other difficulties over subject verb concord result from singular nouns ending in the –s of the plural inflection such as *measles*, *physics*, *etc.* These nouns are often misused in connection with concord rules.

The problem is, then, this: the students manifest failure to operate concord rules that regulate syntactic constructions in English. The job of this dissertation is to investigate this important aspect of English syntax.

1.3 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that EFL learners have little knowledge of the grammatical area of concord and that their achievements in this respect is low.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This research may be considered a modest contribution towards solving some controversial issues in English concord facing students of English language in Yemeni Faculties. Teachers who are teaching English know that concord is a great problem for their students. This study has been chosen to provide an in-depth investigation of English concord problems. It tries to explore why these problems arise in the first place, and to find out why students violate the various rules of English concord.

1.5 The Aims of Study:

This study aims at:

1. examining the problems that arise as a consequence of the relation between syntactic and semantic properties of subjects and that determine the verb number (ie singular or plural).
2. investigating the problems resulting from the conflicting concepts of Grammatical Concord, Notional Concord, and Proximity Concord.
3. exploring how the proximity or '*attraction*' phenomenon influences determining the verb number.
4. exploring why students violate the various rules of concord.
5. enhancing the students' awareness of the English Concord problems and assisting those students by providing some solutions and recommendations to overcome such problems.
6. presenting some findings that will potentially be of considerable pedagogical benefits to instructors and course-designers.

1.6 The Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is conducted in the Department of English, Faculty of Education / Aden University. It is primarily concerned with the concord problems in the writings of the second-

year students. These problems can be traced back to conflicting concord principles and to various concord areas such as number, person, etc.

Needless to say that the students' writings contain various problems of different grammatical types but the researcher's focus is just on the violation of English concord rules.

1.7 Methods of Collecting Data

This study employs two instruments for collecting the data required for the research topic. These are (i) a Questionnaire and (ii) Grammar Testing Tasks.

Seliger and Shohamy (1990:176) argue that tests are generally used to collect data about the subjects' ability and knowledge of the language areas such as vocabulary, grammar, reading, etc. They also maintain that the handiness of questionnaire often comes from the fact that (i) questionnaires are self administered, (ii) they can offer some reliable information if they are properly administered and (iii) they can be used to collect data on sensitive issues.

This study, therefore, relies totally on the data gathered together through questionnaire designed for grammar instructors in some Yemeni Faculties such as the Faculty of Education in Aden, the Faculty of Education in Saber, and the Faculty of Education in Tor Al-Baha, and on the data gathered through ten grammar testing tasks submitted to (45) Second Year Students in Department of English, Faculty of Education /Aden. The Questionnaire and the Grammar Testing Tasks would be discussed in Chapter Three.

1.8 The Structure of the Study

This study falls into four chapters. Chapter One includes among the other things, the theoretical background of the research problem, the aims of the study, the instruments of collecting data, the structure of the study and the research questions. Chapter Two deals with the specific literature pertaining to the area of study. It shows a distinction that is made between the two terms 'concord' and 'agreement'. Besides discussing the various rules of subject-verb concord, it explores the various areas covered by concord. Chapter Three provides a clear description of the instruments used to collect the data related to the topic. It also provides a detailed analysis and interpretation of the data gathered. Chapter Four summarizes the main findings of this study and offers recommendations that may be adopted to overcome specific problems pertaining to the topic.

1.9 The Research Questions:

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What causes the confusion about subject-verb concord?
2. Does the process of subject-verb concord appear to be governed by the syntactic properties or the semantic properties of the subject?
3. Why do students violate the obvious rule of English (ie *a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb*)?
4. How do students determine the verb number (ie singular or plural) when the subject is a collective noun which is grammatically singular and notionally plural?
5. Does the conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord cause concord problems in English?
6. Do concord problems arise as a consequence of the proximity principle?
7. Why do pronoun agreement problems occur in English?
8. What particular areas of English concord cause concord problems?

Chapter Two

Literature Review

1. Introductory Word

This Chapter intends to survey the relevant literature pertaining to the concord phenomenon. It consists of two sections. The first section deals with different views showing the distinction between the two terms of ‘agreement’ and ‘concord’. The second is a theoretical survey accounting for the concord phenomenon proper. This section discusses various rules of subject – verb concord and explores the different areas that concord may cover.

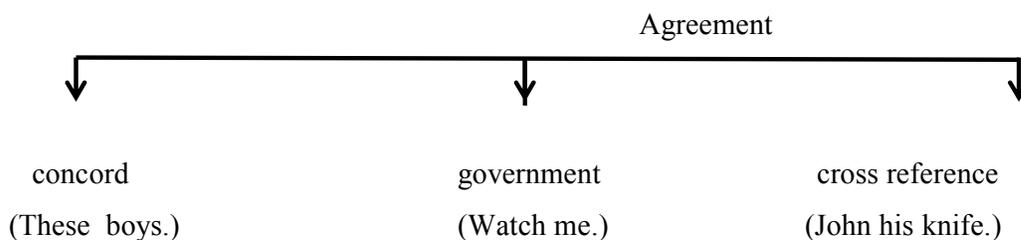
The two terms of concord or agreement have led to considerable confusion. Some linguists treat them as synonymous. For example, Moravcsik (1978: 323) alternates agreement with concord in a survey of the topic. Similarly, Lyons (1962: 239) Speaks of concord or agreement .Anderson (1992:103) suggests this fluid use of the terms, ‘... just what is agreement as it is often called ... concord?’ Other linguists, following Bloomfield (1933: 191 – 194), have treated agreement as the superordinate term. According to Bloomfield (1933: 191), in a rough way without real boundaries, we can distinguish three general types of agreement, they are:

concord or congruence: e.g.: agreement of modifiers within the noun phrase and agreement of predicate verbs.

government: as in, *I know* as Compared with *watch me*. This type of selection is called *government*.

cross – reference: the subclass contains an actual mention of the forms with which they are joined.

In non – Standard English, this type of agreement occurs in such form: *John his knife*. Here the form ‘*his knife*’ actually mentions a male possessor ‘*John*’. In graphic terms, these details of agreement may be, thus, classified:



(Agreement and related terms in Bloomfield.)

Bloomfield treats Concord as a type of agreement. In contrast to Bloomfield’s position, and development from it, Greenberg (1978: 50) treats concord as a wider term:

" It would be useful then to distinguish the wider notion of concord elements from agreement, the latter being a subtype in which the choice of alternative concord elements depends on the class to which the stem of governing item belongs whether marked by an affix or not".

For Greenberg matching in case within the noun phrase would count as an instance of concord. When matching is determined by a lexical feature, it would be agreement. Greenberg cites *gender* here.

The discrepancy between Bloomfield's definition and that of Greenberg is obvious. For Bloomfield concord is a subset of agreement, while for Greenberg agreement is a subset of concord. However, the criteria on which the relation is based differ too. Bloomfield and several followers distinguish things according to domain (ie the syntactic environment in which agreement occurs): for them, concord exists in a 'smaller' domain, than cross – reference. For Greenberg the distinction is based on the type of the features involved: 'agreement' involves lexical features, while 'concord' can involve matching of other features. Domain is not a defining feature here. Indeed Greenberg (1978:75-76) later talks of three types of concord phenomenon and distinguishes between agreement within the NP, predicate agreement and anaphoric uses.

There are other ways in which the terms sound to be different. Lehmann (1982: 206, 249 – 250) also distinguishes agreement from concord. ' 'Agreement' is the core syntactic phenomenon' and the term ' 'concord' is the use for instances of semantic compatibility ', certain classifier noun relations, for instance.

Radford (2004) recognises that traditional grammar draws a distinction between concord and agreement. Concord is traditionally viewed as an operation whereby number - gender features on a noun are copied onto determiners or adjectives which modify it inside a particular nominal expression, whereas agreement is seen as an operation whereby person – number features on a nominal are copied onto a verb which lies outside the nominal expression. A further difference between the two is that agreement (but not concord) results in a verb assigning nominative case if it agrees with a finite verb, and accusative case if it agrees with a transitive verb. (Subject – agreement being visible in a language like English, but object agreement being not so).

Since there is no distinction being consistently drawn between the two terms, other linguists alternately use both terms 'agreement' and 'concord'.

In this study, the researcher has opted for the term 'concord' as embraced by Greenberg and Crystal, rather than 'agreement' since the term makes currency in recent grammar books.

However, wherever the term ‘agreement’ occurs in the course of this study, it alternates with that of ‘concord’.

Sources often define '**concord**' in terms of grammatical relationships:

Zandvoort (1966:255) defines concord as ‘a formal agreement of person, number, gender or tense (or more than one of these combined) between two or more parts of a sentence’.

Lyons (1968:239) suggests that ‘the constituents of a particular syntactic construction are said to agree or be in concord with respect to such features as gender, number, case, person, etc’.

Quirk et al (1985:755) define concord as ‘the relationship between two grammatical elements such that if one of them contains a particular feature (e.g. *plurality*) then the other also has to have that feature’.

Steele (1978: 610) speaks of the term ‘agreement’ as referring to ‘some systematic covariance between a semantic or formal property of one element and a formal property of another’.

Crystal (1991:71) defines concord as a ‘term used in grammatical theory to refer to a formal relationship between elements, whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another. This formal correspondence was traditionally referred to as agreement’.

Leech and Svartvik (2002: 273) state that ‘grammatical concord means that certain grammatical items agree with each other. Concord is therefore also called agreement’.

Principles Of concord:

There is great uncertainty and confusion in contemporary English about concord between subject and verb. It is not surprising that Quirk et al (1985:757) say that ‘English speakers are rather uncertain about the rules of concord ...’. In fact the confusion and uncertainty is a result of the conflict between the principle of grammatical concord and the other two principles (ie the principle of notional concord and proximity principle). These principles are illustrated as follows :

Grammatical Concord Principle

Grammatical concord is a phenomenon in which word forms co- occurring in a clause are sensitive to each other. Inflected forms often agree in their value of number, gender, person, or case. Quirk et al (1985:757) argue that ‘when the verb matches its subject in number, this may be called the principle of grammatical concord’. Strictly speaking grammatical concord is concord of forms. The basic grammatical rule of concord according to Leech and Svartvik (2002:274) is that ‘*singular subject + singular verb, and plural subject+ plural verb*’. Biber et al (2002:232) state that the rule of subject – verb concord is that in finite clauses, the verb

phrase in a clause agrees with the subject in terms of number (singular or plural) and person (first, second and third person).

Notional Concord Principle

Notional Concord is the concord of verbs with their subjects and of pronouns with their antecedent nouns on the basis of meaning rather than form. If you think of ‘committee’ as one entity, then

The committee has its agenda.

If you think of ‘committee’ as representing several people, then

The committee have their agenda.

Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:215) argue that notional concord sometimes conflicts with grammatical concord concerning the idea of number rather than the presence of the grammatical marker for that idea. The difference between grammatical and notional number can be illustrated as follows: First there are words such as ‘*pants*’ and ‘*binoculars*’ that are grammatically plural, e.g.:

The pants are too big.

Yet these are notionally singular, that is, designating only one entity. On the other hand, there are words such as ‘*flock*’ and ‘*colony*’ that are grammatically singular, e.g.:

The flock is out grazing.

but notionally plural since they refer to a group of many things.

Biber et al (2002:235) argue that competing with rule of grammatical concord, there is a tendency to follow notional concord, which is to let the notion of singular / plural in the subject determines the form of the subject. Lyons, however, (1968:241:242) recognises that it would be incorrect, for example, to maintain that the person and number of the subject is determined by the person and number of the verb. It would be equally incorrect to say that neither the subject nor the verb determines the other, but that both the subject and the verb manifest a category which pertains the construction of which they are members. However, Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968:76) maintain that concord is determined by the subject in surface structure.

Many concord problems arise as a result of this conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord. Notional concord is used:

A. with citation forms and titles of books. For example:

‘Boys’ is a plural form.

The Canterbury Tales is / are interesting.

B. with plural titles, e.g.:

Alexis Kivi's 'Seven Brothers' is a finish classic.

C. with names of countries:

The United States has endorsed Britain's show of force.

The Netherlands is a parliamentary democracy.

D. with coordinate subjects referring to a single entity, for example:

The stars and stripes was on his forearm.

Old friend and former colleague, Bob Granger, has passed away.

E. with collective nouns. For example:

The committee have/has discussed the proposal.

F. with singular phrases of number. For example:

A Large number of people have complained.

The majority of miners is on strike:

G. with amount expressions:

Fifteen pounds is not enough.

Ten miles is about 16 kilometers.

All the allotted 45 minutes was consumed by Mrs. Thatcher talking away, with Charm, determination and conviction, about everything except Northern Ireland.

The Principle of Proximity:

Quirk et al (1985:757) define the proximity principle as follows:

"The principle of proximity, also termed 'attraction', denotes agreement of the verb with a closely preceding noun phrase in preference to agreement with the head of the noun phrase that functions as subject". For example:

No one except his own supporters agree with him.

The proximity principle may lead to plural concord even with indefinite pronouns such as *each, everybody, anybody, and nobody* which are otherwise singular. For example:

Nobody, not even the teachers, were listening.

Every member of that vast crowd of 50.000 people were pleased to see him.

However, most people would probably regard these sentences ungrammatical, because they contradict grammatical concord. For such cases the term 'attraction' is often used to signal that the proximity principle overrules grammatical concord. Leech and Svartvik (2002:275) argue that we use *attraction* or *proximity* because the last noun attracts a certain form. Biber et al (2002:236) state that 'the principle of proximity sometimes plays a part in

subject - verb agreement'. The verb agrees with the closest (pro)noun even if that (pro)noun is not the head of the subject noun phrase, e.g.:

Do you think any of them are bad?

In addition, Leech and Svartvik (2002:275) argue that attraction clearly works together with notional concord in many cases. The head noun (*number, variety, majority, etc*) conveys the idea of plural. Here is an illustrative example:

A variety of analytic methods have been used.

Attraction by the nearest noun phrase also takes place with:

a. there is / was etc.

There is famine, poverty, corruption and total misgovernment.

b- disjunct coordinate subject.

Either he or his friends are to blame for this.

Quirk et al (1985:756) add that proximity concord effects a change from singular to plural more often than the reverse perhaps because the plural is the form that is morphologically unmarked.

2.1 Grammatical Concord.

According to Anderson (1988), Lapointe (1988), Corbett (1994), Pollard and Sag (1994), grammatical concord can be seen as an interplay of morphological, syntactic and semantic aspects. Morphologically, concord is a relation between syntactic constituents by virtue of the fact that the word forms they consist of bear similar information either inherently or by means of morphological affixation (inflection). Lehmann (1982) says semantically agreements serves to keep record of discourse referents: only constituents that relate to the same referent may overtly agree with each other.

Generally, concord relations are found among the following elements:

a. NP internally: determiner and noun, e.g.: *A boy.*

b. Attribute and noun: possessor and possessed noun, e.g.: *These cars. This car.*

c. Predicate and its argument: subject – verb, e.g.: *She writes.*

d. A pronoun or an anaphor and their antecedents, e.g.: *She hurts herself.*

The element which determines concord is called *controller*. The element whose form is determined by concord is called *target*. The syntactic environment in which concord occurs is the *domain* of concord. The concord features of *controller* and *target* do not have to be identical, but they must be compatible with each other. For instance in:

The girl is beautiful.

The copular 'is' is the target element of the NP (*the girl*).

The categories that may appear in these relations are gender (feminine, masculine and neuter), number which has the values of (singular and plural) and person (first, second and third).

2.1.1 Areas of Grammatical Concord.

Grammatical concord means that certain grammatical items agree with each other. Areas of grammatical concord would be classified as follows: concord of number, gender concord, person concord, pronoun concord and case concord.

2.1.2 Concord of Number:

Concord of number is a very important area of concord. Most of problematic concord situations are caused within this area of concord. Concord of number may be illustrated as follows:

2.1.3 Subject – Verb Concord:

Concord depends on the subject and not on the complement except for the existential subject *'there'*. For instance:

The material is composed of 300 samples.

* *The material are composed of 300 samples.*

An important rule of the English language is that the verb must agree in number and person. Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:214) recognise that the most important type of concord in English is concord of third person number between subject and verb.

Palmer (1974:15) details the main rule of concord:

'The main rule of concord is a third person singular subject; the finite verb takes the – e (s) in the present tense. With other types of subject the verb has no ending in the present tense. The main exception {to be} has special 1st, 2nd and 3rd person singular forms, (am, are, is) and also shows concord with past tense (was, were).'

Quirk et al (1985:149) explain that 'there is person concord and number concord between the subject of the clause and the finite verb phrase'. Concord is particularly clear with the present tense of *'Be'*. However, with most full verbs, concord is restricted to a contrast between the 3rd person singular and other person plural number. There is no subject – verb concord with modal auxiliaries, non – finite verbs, imperatives or the subjunctive.

Quirk et al (1985:150) recognise that those verbs phrases introduced by modal auxiliaries are normally classified as indicative, e.g.:

The man is walking.

but it is worth pointing out that not only semantically, but syntactically they resemble the imperative and the subjunctive. Modal auxiliaries lack person and number contrast and also

(to some extent) tense contrast. It follows from the lack of person and number contrast that they have no overt concord with the subject.

Quirk et al (1985:155) also state that ‘there are two forms of the subjunctive traditionally called the present and past subjunctive’. The major categories of present subjunctive are the mandative and the formulaic subjunctive. These are realised like imperatives, by the base form of the verb. Consequently where the clause has a plural subject, there is normally no difference between the indicative and subjunctive forms, except with ‘Be’ where the subjunctive form ‘Be’ is distinct from the indicative forms (am, is and are). The subjunctive is distinctive only in the third singular. Consider these instances:

Our decision is that the school remain closed. (Subjunctive).

Our decision is that the school remains closed. (Indicative).

Our decision is that the schools remain closed. (No difference between indicative and subjunctive).

The past subjunctive is called the ‘were – subjunctive’; since it survives as a distinguishable form only in the past tense of ‘Be’. Quirk et al (1985:158) speak of this subjunctive as hypothetical or unreal in meaning. This subjunctive is limited to the one form ‘were’ and thus breaks the concord rule of indicative ‘Be’ in the 1st and 3rd person singular or the past tense. However, ‘were’ cannot be replaced by ‘was’, it is also normal in Standard English to use ‘were’ in the fixed phrase, ‘If I were you’. A similar use of ‘were’ occasionally occurs in indirect questions, e.g.:

It was difficult to tell whether the language were Semitic or Indo – European.

The mandative subjunctive occurs in subordinate clauses, and consists of the base form of the verb only. Thus, there is a lack of the regular concord of indicative mode between subject and finite verb. For instance:

His sole requirement is / was that the system work.

The committee proposes that Mr. Day be elected.

The formulaic, like mandative, consists of the base form of the verb. It is used in certain set of expressions in independent clauses. For instance:

God save Queen.

Heaven forbid that I should let my parents suffer.

There are other contexts in which the present subjunctive can be used in subordinate clauses such as:

a) Clauses of Condition and Concession:

If that be the official view, it cannot be accepted.

Even if that be the official view, it cannot be accepted.

b) Clauses of Condition or negative purpose introduced by ‘lest’:

The president must reject this proposal lest it cause strike and violence.

2.1.4 Concord with nouns ending in - s.

According to Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:6), ‘when you use the singular form of a count noun as the subject of a verb, you use a singular verb. When you use the plural form of a count noun as the subject, you use a plural verb’. For instance:

A dog likes to eat far more meat than a human being .

Bigger dogs cost more.

When the subject of the sentence is a non-count noun, a singular form of the verb is used, e.g.:

Fear begins to creep slowly into their hearts.

Electricity is potentially dangerous.

Although the rules for subject -verb concord are easy to state, in practice they are not always easy to apply. Difficulties arise because singular and plural can be understood in terms of form or in terms of meaning. Quirk et al (1985:299-300) say that ‘invariable nouns ending in – s take singular verbs’:

a. ‘News’ is always singular, e.g.:

Here is the news from BBC.

b. Nouns ending in — ics denoting subjects, sciences, etc are usually invariable and are treated as singular, e.g.:

Mathematics is the science of quantities.

Some of these nouns can be either singular or plural, when such words can denote both one’s knowledge of the subject and particular application of results, e.g.:

Politics is said to be the art of impossible. (The science of government).

His politics are rather conservative. (Politics views).

c. Names of certain diseases ending in — s are usually treated as singular (but some speakers also accept a plural version), e.g.: *Measles, numps, vickets shingles.*

d. The names of some games ending in — s have singular concord, e.g. *billiards, draughts, dominoes and ninepines.* For instance:

Billiards is becoming very popular as a spectators sport.

Quirk et al (1985:300-301) recognise that some pluria tantrum (ie nouns that, in a given sense, occur only in the plural) end in — s, for instance, *ashes, arrears,* etc; whereas others have no plural marking, e.g. ‘people’. They have plural concord.

Summation plurals denote tools; instruments and articles of two parts which are joined together require plural concord. They differ from ordinary plural nouns in that they are not generally thought of as denoting plural number, e.g.:

Both pair of scissors need sharpening.

How much are those binoculars.

2.1.5 Concord with plurals not ending in — s.

Biber et al (2002:233) maintain that zero plurals, like ‘*sheep*’, do not change between singular and plural. These forms appear to break the concord rule but in fact not, e.g.:

a. *The sheep is infected by ingesting molluse.*

b. *In its grassy center, the dark – wooded sheep were grazing.*

The different forms of the verb ‘*Be*’ used in ‘a’ and ‘b’ obey the concord rule. ‘*Sheep*’ in sentence ‘a’ is singular and ‘*sheep*’ in sentence ‘b’ is plural.

2.1.6 Concord with Coordinate Subjects:

Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:216) recognise that ‘when a subject consists of two or more noun phrases or clauses coordinated by ‘*and*’, a distinction has to be made between coordination and coordinative apposition’. Coordination comprises cases that correspond to fuller coordinate forms. A plural verb is used even if each conjoin is singular, e.g.:

Tom and Alice are ready.

Two noun phrases could have either a singular or a plural verb depending on the meaning, e.g.:

His brother and the subsequent editor of his collected paper {was - were} with him at his death bed.

Singular (*was*) is used if the ‘*brother*’ and the ‘*editor*’ are the same person and plural (*were*) if they are two different people. Biber et al (2002:233) say that, ‘however, there are occasional exceptions to this rule, where we find singular concord; the subject refers to something that can be viewed as a single entity’. For instance:

The anxiety and anger is then taken away and suddenly erupts in family environment.

In this example ‘*anxiety and anger*’ are merged into a single state.

Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:217) give some rules that may clarify the use of singular or plural verbs. They are as follows:

a. Plural concord is required in a syndetic coordination (ie without a coordinator), e.g.:

His camera, his radio, his money, was confiscated by the customs officials.

b. Subject noun phrases may be linked by quasi – coordinator (ie prepositions such as ‘*as well as, along with*’ similar to coordinators). Grammatical concord requires a singular verb if the first noun phrase is singular, e.g.:

The captain, as well as the other players, was tired.

c. If an adverbial is presented in the second noun phrase the construction is considered parenthetical (ie a word, a phrase or a clause inserted into passage to which it is not grammatically essential) and grammatical concord requires the verb to agree in number with the first noun phrase, e.g.:

The ambassador – and perhaps his wife too – is likely to be present.

The same grammatical rule applies when the second phrase is negative, linked or not linked by ‘*and*’, though here the principle of notional concord reinforces the use of a singular verb, e.g.:

The prime minister (and) not the monarch decides government policy.

d. A singular non – count head with coordinate premodifiers may imply two (or more) separate sentences. It may be followed legitimately by a plural verb, e.g.:

American and Dutch milk are both much cheaper than British milk.

American milk is ... and Dutch milk is

The same phenomenon occurs with nominal relative clauses, e.g.:

What I say and do are my affair.

What I say is ... and what I do is

e. A singular verb is required with post modifying phrases, e.g.:

Milk from American and Dutch is much cheaper than British milk.

Milk that comes from America and Dutch is

Biber et al (2002:234) recognise that subjects consisting of noun phrases coordinated by ‘*or*’ generally take singular concord if both noun phrases are singular, e.g.:

No food or drink has been consumed.

However, examples with plural concord also occur occasionally, e.g.:

I will wait until my sister or my mother come down.

Where one of the noun phrases linked by ‘*or*’ is plural, plural concord is the rule, e.g.:

Whether [interest rates or intervention] were the chosen instrument, and in what combination, was probably a secondary question.

Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:218) realise that when ‘*or* is used for coordinative apposition, grammatical concord requires the verb to agree in number with the first appositive element’. For instance:

Gobbledygook, or the circumlocutions of bureaucratic language, is intentionally difficult to understand.

The circumlocutions of bureaucratic language, or gobbledygook, are intentionally difficult to understand.

Quirk et al (1972: 363) argue that the rules are different for subjects' phrases coordinated by 'either...or'. In cases where two singular noun phrases coordinated by 'either ... or', the verb is singular, and with two plural noun phrases, the verb is plural. Some difficulties arise when one phrase is singular and the other is plural, but this is generally solved by recursion to the principle of proximity, e.g.:

Either your brakes or eyesight is at fault.

Either your eyesight or brakes are at fault.

Alexendar (1988:105) adopts the principle of proximity: with 'either ... or' and 'neither ... nor', the verb generally agrees with the nearest noun, e.g.:

Neither my brother nor my sister is red haired.

Neither my brother nor my sisters are red haired.

The pronouns 'neither' and 'either' are singular and they require singular verbs, even though they seem to be referring, in sense, to two things. Chalk (1984:62) argue that 'either' usually views the two as exclusive alternatives; *either man* (not both) and takes a singular verb, e.g.:

Either man knows.

But if the meaning is neither (*both ...not*), the plural verb is possible in pronoun use, e.g. .:

I do not suppose either of them know/knows.

'Neither' is not strictly comparable to 'either', the meaning is nearer to (*both...not*) and a plural verb is possible e.g.:

Neither of them know/knows.

But (*neither and either*) as determiners take singular verbs and singular nouns, e.g.:

Neither man knows.

Quirk et al (1985:297) suggest that 'we may distinguish dual number in the case of 'both', 'either', 'neither', since they can only be used with reference to two. 'Both' has plural concord', for instance:

Both my wife and my secretary are there.

The coordinating correlative 'not ... but' and 'not only' behave like 'or'; the latter of the two subject noun phrases determines concord, e.g.:

Not only one, but all of us are hoping to be here.

Quirk et al (1985:763) argue that the mixed expressions ‘*one or two*’ and ‘*between one and two*’ follow the principle of proximity in having plural concord, for instance:

One or two reasons were suggested.

Quirk et al (1985:758) maintain that grammatical concord is usually obeyed for ‘*more than*’, although it may conflict with notional concord. For instance:

More than a thousand inhabitants have signed the petition.

More than one person has protested against the proposal.

Although ‘*more than one person*’ is notionally plural, a singular verb is preferred. (One) person operates as a head of a singular noun phrase. Quirk et al (1985:758) see that ‘the principle of notional concord’ explains these instances:

The hammer and stick was flying from the flagpole.

The Bat and Parker sells good ink.

Similarly *one and plus a fraction or percentage* has plural concord since the notion of plural applies not to at least two but to more than one, e.g.:

One and a half year have passed since we met.

Arithmetic sums illustrate non – appositive coordination with the possibility of a singular verb, e.g.:

Two and two make / makes four.

Other numerical expressions are as follows:

Ten times fives is fifty.

Sixty people means a huge party.

Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:121), approves of the use of a singular form of a verb when you talk about fractions of singular things. For instance:

Half of our work is to design programmes.

Two thirds of the plant’s surface is covered with water.

However, when you talk about a fraction of number of things, use the plural form of the verb, e.g.:

Two thirds of Chad’s exports were cotton.

A quarter of students were seen individually.

When you use a number and a plural noun to talk about two or more things, you usually use a plural verb. You use a singular verb with ‘*one*’. For instance:

Seven guerrillas were wounded.

These days, one has to be careful with one’s money.

Quirk et al (1985:757,758) argue that when one talks about an amount of money or time or distance, speed or weight, one usually uses a plural noun and a singular verb. For instance:

Ten dollars is all I have.

Two miles is a long distance.

Ten years is along time.

Ninety pounds is all she weighs.

2.1.7 Concord with Indefinite Expressions of Amount as Subject:

Leech (1996:195) defines indefinite pronouns as ‘pronouns which do not have definite meaning’. Two kinds of indefinite pronouns are distinguished, **compound pronouns** and **of-pronouns**. In Quirk et al (1985:376), compound pronouns are those which are composed of two morphemes, viz, a determiner morpheme **every – some - , any – or no -**, and a nominal morpheme — **one**, — **body**, or — **thing**. The remaining indefinite pronouns especially **all, each, many, some, few, one, none**, etc are called **of-pronouns**. Because they can be followed by a partitive *of*-phrase such as *many (of)* and *some (of)*.

Quirk et al (1985:378) argue that all the compound pronouns are singular and have concord with a singular verb even though notionally they may denote more than one thing or person. For instance:

{Everybody/ Everyone} over eighteen has a vote.

Indefinite expressions of amount often cause concord problems. The following sentences realise basic concord rule:

No person of that name lives here.

No people of that name live here.

The indefinite pronoun (*none*) occurs with both a singular verb and a plural verb.

Schibsbye (1970:47) explains that ‘*none*’ takes a plural verb, e.g.:

None are as deaf as those that will not hear.

The singular is rare:

There was none she could tell her sorrow to.

Schibsbye (1970: 47) adds saying that when ‘*none*’ refers to (or is followed by *of* +) pronoun, the number of the verb is as follows: when ‘*none*’ refers to uncountable substantives, the verb is singular, e.g.:

We hoped the money would arrive soon, but none was forthcoming.

When ‘*none*’ refers to a substantive noun or pronoun with a countable content, the number of the verb varies according to the reality referred to. For instance:

None of them are of any use to me. (They are not of any use to me).

None of them is the man I want. (I want one man, but...).

Where the number of the reality is obscure, the tendency seems to be to use the singular.

For instance:

None of their pistols was loaded.

None of our leaders seems capable of dealing.

Leech and Svartvik (2002:197) argue that ‘each’, ‘either’, ‘neither’, ‘nor’, ‘another’, are normally considered singular pronouns although they are followed by plural nouns. This means that they go with a singular verb. Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:36), supporting this conclusion enunciates that ‘you use singular verbs with indefinite pronouns’, e.g.:

Is anyone here?

Quirk et al (1972:365) explain things in this way: If a prepositional phrase with a plural complement follows the indefinite construction; a plural verb is favoured not only because of notional concord but because of the proximity rule, e.g.:

None of them are...

Either of the girls are ...

Quirk et al (1985:764) also maintain that the same proximity principle may lead to plural concord even with the indefinite ‘each’ ‘every’, ‘everybody’, and ‘anybody’, which are otherwise unambivalently singular, e.g.:

Nobody, not even the teachers, were listening.

Biber et al (2002:234) show that quantifying pronouns such as ‘all’, ‘some’, ‘any’, ‘none’, ‘a lot’, and ‘most’ can take either singular or plural concord, according to whether they have singular or plural reference. For instance:

Some of it is genuine.

Most of the copies are bad

2.1.8 Concord where the Subject is a Clause:

Biber et al (2002:236) recognise that ‘singular concord is the rule when the subject is a finite or nonfinite clause’. For instance:

Carrying cases, boxes, parcels, or packages was a task only for servants.

But nominal relative clauses can have plural as well as singular concord, e.g.:

What we do now is this.

What is needed are effective regulators.

2.1.9 Concord with Subject – Verb Inversion:

Biber et al (2002:236) state that ‘there are some clausal patterns when the subject follows rather than precedes the verb phrase’. This pattern, known as subject – verb inversion, can give rise to opposing tendencies of subject – verb concord. With existential constructions, there is / are, the noun phrase which follows the main verb ‘Be’ is known to be the ‘notional subject’. The ‘notional subject’ determines concord with the verb. For instance:

There was a squirrel in the garden.

There are squirrels in the garden.

Quirk et al (1985:756) alert us that other instances of subject – verb inversion occur in conversation, where there is a tendency to attach the singular verb contracted form ‘s’ to the preceding adverb, e.g.:

Here's your shoes.

How's things?

Where's your tapes?

How's mum and dad?

Here concord in conversation is singular even when the following ‘notional subject’ is plural.

Similarly, interrogative ‘who’ and ‘what’ as subjects normally take a singular verb even when the speaker has reason to believe that more than one person or entity is involved:

Who's making all that noise?

However, a plural verb may be used if other words in the sentence indicate that a plural subject is expected in the answer:

Who have not received their passes?

2.1.10 Concord with Collective Nouns:

In recent terminology, collective nouns are presented as count nouns. Crystal (1991:61), however, defines ‘Collective’ as ‘a term used in grammatical description to refer to a noun which denotes a group of entities and which is formally differentiated from other noun by a distinct pattern of number contrast’.

Collective nouns, as a traditional term, such as: ‘government’ ‘army’, ‘club’, ‘jury’, ‘public’, fall into several grammatical subclasses, but their distinctive feature is their occurrence with either a singular verb or a plural verb: the noun being seen as a single collective entity, or as a collection of individual entities, e.g.:

Is the family at home? (ie the family as a whole).

The family are absolutely devastated. (ie the family as individuals).

Both foreign learners and native users of English are faced with the problem of how to treat collective nouns since there is a choice between singular and plural concord markers. Poutsma (1914:383) and Quirk et al (1985:316) have pointed out that singular forms are used when a collective noun is thought of as a unit and plural forms when the speaker or writer has the individual members in mind. E.g.:

1. *The committee has met and it has rejected the proposal.*
2. *The committee have met and they have rejected the proposal.*

The difference in point of view is noticeable in (1) and (2), the speaker in sentence (1) thinks of the *committee* as a unit and the speaker/writer of sentence (2) thinks of it as a number of separate individuals. Partridge (1999:69) also recognises that ‘such collective nouns as can be used either in the singular or in the plural ‘*family*’, ‘*clergy*’, ‘*committee*’, ‘*parliament*’ are singular when the unity (unit) is intended; plural, when the idea of plurality is predominant’. The singular / plural distinction can be seen with personal pronouns referring to collective nouns as in sentences (3) and (4) below. Pronoun agreement differs from verbal agreement in that the connection between pronoun and its antecedent is weaker than that between subject and verb, a thing, which means that pronouns are more easily influenced by semantic context:

3. *The crowd staged its own made scene.*
4. *A small crowd stood in the square, presenting their fine message to the passengers.*

According to Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:17), ‘if you want to refer back to a collective noun, you choose a singular pronoun or determiner if the previous verb is singular and a plural pronoun or determiner if the previous verb is plural’, e.g.:

The government has said it would wish to do this only if there was no alternative.

But Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:216) suggest that in both British English and American English plural pronouns are often used to refer to singular collective nouns even when the verb is singular. For instance: ‘*they*’ is an alternative to ‘*it*’ in the following sentence:

The committee has not yet declined how they should react to the letter.

Notional concord is generally more frequent with pronouns than with verbs. Hundt (1998:89) assumes that since concord with personal pronouns is more variable than with verbal concord, it may turn out to be a stronghold for notional concord. Wales (1996:163) notices that ‘there is pressure for native speakers to use plural personal pronouns when referring to collective nouns’. However, Quirk et al (1985:771) maintain that singular

collective nouns have plural verbs in cases where the speaker/writer thinks of the group as made of separate individuals. The same principle extends to pronoun concord.

Another significant factor influencing concord was adduced by Strang (1969:107): ‘collective nouns preceded by determiners or numerals associated with singular forms (e.g. ‘a’, ‘an’, ‘one’, ‘every’, ‘each’, ‘this’, and ‘that’) are frequently used with a singular verb’, e.g.:

Not that every married couple is happy.

In Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:17), the names of many organizations are collective nouns and can be used with a singular or a plural verb, e.g.:

The BBC is sending an announcer to Aden for the summer.

The BBC are planning to use the new satellite next month.

Partridge (1999:69) shows that collective nouns including proper names take plural verbs. ‘Pakistan (ie *the team*), e.g.:

Pakistan are just going into bat.

Volvo (ie the company), e.g.:

Volvo have raised their prices.

Although one can use plural verbs after collective nouns, these nouns do not behave like plural forms of count nouns. For instance:

One cannot use numbers in front of them:

One cannot say: *three enemy were killed.*

One has to say: *three of the enemy were killed.*

Some authors (Zandvoort 1975:259 and Wales 1996:162) admit that it is often difficult to notice a distinction in meaning between singular and plural forms if it were only a matter of point of view. There would not be any change in this area, unless native speakers' perception of these nouns either as units or groups of people changes over time.

Quirk et al (1985:758) add that it is generally safer in BrE to use a singular verb where there is doubt in obedience to grammatical concord.

2.1.11 Subject – Complement – Verb Concord.

When the subject complement in a copulative clause is a noun phrase, there is always subject – subject complement number concord, e.g.:

His father is a member of parliament.

In such cases, sometimes the verb agrees in number with the complement rather than with the subject. Scott et al (1968:44) point out that there is number concord between the subject and complement when the complement is represented by a noun – headed group.

Quirk et al (1985:767) support the idea by saying that there is usually concord of number (*not of person*) between subject –subject complement and direct object and object complement. For instance:

He felt a fool. (Both subject and complement are singular).

They felt complete fools. (Both subject and complement are plural).

They elected John a president. (Both the object and the object complement are singular).

There are, however, cases when such concord does not exist. Scott et al (1968:44) argue that extensive complement (ie the nominal group items that represent complement have a noun or pronoun at the head) is not in concord with either subject or predicate, e.g.:

They ask him a question.

Quirk et al (1985:767) account for the lack of subject – subject complement, e.g.:

1. a *My only hope for the future is my children.*

by assuming that the complement in this sentence seems condensed with perhaps an implied preposition, e.g.:

My only hope for the future is (in) my children.

On the other hand, they consider the following alternative as acceptable, e.g.:

1. b *My only hope for the future are my children.*

They speak of the potentiality for subject complement reversal, e.g.:

My children are my only hope for the future.

There is clearly no number concord of any kind (grammatical, notional or attraction) between the subject and subject complement in the above examples. In sentence (1.b) the verb quite clearly agrees in number with the complement.

The second example given by Quirk et al (1985) is:

2. *More nurses is the next item on the agenda.*

Here again we have a breakdown of subject – subject complement concord. The explicit agreement in number of the verb is with the subject complement (ie *the next item*).

Quirk et al (1972:366) consider the use of a plural verb in the following:

3. *The majority are Moslems.*

In the sentence the choice of the verb number is determined by the complement rather than the subject as the only acceptable number for the verb. They argue that the use of singular would be considered unacceptable, because of the plural complement.

Another example given by Quirk et al (1972:366) shows ‘*majority*’ as requiring a singular verb:

(4) *The majority agrees with me.*

Quirk et al (1985:767) interpret the clear subject complement – verb concord in pseudo – cleft constructions with a fronted object ‘*what*’ as a plural verb in concord with the subject ‘*what clause*’. Because ‘*what*’ is ambivalent in number, it is interpreted as equivalent to either ‘*the thing that*’ or ‘*the things that*’. For instance:

1. *What we need most are books.*

But if the subject ‘*what*’ is passive, we get:

2. *What is needed most is books.*

For sentence (1) ‘*what*’ cannot be interpreted as ‘*the thing that*’, and the plural ‘*are*’ is clearly not in concord with the subject ‘*what clause*’, but with the plural complement.

Quirk et al (1972:368) also recognise that there are variants, in which the number of the verb is in agreement with the complement, e.g.:

a. *What we need most are books.*

b. *Good manners are a rarity these days.*

For sentence (a) that is probably related to notional concord, the idea of plurality being dominant. Sentence (b) contains a subject complement which, although nominal in form, has a characterizing function closer to that of an adjective than of a noun.

Quirk et al (1972:386) maintain that ‘there can be failure of subject complement concord when the subject is a singular collective noun’, e.g.:

The Bennett family were remarkable musicians.

There is often no singular for the plural form:

Those men are *crackers*. ‘*Crackers*’ has no singular version, e.g.:

**That man is a cracker.*

There is often no singular /plural contrast, e.g.: we do not have:

**The houses are bricks.* We only have: *The houses are brick..*

2.1.12 Subject Reflexive Object Concord:

Quirk et al (1972:368) point out that subject – object concord of number, person and gender is necessary when the second element is a reflexive pronoun. For instance:

He injured himself in the leg.

Napoli (1993:10) sees 'a compatibility requirement on the number of reflexive pronoun as well as compatibility requirement of *gender* with the subject of the sentence, in addition to another feature, it is that of *person* ', e.g.:

* *I save himself.*

Jack saved himself.

Quirk et al (1985:365,357) show that the reflexive pronoun must agree with the subject in terms of gender, number and person. Consider the following sentence:

Ralf likes himself.

An agreement process assures us that the features of gender, number and person will be identical for '*Ralf*' and '*himself*'. Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968:236) argue that the important fact to keep in mind about reflexivization is that the two identical noun phrases must appear in the same sentence. Radford (1997:74) recognises that words like '*himself*' are termed (reflexive) anaphors, and have the properties that they cannot be used to refer directly to an entity in the outside world, but rather must be bound by and hence take their reference from antecedent elsewhere in the same sentence or phrase. Where an anaphor is unbound (ie has no suitable antecedent to bind), the resulting sentence is ungrammatical. For instance:

He washed himself.

They washed themselves.

* *They save himself.*

2.1.13 Concord where the Subject is an Adjective as Nominal:

Adjectives as nominal take either singular or plural concord. Chalk (1984:183) maintains that (the +adjective) including *-ing* and participle *-en* can be used to mean a category of people as a whole. '*Whole*' here does not have to mean '*throughout the world*', but a total group in a particular context. The adjective does not take *-s* but it requires a plural verb. For instance:

The rich help the poor.

The definite article is sometimes replaced by other determiners:

What poor? There aren't any poor in my country!

Nationality adjectives also take plural concord, e.g.:

The English drink tea.

Although [the + adjective] with reference to people stands for plural. There are exceptions: For instance:

The accused pleads 'not guilty'.

The deceased was the victim.

[The + adjective] following the name is also commonly singular, e.g.:

Alexander the Great was killed.

The adjectives the first / the last and superlatives generally can mean person (singular) or people (plural) according to context:

Tom is always the first.

Tom and Jerry were the first.

[The +abstract adjective] taking singular verb can stand for an abstract idea or quality in general, e.g.:

The unthinkable has happened.

2.2 Grammatical Classification of Elements of Concord

Here is a grammatical classification of elements of grammatical concord:

2.2.1 Gender and Concord

Quirk et al (1985:314) regard gender as a grammatical classification of nouns, pronouns or other words in the noun phrase, according to certain meaning – related distinctions, especially a distinction pertaining to the sex of the referent.

In English, nouns, determiners, and adjectives have no inflectionally – marked gender distinctions. Some third person pronouns and wh - pronouns do, however, express natural gender distinctions such as ‘it’, ‘which’ etc. Gender in English nouns may be described notionally, that is, nouns are classified not grammatically but semantically according to their coreferential features with personal, reflexive and wh – pronouns. Napoli (1993:19) supports this conclusion. She maintains that the fact that there is a correlation between gender and the object that the pronoun is referring to is evidence of the larger fact that in English, gender is related to semantics.

Palmer (1974:82) argues that gender is regarded as a category of the noun. Nouns are either masculine or feminine or neuter. But Palmer premises that English has no gender. The nouns of English cannot be classified in terms of agreement with articles or adjectives. There are in English pairs of words of the type ‘ram / ewe’, ‘uncle/aunt’, ‘brother/sister’. But this is a lexical feature, not a grammatical one, related to sex not gender.

Lyons (1968:283) points out that gender plays a relatively minor part in the grammar of English. There is no gender concord, and the reference of the pronouns, *he*, *she*, *it*, may largely be determined by what is sometimes referred to as ‘natural’ gender. For English, this depends upon the classification of persons and objects as **male**, **female** or **inanimate**. In

contrast, Zandvoort (1966:264) emphasizes the existence of concord of gender which occurs between a noun or a pronoun and one of the pronouns of the third person.

English nouns may be divided into gender classes according to the personal pronouns they take. Nouns referring to males require ‘*he*’ and nouns referring to females require ‘*she*’. Most English nouns referring to objects that cannot be classified by sex require the pronoun ‘*it*’, although exceptions exist, *ship*, for example, is sometimes referred to as ‘*she*’. Quirk et al (1985:342) argue that the choice between masculine and feminine pronouns is based on the sex of the person, e.g.:

Fred looks at himself in the mirror.

Freda looks at herself in the mirror.

Napoli (1993:16) maintains that nouns can be classified as **proper** or **common**. If we look at common nouns in English, we find that their morphological forms do not usually distinguish them for gender, e.g.: *teacher*. Napoli adds saying that ‘many languages linguistically mark their nouns and pronouns for gender. English either marks only small subset of them or does not mark them’. Greenbaum and Quirk (1997:110) argue that the only personal pronouns that are marked for gender are the third person pronoun. For instance:

‘*He*’ is masculine.

They (1997:221) recognise that the relative pronouns ‘*who*’, ‘*whom*’, and ‘*which*’ agree with their antecedents in gender, the first two being personal and the last being non -personal (impersonal). For instance:

Here is the hammer which I borrowed yesterday.

That is the man who (m) I saw talking to your partner.

Quirk et al (1985:316) point out that collective nouns can trigger either singular or plural pronoun coreferents. Collective nouns differ from other nouns in taking as pronouns coreferents either the singular ‘*it*’ and the relative ‘*which*’ or the plural ‘*they*’ and the relative ‘*who*’ without changing number. For instance:

The committee {has met and it has / have met and they have} rejected the proposal.

The problems of concord gender occur with coordinate subjects and with subjects of common gender, but here one may resort to the evasive tactic of the plural pronoun. For instance:

1. *Either he or his wife is going to have to change their attitude.*

2. *Not every drug addict solves their problems easily.*

However, some speakers/writers consider such sentences ungrammatical. For sentence (1) the only alternative in formal English is to rephrase the sentence as follows:

Either he is going to have to change his attitude or she hers.

For sentence (2) the pronoun that should refer to generic noun reference 'addict' is 'he'.

2.2. 2 Concord of Person.

Crystal (1991:256) defines 'person' as 'a category used in grammatical description to indicate the number and nature of the participants in a situation'. Napoli (1993:24) argues that there are three persons of English. One is called *first person* and it refers to the speaker. It is seen in the pronouns here:

Singular: I, me, mine.

Plural: We, us, our, ours.

The next person is called *the second* and it refers to the person(s) spoken to. (It is often called the hearer(s)):

You, your, yours.

In English, the second person is not phonetically distinct for number.

The last person is called *the third*, and it refers to the person spoken about:

Singular: she, her, hers; he, his, him; it, its.

Plural: they, them, their, theirs.

The singular pronouns here are distinguished for number and all three for gender. The plural pronoun 'they' is not distinct for gender. The full nouns of English, in contrast with the pronouns system are not morphologically distinguished for person, just as they are typically not morphologically distinguished for gender.

According to Napoli (1993:24), 'every noun phrase, that is not a pronoun, is treated by grammar as being third person'. Quirk et al (1985:340) support this argument by saying that all noun phrases (except those having 1st and 2nd person pronouns as heads) are 3rd person for purpose of concord, e.g.:

{The man / he, the car / it} has just arrived.

Zandvoort (1966:255) points out that 'concord of person occurs (a) between a subject and its finite verb; (b) between a noun or a pronoun and the pronoun(s) referring to it; it usually occurs in combination with concord of number'. So concord of person occurs between a subject in third person singular and the present tense form of the verb.

Quirk et al (1985:762) argue that following the principle of proximity, the last noun phrase of coordinate subject where the coordinator is 'or'; 'either ... or'; or 'neither ... nor' determines the person of the verb. For instance:

Neither you nor I, nor anyone else knows the answer.

Either my wife or I am going.

2.2.3 Concord of Pronoun:

Crystal (1991:281) defines ‘pronoun’ as a ‘term used in the grammatical classification of words referring to the closed set of items which can be used to substitute for a noun phrase or single noun’. Quirk et al (1985:335) point out that pronouns have morphological characteristics that nouns do not have.

A. Case: there is a contrast between subjective and objective cases. *I/me, she/her, Who / whom.*

B. Person: there is a contrast between first, second and third person.

C. Gender: there are overt grammatical contrasts between personal and non – personal gender and between masculine, feminine and neuter: *he/ she/ it*. Salak (1995:300) maintains that pronouns and antecedents must agree in number, gender and person. It is well – known that the grammatical gender of a pronoun can be determined by the gender feature of its antecedents, even when these antecedents occur in a previous sentence, e.g.:

This old book keeps falling. Please pick it.

Salak (1995:295) argues that the need for agreement in gender can lead to gender bias which occurs when either a masculine or a feminine pronoun is used to refer to antecedents that include both male and female. Quirk et al (1985:335) recognise that when a pronoun has as its antecedent two or more noun phrases coordinated by ‘*and*’, the pronoun must be in plural, even when each of the noun phrases is singular. For instance:

John and Mary stole a toy from my son. Their mother told them to return it to him, but they said it was theirs.

In formal English, the tendency has to use ‘*he*’ as unmarked form when the gender is not determined, e.g.:

A student should submit his papers in May.

The conditions of concord here, in fact, are the same as those which govern subject – verb concord.

In Collins Cobuild English Grammar (1990:362), ‘relative pronouns do not have masculine, feminine or plural forms. The same pronoun can be used to refer to a man, a woman or a group of people’, e.g.:

She didn’t recognise the man who had spoken.

I met a girl who knew Mr. Townsen.

There are many people who find this intolerable.

In contrast to this point, Quirk et al (1972:369) suggest that pronoun concord may extend beyond clause boundaries. Thus the relative pronouns ‘*who*’ ‘*whom*’ and ‘*which*’ agree in

gender with their antecedents in the subordinate clauses, the first two being personal and the last one being non – personal. For instance:

The man whom I saw.

The bag which I saw.

Quirk et al (1985:1245-1246) maintain that the choice of concord depends on the basis of a two gender system (ie personal and non-personal) .The choice of gender with coordinate antecedents of mixed gender may cause a problem with relative pronouns. With *wh- pronouns* the principle of proximity seems to be favoured, e.g.:

The people and the things which amuse her most.

The things and people who amuse her most.

Problems do not arise where zero relative is possible or where '*that*' is chosen, e.g.:

The people and things (she likes most /that she likes most).

A noun such as '*ship*' may take the personal pronoun '*she*' but the relative pronoun is regularly non-personal, e.g.:

Is it/she the ship which is due to leave for the port tomorrow?

2.2.4 Case Concord:

Crystal (1991:47) defines 'case' as 'a grammatical category used in the analysis of word classes (or their associated phrases) to identify the syntactic relationship between words in a sentence through such contrast as *nominative, accusative, etc*'. Mathews (1997) speaks of 'case... inflection category, basically of nouns which typically marks their role in relation to other parts of the clause'. In Blake (2001:1) 'the notion of 'case' is used to mean ' a system of marking dependent nouns for the type of relationship they bear to their heads'.

Blake (2001:28+29) shows that 'traditional model for describing case system is based on Ancient Greek and Latin'. He adds saying that for each case there are a number of functions and there is a concord between the head of a noun phrase and its dependents. He also distinguishes (2001:32-33) between grammatical cases and semantic cases. The former are constituted by core (nominative, accusative, ergative) and peripheral (genitive, dative) while the latter consist of Local (Locative, ablative, etc) and Instrumental. **The nominative** is said to pinpoint a subject within a sentence, which is a purely syntactic relation characteristically associated with presenting given and topical information. **The accusative** case is the case that encodes the direct object of a verb. **The ergative** case is used where there is a parallel between the object of a transitive verb and the subject of an intransitive one, e. g.:

The window broke.

The man broke the window.

The subject of the intransitive use of 'broke' is the same as the object of its transitive use.

Blake (2001:151) maintains that **the genitive** case is often used to encode a complement of a nominalized verb, most often the subject. **Dative** is typically the case of indirect object, and (OP) (ie prepositional object) often have **the ablative** case. **Instrument** case refers to the semantic case of an inanimate entity casually involved in verbs actions, e.g. *the key*:

The door is opened with a key.

Napoli (1993:26) argues that English lexically marks its personal pronouns system for case, where case is associated with structural positions. These structural positions are called grammatical functions, such as subject, object, and complement. Case is morphologically distinguished for both pronouns and full noun phrases.

a. The subject position of clauses is singled out and the only personal pronouns, *I, we, you, they, he, she, it*, can occur here.

The grammatical functions such as direct object, indirect object and object preposition are typically filled with the personal pronouns *me, us, you, them, him, her and it*, e.g.:

Ralph gave me a book.

b. Full noun phrases, as opposed to pronouns, are not distinguished for **Subjective** – versus – **Objective** case in English. This means that there are no nouns or forms of any noun that occur only in certain structural positions. Thus, morphologically, the noun phrase '*the dog*' does not change its form when either it is used as a subject or is used as an object.

c. The third case that is morphologically distinguished for pronouns and full noun phrases is called **Genitive**. For full noun phrases, it is regularly realised as ('s) in:

Sally's brother.

This book is Sally's.

According to Biber et al (2002:79), 'English has only one case suffix – the ending written –'s'. This suffix marks a noun phrase that occupies the specifier position within a large noun phrase. It is the genitive case. For pronouns, the form occurs when it precedes other material within an NP ('my', 'our', 'their', 'his', 'hers', 'its').

O'Grady et al (1992:221) premises that many linguistic phenomena reflect the interaction of the morphological and syntactic components of the grammar. An important example of this interaction involves case, which indicates an NP's position in syntactic structure. Case is usually marked by inflecting the head of the NP which will always be a noun or a pronoun.

Case rules for English NPs:

O'Grady et al (1992:222) maintain that in order to account for the case contrast found in English nouns and pronouns, the grammar must include a set of rules that associate case with specific syntactic positions:

- a. The complement of verb recognises accusative case.
- b. The complement of pronoun receives accusative case.
- c. The specifier of noun receives genitive case.
- d. The subject receives nominative case.

According to these rules, a sentence such as:

Mary saw him.

is acceptable since the pronoun in the complement is accusative, as required by rule 'a' above.

In contrast, a sentence such as:

* *Mary saw he.*

is ungrammatical since the pronoun in the complement NP has the nominative form, in violation of rule 'a' above. However, these case rules do not specify a case form for every position in syntactic structure. Thus, while the complements of verbs or pronouns receive accusative case, no rule specifies the case of complement of an adjective or noun. These latter positions cannot be occupied by an NP, e.g.:

Verb with NP complement:

Criticize the girl.

Noun with NP complement:

* *Criticism the girl.*

Preposition with NP complement:

Near the girl.

Adjective with NP complement:

* *Critical the girl.*

(O'Grady et al 1992:223).

This process is known as the *Case Filter*. The *Case Filter* determines that each noun phrase in a grammatical sentence must be in a position to which case can be assigned.

Crystal (1991:99) maintains that *Case Filter* prevents the appearance of adverbial between a verb and its object, so that phrases such as '*Criticize the girl*' and '*Near the girl*' satisfy the *Case Filter* since the NP '*the girl*' is in a position to receive accusative case. In contrast, the ill-formed phrases '*Criticisms the girl*' and '*Critical the girl*' violate the *Case Filter* since the NP '*the girl*' is not in a position to which case is assigned.

2.3 Selectional Restrictions:

Crystal (1991:309) defines '*selectional restrictions*' as 'a term used in generative grammar for a type of contextual feature' (ie the syntactic feature which specifies the conditions relating to where in a deep structure a lexical item can occur). *Selectional features*

For instance: In poetry:

'Leaves may dance.'

And 'Stars may bless.'

To sum up, in reviewing the literature pertaining to the topic of this study, the chapter has surveyed the various principles of concord, focusing on the areas and kinds of Grammatical Concord. The chapter ends with Selectional Restrictions which occur nowadays in Transformational Generative Grammar (s).

Chapter 3: Data Description and Analysis

3.1 Setting up the Research

As mentioned in Chapter One, the data collection in this study has employed two different instruments; a Teachers' Questionnaire and Students' Grammar Tasks Tests.

The construction of the Teachers' Questionnaire passes through the stages suggested by Evans (1988:19): defining the purpose, deciding on the information needed, analyzing this information into component parts and deciding on the questions, which can elicit the required information. The construction of the Students' Grammar Tasks Tests depends on the suggestions stated by Seliger and Shohamy (1989:176-177) who argue that the test of high explicitness will give more isolated and discrete types of language such as short sentences, structures or vocabulary items.

To check the validity, the two instruments were piloted before their actual distribution. Copies of the Teachers' Questionnaire and Students' Grammar Tasks Tests were given to some experts of ELT in the University of Aden, and to some experienced teachers of English. The Students' Grammar Tasks Tests were tried out with twenty five Second Year students in the Department of English, Faculty of Education, Tor Al-Baha.

As a result of the piloting stage, several changes have been inserted in both Teachers' Questionnaire and Students' Grammar Tasks Tests.

Eight male teachers of grammar from different faculties of education were selected as specimen for the Teachers' Questionnaire. The specimen of the Students' Grammar Tasks Tests were (45) Second Year students (8 males and 37 females) of Department of English, Faculty of Education, Aden University. They were selected in a random way. What we need now is to look closely at the Teachers' Questionnaire to examine the categories of questioning items used and the aim(s) underlying each item. The Students' Grammar Tasks Tests and the aim(s) for each task are also presented.

3.2 The Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is distributed to teachers in Faculties of Education (Aden, Saber and Tor Al-Baha) in order to collect information about English concord problems facing students of English language.

The questionnaire consists of ten Questioning items, running from 1 to 8, each one of them has three possible alternatives from which teachers can choose, the fourth alternative is provided to give the teachers an opportunity to add whatever information they want. Each of items 9 & 10 has four appropriate alternatives from which teachers can choose.

The ten items were sequenced from the more general to the more specific; each one of them focuses on an important issue of English concord. In this way, the subjects of this study can focus their attention on what is actually required in (or by) each item. Thus, items can be classified into various categories; each category has a specific focus.

The first group, (ie items 1 and 2), focuses on obtaining information about several issues that cause uncertainty and violation of subject – verb concord rules. The second group, (ie items 3-9), focuses on specific issues causing some concord problems, such as those related to collective nouns, indefinite expressions, indefinite pronouns, etc. The third category consists of one questioning item which investigates the teachers' opinion about the specific areas of English concord which cause concord problems. The questioning items of the Teachers' Questionnaire are discussed in detail (see appendix 2:139-142)

The **First** item inquires about subject-verb concord uncertainty in English. The subjects are required to tick off one of the given alternatives. They are also requested to specify their own reason (if any).

1- What causes uncertainty about subject-verb concord in English Language is

Here are the Subjects' tabulated responses:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
a	the conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord.	5	62.5
b	over-concern for rules and fear of making mistakes.	2	25
c	the difficulty of understanding concord rules.	1	12.5
d	Any other reason. Please specify.	0	0

Table 1: The reasons for concord uncertainty and the subjects' responses.

It is clear from the responses given in table (1) that most of the subjects (5 / 62.5%) consider that the conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord causes uncertainty about subject-verb concord.

Table (1) reveals that (2 / 25%) of the subjects justify the uncertainty about subject-verb concord in terms of the over-concern for rules and the fear of making mistakes. Table

(1) also shows that one of the subjects (1 / 12.5%) points out that the reason for uncertainty about subject-verb concord relates to the difficulty of understanding concord rules. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason that causes the uncertainty about English concord. The view of the majority here agrees with what has already been discussed in Chapter Two.

The **Second** questioning item requires the subjects to tick off one of the given reasons that makes students violate the important rule of English *ie a Singular subject requires a singular verb; a plural subject requires a plural verb*. The respondents are also requested to add their own reason (if any).

2. *The reason that makes students violate the important rule of English (ie singular subject + singular verb and plural subject + plural verb) is:*

Here are the subjects' tabulated responses:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	the interference of the mother tongue (ie Arabic Language).	1	12.5
B	that some nouns can be either singular or plural.	2	25
C	that sometimes the subject has a prepositional phrase which separates it from its verb, e.g.: <i>The ideas in that book are interesting.</i>	5	62.5
D	Any other reason. Please specify.	0	0

Table 2: The reasons which lead to the violation of the important rule of English (*singular subject + singular verb and plural subject + plural verb*) and the subjects' responses.

Table (2) shows that most of the subjects (5 / 62.5%) assign the violation of the important rule of English concord *ie singular subject + singular verb and plural subject + plural verb* to the occurrence of the prepositional phrases which separate the subjects from

their verbs. That leads the verb to end up agreeing in number not with the head noun of the subject, but with the nearby noun.

The responses in table (2) also show that (2 / 25%) of the subjects recognise that the reason that makes students violate the important rule (mentioned above) is that some nouns can be either singular or plural. Similarity between singular and plural form of some English nouns leads to such violation.

Significantly, table (2) suggests that one of the subjects (1 / 12.5%) relates the violation of the mentioned important concord rule to the interference of the mother tongue (ie Arabic Language). None of the subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason that makes students violate the concord rule (*a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb*).

The Third questioning item inquires about collective nouns. The participants are required to tick off one of the given reasons which make students unable to specify the verb number when the subject is a singular collective noun. They are also requested to add their own reason (if any).

3. *Students are unable to determine the verb number (ie singular or plural) when the subject is a singular collective noun because of:*

Here are the subjects' tabulated responses:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	grammatical concord rules.	0	0
B	the idea of number rather than the presence of the grammar marker for that idea.	2	25
C	the idea of number and the presence of the grammar marker for that idea.	6	75
D	some other reason. Please specify.	0	0

Table 3: The reasons which make students unable to determine the verb when the subject is a singular collective noun and the subjects' responses.

Table (3) shows that most of the informants' responses (6 / 75%) justify the students' inability to determine the verb number when the subjects are singular collective nouns in terms of the idea of number and the presence of the grammar marker for that idea. Collective nouns are marked or tagged in some way for plurality. They are notionally plural, but their forms are singular. Students, therefore, cannot determine the verb number in sense that they either depend on meaning and choose plural or that they depend on form and choose singular.

Table(3) highlights that (2 / 25%) of the subjects consider the idea of number rather than the presence of the grammar marker for that idea is the reason that makes students unable to determine the verb number when the subjects are singular collective nouns. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) states that grammatical concord rules make students unable to determine the verb number when the subjects are singular collective nouns. None of subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason which makes students unable to determine the verb number when the subject is a singular collective noun.

The Fourth questioning item requires the subjects to tick off one of the reasons that makes troublesome cases of subject-verb concord controversial. The subjects are also requested to specify any other reason.

4. I think that many of the troublesome cases of subject-verb concord are controversial because of

Here are the subjects' tabulated responses:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	the notional concord which allows the notion of singular and plural in the subject to determine the verb.	4	50
B	the variety of various grammatical rules.	2	25
C	the gender bias of nouns and pronouns.	2	25
D	some other reason. Please specify.	0	0

Table 4: The reasons causing troublesome cases of subject-verb concord controversial accompanied by the subjects' responses.

Table (4) reports that (4 / 50%) of the subjects consider that troublesome cases of subject-verb concord controversial on account of the notional concord which allows the notion of singular and plural in the subject to determine the verb form. That means that some nouns are grammatically plural in forms (e.g. *pants*) but notionally singular; they are

designating only one item. On the other hand, there are nouns that are grammatically singular in form, but notionally plural (e.g. *flock*) since they denote a collection of things or individuals.

The responses in table (4) demonstrate that (2 / 50%) of the subjects justify that troublesome cases of subject-verb concord are controversial because of the variety of various grammatical rules. That means that some grammatical concord rules allow singular and plural concord with some nouns and expressions. For instance, a singular collective noun can take either singular or plural concord. There is also the idea that indefinite expressions of quantity have both singular and plural uses. With non-count nouns, the verb is singular, with plural count nouns, the verb is plural.

Table (4) also shows that (2 / 50%) of the subjects recognise that troublesome cases of subject-verb concord are controversial on the ground of the gender bias of nouns and pronouns. That suggests that difficulty arises where some nouns are used to refer to both male and female, e.g. '*manager*'. Table (4) shows that none of the subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason that makes troublesome cases of subject -verb concord controversial.

The Fifth questioning item investigates the reason which makes the proximity concord principle causes problems in English concord. The subjects are requested to tick off one of the given reasons and also to add any other reason.

5. *The proximity concord principle causes problems in English concord because:*

Here are the subjects' tabulated responses:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	the verb agrees with the nearby noun which is not the real subject of the verb.	4	50
B	it is not always clear which element of the sentence triggers off the plural or the singular form of the verb.	2	25
C	in many cases, the supposed triggering off element is not close enough to determine the verb number.	2	25
D	Please specify any other reason.	0	0

Table 5: The reasons which make the proximity concord principle causing English concord problems accompanied by the subjects' responses.

Table (5) clarifies that (4 / 50%) of the subjects consider the proximity concord principle causing problems in English concord because the verb agrees with the nearby noun which is not the head noun of the subject. The responses in table (5) single out that (2 /

25%) of the subjects realise that the proximity concord principle causes problems in English concord because it is not always clear which element of the sentence determines the verb number.

Table (5) also demonstrates that (2 / 25%) of the subjects envisage that the proximity concord principle causes English concord problems because, in many cases, the supposed triggering off element is not close enough to determine the verb number. That means where there is a great amount of intervening information between the head noun of the subject and its verb; it will be more difficult to determine the verb number. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason that clarifies why the proximity concord principle causes English concord problems.

The Sixth questioning item requires the subjects to identify the reason which causes pronoun agreement problems. The subjects are also given a chance to add their own reason (if they have any).

6. *Pronoun agreement problems occur when pronouns refer back to:*

The subjects' responses to this question are shown in the following table:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	Collective noun.	2	25
b	Coordinate subject.	3	37.5
c	Compound indefinite pronouns.	3	37.5
D	Some other reason that can be specified.	0	0

Table (6): The reasons which cause pronoun concord problems in parallel to the subjects' responses.

Table (6) shows that all the reasons are operative, a thing which means that all the above reasons cause, from the subjects' point of view, pronouns agreement problems. Table (6) isolates that (3/37%) of the subjects' responses point out that pronoun agreement problems occur when pronouns refer back to coordinate subjects.

(Pronouns agreement problems occur as they discussed in Chapter Two, when the pronouns refer back to coordinate noun phrases differing in gender).

The subjects' responses in table (6) reveal that (3 / 37.5%) of them state that pronoun concord problems occur when the pronouns refer back to compound indefinite pronouns. (Compound indefinite pronouns such *everybody, everyone* seem to be notionally plural, but they are grammatically singular).

Table (6) also shows that (2 / 25%) of the subjects' responses suggest that pronoun concord problems occur when the pronouns refer back to singular collective nouns. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) specifies any other reason justifying why pronoun concord problems occur.

Questioning item **Seven** examines the reason that makes indefinite expressions ending with 'of' cause problems in English concord. The subjects are required to tick off one of the given reasons, and they are also requested to specify any other reason.

7. I think quantifying expressions ending with 'of' cause problems in English concord because:

The following table shows the subjects' responses to this question:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	the verb agrees with quantified noun.	0	0
B	the verb agrees with quantifier which is not the head noun of the subject.	5	62.5
C	Quantifiers have conflicting rules.	3	37.5
D	Please specify any other reason.	0	0

Table 7: The reasons which make quantifying expressions ending with 'of' cause problems in English concord in terms of the subjects' responses.

The subjects' responses, as table (7) shows, demonstrate that (5 / 62.5%) of them view those indefinite expressions of quantity cause English concord problems because the verb agrees with the quantifier which is not the head of the subject. Table (7) reveals that (3 / 37.5%) of the subjects' responses justify that quantifying expressions cause English concord problems because they have conflicting rules. As seen, Quantifiers can take either singular or plural concord. For instance, concord patterns vary with 'any' and 'none'. With these quantifiers, the singular was traditionally considered correct. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) recognises that the verb agreement with the quantified noun causes English concord problems. (Biber et al (2002:233) argue that indefinite expressions of amount or quantity can

take either singular or plural concord according to whether they have singular or plural reference).

Table (7) also shows that none of the subjects (0 / 0 %) specifies any other reason justifying why quantifying expressions cause English concord problems.

Questioning item **Eight** explores the reasons of concord problems with coordinate subjects. The subjects have to tick off the reason which causes coordinate subject concord problems. They are also requested to add any other reason.

8. *The reason contributing to concord problems with coordinate subjects is that:*

The subjects' responses to this question are shown in the following table:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
a	the element of notional concord in such cases of coordination prevails over strict grammatical rules.	4	50
b	it is not clear which element of the coordinate subject triggers off the verb form.	2	25
c	there is confusion in using pronouns to refer back to such coordinate subjects.	2	25
d	It is still unspecified.	0	0

Table 8: The reasons of concord problems with coordinate subjects with regard to the subjects' responses.

As all the three reasons are responded to, it means that all the above reasons cause, from the subjects' point of view, concord problems with coordinate subjects. The subjects' responses in table (8) show that (4 / 50%) of them relate the reason for concord problems with coordinate subjects to the element of notional noncord which tends to prevail over strict grammatical concord. Notional concord, for instance as suggested earlier, explains the singular in these coordinated cases.

The hammer and sickle was flying from the flagpole.

The Parker and Bat sells good ink.

Table (8) isolates that (2 / 25%) of the subjects' responses justify the occurrence of concord problems with coordinate subjects in the sense that it is not clear which element of the coordinate subjects triggers off the verb form. The subjects' responses, as table (8) shows, demonstrate that (2 / 25%) of them point out that there is confusion in using pronouns to refer back to coordinate subjects. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) considers that the reason of concord problems with coordinate subjects is unspecified.

Questioning item **Nine requires** the subjects to tick off one of the given reasons for false agreement in relative clause antecedents.

9. *The reason for false agreement in relative clause antecedents is that:*

The subjects' responses to this question are as follows:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
A	the tendency for the verb to agree with the closest noun or pronoun leads to such false agreement .	6	75
B	relative pronouns have no singular or plural forms.	0	0
C	the singular and plural can be understood either in terms of form or in terms of meaning.	2	25
D	It is still unspecified.	0	0

Table 9: The reasons for false agreement in relative clause antecedents with regard to the subjects' responses.

Table (9) reveals that most of the subjects (6 / 75%) justify the reason for false agreement in relative clause antecedents in terms of the tendency for the verb to agree with the closest noun or pronoun when that noun or pronoun is not its head noun or pronoun antecedent. This explains that the choice of singular or plural verb number in relative clause can depend on whether the attention of the relative clause is directed to the generality or the uniqueness of the antecedent noun phrase especially if the relative clause follows a noun phrase consisting of 'one of plus a plural noun'. Table (9) also shows that (2 / 25%) of the subjects relate the reason for false agreement in relative clause antecedent to the singular and plural forms which can be understood either in terms of form or in terms of meaning. None of the subjects (0 / 0%) contributes the reason for false agreement in relative clause antecedents to the grammatical fact that relative pronouns have no singular or plural forms. None of the subjects, as table (9) shows (0 / 0%), suggests that the reason for false agreement in relative clause antecedents is still unspecified.

Question **Ten** explores the subjects' opinions about the areas of English concord which cause concord problems. It asks the subjects to tick off one of the given alternatives.

10. *What particular areas of English Concord, in your opinion, cause concord problems?*

The subjects' responses are, thus tabulated:

No. of reasons	Reasons	Subjects' Responses	Percentage %
a	Concord of number	5	62.5
b	Concord of pronoun	1	12.5
c	Concord of case	1	12.5
D	Concord of gender	1	12.5

Table 10: The areas of English Concord and the subjects' responses categorised.

Most of the subjects' responses in table (10) ie (5 / 62.5%) show that concord *number* is the major area which causes concord problems. That result supports what has been discussed in Chapter Two: that most of the subject-verb concord problematic situations arise as a result of the conflict between the grammatical form and the notional meaning of noun numbers.

Table (10) also shows that one of the subjects (1/12.5%) considers that *pronoun* concord area as causing English concord problems. Table (10) also reveals that one of the subjects' responses (1/ 12.5%) demonstrates that *case* concord as causing English concord problems. Table (10) also shows that one of the subjects (1 / 12.5%) points out that *gender* concord area as causing English concord problems. The successive low percentages in table (10) ie (1/12.5) for each of the areas show that those areas, to a less degree, cause concord problems.

As the fact that the four areas are responded to means that all the above areas cause, from the subjects' point of view, English concord problems but concord of number is realised as a major area causing concord problems.

There is a correlation between items (2, 5 and 9) which refer to the proximity concord principle as a reason of subject -verb concord problems. As shown in table (2) , the proximity concord principle causes violation of grammatical concord rules in the case when the subject is singular followed by a prepositional phrase ending with a plural noun. It has been noticed in table (5) that the proximity or the attraction phenomenon causes concord problems because the verb agrees with the nearby noun which is not the head noun of subject. Table (9) demonstrates that the proximity concord principle is the reason for false

agreement in relative clause antecedent due to the verb tendency to agree with the closest noun or pronoun. This correlation emphasizes that the conflict between the grammatical concord principle and the proximity concord principle causes concord problems in English.

There is a correlation among items (1, 3, 4 and 8) in their reference to the notional concord principle as a reason for English concord problems. As shown in table (1), the conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord causes uncertainty about subject-verb concord. It has been noticed in table (3) that the impact of notional number on the grammatical marker of a singular collective noun makes students unable to determine the verb number. Table (4) reflects that troublesome cases of subject-verb concord are controversial because notional concord allows the notion of singular and plural in the subject to determine the verb. Notional concord, as table (8) shows, is the reason of concord problems with coordinate subjects. This correlation emphasizes that the conflict between grammatical concord and notional concord principles causes English concord problems.

3.3 Grammar Tasks

Testing is the second instrument used to collect data in this study. The study contains ten grammar tasks divided into ten types. Each task provides a test.

3.4 the process of marking:

Each task consists of ten sentences. The total marks for each task is one hundred (100) on the basis that every sentence in every task receives ten marks. The process of marking every sentence in all tasks is conducted on the basis of the various problems of English concord. Since every sentence in these tasks demonstrates a particular problem, the correct response for the relevant form receives the mark. The types of problems presented in these tasks have been discussed in Chapter Two of this study.

3.5 Description and Analysis of Grammar Tasks.

General description of the ten grammar tasks and the marks obtained by the participants in each task are illustrated below. The tasks are also analyzed and the participants' responses are discussed in detail.

3.5.1 Task 1

3.5.1.1 A General Description of Task 1

Task 1 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences. Each one of them contains a different noun phrase functioning as a subject requiring a specific verb in terms of grammatical concord. Two alternative verb forms are given. The participants of this study are asked to choose the correct verb form that is in concord with the subject of each sentence. The basic aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to determine the

correct verb number (ie *singular or plural*) for each subject of the ten sentences. It also aims to check the influence of proximity concord on determining the verb form. Each item in the following section is fully described.

3.5.1.2 A Description of Task 1 Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 1:

Item 1 is:

The book on political parties (is, are) interesting.

The head of the subject is a singular noun phrase ie ‘*the book*’ followed by a prepositional phrase ending with a plural noun ‘*on political parties*’. It ,thus, requires a singular verb.

Item 2 is:

The ideas in that book (is, are) interesting.

The head of the subject is a plural noun phrase ie ‘*the ideas*’ followed by a prepositional phrase ending with a singular noun ‘*in that book*’. It, thus, requires a plural verb.

Item 3 is:

Growing flowers (is, are) a new hobby.

The head of the subject is a gerund ie ‘*growing*’ followed by a plural noun ie ‘*flowers*’. It, thus, requires a singular verb.

Item 4 is:

The English (drink, drinks) tea.

The subject is a singular noun phrase denoting nationality ie ‘*the English*’. It is a noun functioning as an adjective. It requires a plural verb.

Item 5 is:

The extent of Jane's knowledge on various complex subjects (astound, astounds) me.

The subject is a singular noun phrase ie ‘*the extent*’ followed by a long prepositional phrase ending with a plural noun ie ‘*of Jane's ... subjects*’. It requires a singular verb.

Item 6 is:

English (is, are) spoken in many countries.

The subject is a singular noun phrase ie ‘*English*’ denoting a language. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 7 is:

Which sentence in the previous sections (contain, contains) the essential feature of explanation?

The head of the subject is a singular noun phrase ie ‘*sentence*’ followed by a prepositional phrase ending with a plural noun ie ‘*in the previous sections*’. It requires a singular verb.

Item 8 is:

Physics (seek, seeks) to understand the mysteries of the world.

The subject is a singular noun ending in the - s of the plural inflection ie ‘*physics*’ denoting a name of a science. It requires a singular verb.

Item 9:

The United States (is, are) located in North America.

The subject is a singular noun phrase ie ‘*The United States*’ denoting a name of a country. It requires singular concord.

Item 10 is:

Measles (is, are) sometimes serious.

The subject is a singular noun phrase ending in the – s of the plural inflection ie ‘*measles*’ denoting a name of a disease. It requires singular concord.

N. B. All sentences of the ten tasks are listed in (appendix 3: 143 -147).

3. 5.1. 3 Results of the participants in Task 1

The result of this task is shown below. Table (11) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their choice of the correct verb forms in Task 1. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (1)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (1)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (1)
1	90	16	60	31	40
2	40	17	40	32	30
3	60	18	70	33	50
4	60	19	30	34	20
5	40	20	40	35	30
6	30	21	70	36	60
7	70	22	50	37	20
8	50	23	60	38	50
9	50	24	50	39	40
10	50	25	60	40	30
11	60	26	60	41	60
12	60	27	60	42	40
13	40	28	40	43	30
14	70	29	10	44	30
15	40	30	50	45	20

Table 11: The marks obtained in Task 1 by all participants.

The table shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in Task (1) is 90%, whereas the lowest mark is 10%. The results also point that (21 / 47%) of the participants have failed to provide the correct responses and that (24 / 53%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3.5.1.4 Detailed Analysis of Task (1) Items:

Each item of Task (1) contains a particular noun phrase functioning as a subject. Each subject requires a specific verb form on the basis of English concord. Table (12) below presents the percentage of wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The percentage of each item is obtained by multiplying the number of wrong answers by (100) and then dividing the total by (45) (the total number of answers of each item for all participants).

The subjects' responses are tabulated as follows:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers 45	%
1	the subject is a singular noun followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural complement.	17	38
2	the subject is a plural noun followed by a prepositional phrase with a singular complement.	26	60
3	the subject is a gerund.	25	56
4	the subject is a noun functioning as an adjective.	34	75.5
5	the subject is a singular noun followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural complement.	23	51
6	the subject is a singular NP.	14	31
7	the subject is a singular noun phrase followed by a prepositional phrase with a plural complement .	20	44
8	the subject is a singular noun ending in __s denoting a name of a science.	28	62
9	the subject is a noun phrase naming a country.	27	60
10	the subject is a singular noun denoting a name of a disease ending in __s.	25	56
		----- 239	

Table (12): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (1).

3.5.1.5 Discussion of the Results of Task (1):

Table (12) shows that the majority of subject-verb concord problems (34 / 75.5%) (ie in item 4) arises when the subject is a noun functioning as an adjective (of nationality). The adjective 'the English' denotes people from England. It sounds singular, and misled by its form, most of the participants use a singular verb. Quirk et al (1985: 422-424) argue that adjectives denoting nationalities that can be noun phrases have generic reference and take plural concord. Most of the participants are unaware of this concord rule that controls the use of such noun phrases.

The second highest percentage of wrong answers (realising concord problems), as table (12) shows (28 / 62%) (ie item (8)), occurs with a noun phrase ending in the __s of the plural inflection. This implies that most of the participants consider such nouns as plural, whereas, being singular, they require singular concord.

The third highest percentage of concord problems (27/60%) (ie item 9) occurs when the subject of the sentence is a plural noun phrase denoting a country name. Most of the participants are misled by the plural form of the subject and have, accordingly, used plural, whereas it requires a singular verb.

Table (12) also demonstrates that subject-verb concord problems are due to the influence of proximity concord principle. The prepositional phrases which disagree in number with their heads of subjects effect the determination of the verb forms, a thing which respectively occurs in item (2) (26 / 60%); in item (5) (23 / 51%), in item (7) (20 / 44%) and in item (1) (17 / 38%). The reason for these concord problems is that the verbs end up agreeing in number with the closer noun rather than with the head subject noun.

Table (12) also reveals that subject-verb concord problems (25 / 56%) ie item (3) occur when the subject is a gerund followed by a plural noun. Most of the participants have misused the plural verb form because they have perceived that the plural noun that follows the 'gerund' is the head of the subject. That percept shows that the proximity concord principle determines the verb number. This result is in agreement with what is stated in the Teachers' Questionnaire. The results in table (12), thus, show that the proximity concord principle causes subject-verb concord problems. It is quite clear that the participants have insufficient knowledge of the concord rules that control the use of such noun phrases.

3.5.2. Task 2

3.5.2.1 A General Description of Task (2)

Task 2 is a completion task. It consists of ten sentences. The subjects of the sentences, though plural in form, substantiate single units. The participants are asked to fill in the

blanks with the correct verb form (of to *be*) by using only the simple present (is / are). The basic aim of Task 2 is to test the students' ability to determine the verb number on the basis of notional concord rather than of grammatical concord rules.

3.5.2.2 A Description of Task 2 Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 2:

Item 1 is:

The news _____ received on April 30th.

The subject is '*the news*'. It is a singular noun ending in -s. It, thus, requires a singular verb.

Item 2 is:

Black and white _____ her favourite colour combination.

The subject is two coordinate noun phrases '*black and white*'. It is viewed as a single entity. It requires a singular verb.

Item 3 is:

Ten minutes _____ more than enough time.

The subject '*ten minutes*', though plural in form, realises as a single period of time. It requires a singular verb.

Item 4 is:

The number of students at the university _____ approximately 10,000.

The head of the subject is an expression of quantity, ie '*the number*'. It takes singular concord.

Item 5 is:

Law and order _____ violated everyday.

The subject is '*Law and order*'. The coordinate words in this subject combine in meaning to refer to one thing. It requires a singular verb.

Item 6 is:

Alexis Kivis's 'Seven Brothers' _____ a Finish classic.

The subject is a title of a book '*Seven Brothers*'. It takes singular concord.

Item 7 is:

Two thirds of all recruitment _____ through friendly contact.

The subject is a fraction ie '*two thirds*' followed by a prepositional phrase with a non-countable noun complement ie '*recruitment*'. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 8 is:

The Times _____ owned by Rupert Murdoch.

The subject is 'The Times'. It sounds a plural noun because it ends in -s. In reality, it is a singular noun denoting a name of a newspaper. It, therefore, requires singular concord.

Item 9 is:

The audience _____ enjoying every minute of it.

The subject is a singular collective noun ie 'audience'. It is notionally plural, but it is being considered as a single undivided body in this sentence. It requires singular concord.

Item 10 is:

Two miles _____ as far as they can walk.

The subject, 'two miles', though plural in form, substantiates a single distance. It requires singular concord.

3.5.2.3 Results of the participants in Task 2

The result of this task is shown in Table (13) which presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their completion task and the correct responses. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Students (45)	100% Task (2)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (2)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (2)
1	50	16	50	31	40
2	70	17	40	32	70
3	40	18	30	33	30
4	70	19	50	34	40
5	60	20	50	35	60
6	40	21	20	36	50
7	40	22	30	37	10
8	20	23	50	38	20
9	30	24	50	39	20
10	50	25	30	40	30
11	40	26	40	41	50
12	20	27	50	42	30
13	40	28	60	43	40
14	50	29	50	44	30
15	30	30	30	45	20

Table 13: The marks obtained in Task 2 by all participants.

Table (13) shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in Task 2 is (70%), whereas the lowest mark is 10%. The results reveal that (27 / 60 %) of the participants have failed to respond correctly, and that (18 / 40 %) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3.5.2.4 Detailed Analysis of Task 2 Items:

Each item of Task 2 consists of a particular subject substantiating a single unit though plural in form. Table (14) below presents the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

Here are the subjects' responses to Task Two:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determining the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	the subject is a singular noun ending in - s.	23	51
2	the subject is a coordinate noun phrase combined in meaning to substantiate one thing.	15	33
3	the subject is a period of time.	25	55.5
4	the subject begins with ' <i>the number</i> '.	30	67
5	the subject consists of coordinate noun phrases referring to one thing.	30	67
6	the subject refers to a title of a book.	32	71
7	the subject is a fraction.	15	33
8	the subject refers to a newspaper name.	34	75.5
9	the subject is a singular collective noun .	33	73
10	the subject substantiates a single distance.	31	68
		268	

Table (14): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (2).

3.5.2.5 Discussion of the Results of Task (2):

Table (14) shows that the majority of subject-verb concord problems (34 / 75.5%) ie in item (8) occurs when the subject is a noun ending in - s and denoting a name of a newspaper. The name, ' *The Times* ', is plural in form, yet it refers to a single thing. It requires a singular verb. The majority of the participants has been deceived by the form of this noun and has, accordingly, used plural concord.

The second highest percentage of wrong answers or (concord problems), as table (14) reveals (33 / 73%) ie in item (9), shows when the subject is a singular collective noun). The majority of the participants has misused the plural form misguided by the notional meaning of the noun, whereas the collective noun in this sentence refers to a single unit.

The third highest percentage of concord problems, as table (14) presents (32 / 71%) ie in item (6), occurs when the subject refers to a title of a book. The plural noun ' *Seven Brothers* ' is plural in form but it refers to a single book. The conflict between the form (grammatical form) and the notional meaning has, thus, led most of the participants to choose the wrong verb forms. Notional concord seems to dominate over the grammatical forms and determine the verbs.

Table (14) also demonstrates that subject-verb concord problems arise when the subjects are plural noun phrases of quantity notionally referring to single entities, or when the subjects are expressions of distance, periods of time, names of books, fractions or coordinate noun phrases referring to single units. These expressions, though plural in forms, must be understood as single units. Quirk et al (1985:757) recognise that notional concord principle accounts for the common use of a singular verb with subjects that are noun phrases of quantity, measures or periods of time. Most of the participants have used plural forms for such expressions. It is clear that the conflict between the notional concord and the grammatical concord is a source of different English concord problems.

3.5.3 Task (3)

3.5.3.1 A General Description of Task (3)

Task 3 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences. Each sentence has a singular collective noun that functions as a subject. Two alternative verb forms are given. The participants are asked to underline the correct verb form which is in concord with the subject. The main aim of Task three is to test the students' ability to match the singular collective noun with the correct verb form.

3.5.3.2 A Description of Task 3 Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 3:

Item 1 is:

The police (have, has) been called.

The subject, 'the police', is a singular collective noun always occurring with a plural verb.

Item 2 is:

The board (disagree, disagrees) on almost every point.

The subject, 'the board', is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals. It requires a plural verb in this sentence.

Item 3 is:

My class (was, were) so noisy.

The subject, 'my class', is a singular collective noun referring to a single undivided unit. It requires a singular verb in the sentence above.

Item 4 is:

The crowd (have, has) been dispersed.

The subject, 'the crowd', is a singular collective noun referring to a single unit. It requires a singular verb in this sentence already mentioned.

Item 5 is:

The public (is, are) tired of demonstration.

The subject, 'the public', is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals. It takes a plural verb.

Item 6 is:

The committee (have / has) discussed the proposal.

The subject, 'the committee', is a singular collective noun referring to a single undivided body. It requires a singular verb in this sentence already given.

Item 7 is:

The family (is, are) absolutely devastated.

The subject, 'the family', is a singular collective noun referring to one entity. It requires a singular verb in the sentence above.

Item 8 is:

The office staff (is, are) large.

The subject, 'staff', is a singular collective noun referring to a single undivided unit. It requires a singular verb in the preceding sentence.

Item 9 is:

The government (have, has) broken all promises.

The subject, *'the government'*, is a singular collective noun viewed as a group of individuals. It requires a plural verb in the sentence already given.

Item 10 is:

The team (was, were) not always successful.

The subject, *'the team'*, is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals. It, thus, requires a plural verb in the sentence above.

3. 5. 3. 3 Results of the participants in Task 3:

The result of this task is shown below. Table (15) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their correct choice of each verb form in Task 3.

The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total marks of each participant.

No. of Students (45)	100% Task (3)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (3)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (3)
1	80	16	90	31	0
2	80	17	30	32	50
3	60	18	80	33	10
4	100	19	90	34	70
5	70	20	60	35	50
6	90	21	90	36	30
7	70	22	60	37	70
8	70	23	60	38	90
9	70	24	70	39	20
10	60	25	80	40	60
11	90	26	70	41	40
12	50	27	80	42	40
13	60	28	50	43	20
14	60	29	60	44	40
15	80	30	70	45	0

Table 15: The marks obtained in Task 3 by all participants.

Table (15) shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in Task 3 is 100%, whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results also show that (10 / 22%) of the participants have failed to choose the correct verb form and that most of them (35 / 78%) have managed to get the passing mark.

3.5.3.4 Detailed Analysis of Task 3 Items:

Each item of Task three consists of a singular collective noun that functions as a subject requiring a specific concord rule with a verb. The choice between singular or plural depends on whether the collective noun is being considered as a single undivided group, or as a collection of individuals. Table (16) below presents the percentage of wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The participants' responses to Task 3 are substantiated by the following table:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determining the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	the subject is a singular collective noun which always takes a plural verb form .	27	60
2	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals.	21	47
3	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a single undivided unit .	11	24
4	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a single unit.	14	31
5	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals.	20	44
6	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a single undivided unit.	13	29
7	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a single entity.	12	27
8	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a single entity.	17	38
9	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals.	22	49
10	the subject is a singular collective noun referring to a collection of individuals.	21	47
		178	

Table (16): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task 3.

3. 5. 3. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task 3:

Table (16) shows that the highest percentage of concord problems occurs when the singular collective nouns refer to collections of individuals or things, a thing which shows with item (1) (27 / 60%), item (9) (22 / 49%), items (2 and 10) (21 / 47%) and item (5) (20 / 44%). All the subjects of these items require plural verb forms because the subjects refer to collections of individuals. However, the participants have used singular verb forms with such collective nouns. It is the notion of plural in these subjects which determines the form of the verb and of the grammatical form of the subjects.

Table (16) also clarifies that no high percentage of concord problems arises when the collective nouns refer to a single unit, a thing which occurs with item (8) (17 / 38%), item (4) (14 / 31%), item (6) (13 / 29%), item (7) (12 / 27%) and item (3) (11 / 24%). Most of the participants have used singular concord since the forms of these nouns prompt singular.

The reason for all concord problems with singular collective nouns is brought about by the conflict between notional concord and grammatical concord principles on determining the verb number. The result is in total agreement with what has been stated in the Teachers' Questionnaire.

3. 5. 4 Task 4

3. 5. 4. 1 A General Description of Task (4)

Task 4 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences. The subject of each sentence is either an expression of amount, quantity or an indefinite pronoun. Two alternative verb forms are given. The participants are asked to choose the correct verb form which is in concord with each subject in the task. The aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to match these expressions of amount, quantity or indefiniteness with the correct verb forms on the ground of concord rules. It also aims to test how the proximity and notional principles influence the determining of the verb number in such cases.

3. 5.4.2 A Description of Task (4) Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 4:

Item 1 is:

None of these ingredients (is, are) available from the nearest supermarket.

The subject is 'none of these ingredients'. It consists of an expression of quantity followed by a plural count noun. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 2 is:

One of my best friends (is, are) coming to visit me next week.

The subject is *'one of my best friends'*. It is an expression of quantity. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 3 is:

Nobody, not even the teachers, (is, are) listening.

The subject is an indefinite pronoun ie *'nobody'* followed by a prepositional phrase. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 4 is:

Some of the apples in the bowl (is, are) rotten.

The subject is *'some of ...bowl'*. It consists of an expression of quantity followed by a prepositional phrase. The noun that follows the expression of quantity is a plural count noun *'apples'*, so the required verb form is plural.

Item 5 is:

Many a member (has, have) protested against the proposal.

The subject is *'many a member'*. It consists of an expression of quantity followed by a singular count noun. Although the subject is notionally plural (= many members), a singular verb form is preferred because *'member'* is analyzed as a head of the noun phrase.

Item 6 is:

Neither of the two traffic lights (is, are) working.

The subject is *'neither of the two traffic lights'*. It consists of an indefinite pronoun *'neither'* followed by prepositional phrase. It requires a singular verb form .

Item 7 is:

Most of the news on the front pages of both daily newspapers (is, are) bad.

The subject is *'most of ... newspapers'*. It consists of an expression of amount *'most of the news'* followed by a prepositional phrase. The noun that follows the expression of amount is a non-count noun *'news'*. The subject requires a singular verb form.

Item 8 is:

More than a thousand inhabitants (have, has) signed the petition.

The subject is *'more ... inhabitants'*. It consists of an indefinite pronoun *'more'* followed by a prepositional phrase. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 9 is:

Every member of these classes (speak, speaks) English well.

The subject is *'every member of these classes'*. It is an expression of quantity followed by a prepositional phrase. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 10 is:

No people of that name (live, lives) here.

The subject is 'no people of that name'. It consists of an indefinite pronoun 'no' followed by the noun 'people' and then by a prepositional phrase. The noun 'people' that follows the indefinite pronoun requires a plural verb form.

3. 5. 4. 3 Results of the participants in Task 4

The result of this task is shown below. Table (17) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their correct choice of the verb form in each item in Task four. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total marks of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (4)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (4)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (4)
1	60	16	10	31	60
2	50	17	50	32	10
3	60	18	60	33	70
4	70	19	50	34	50
5	30	20	40	35	40
6	60	21	50	36	30
7	70	22	30	37	50
8	60	23	40	38	40
9	30	24	20	39	60
10	40	25	60	40	20
11	60	26	40	41	20
12	60	27	50	42	50
13	60	28	0	43	50
14	60	29	20	44	0
15	50	30	30	45	20

Table 17: The marks obtained in Task 4 by all participants.

Table (17) shows that the highest marks obtained by the participants in Task 4 is 70%, whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results reveal that (20 / 44%) of the participants have failed to give correct responses and that (25 / 56%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3.5.4.4 Detailed Analysis of Task 4 Items

Each item in the task contains either an expression of quantity, or an indefinite pronoun functioning as a subject. Indefinite expressions and pronouns as these require specific verb forms on the basis of English concord. Table (18) below presents the percentage of wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The participants' responses are tabulated as follows:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	an expression of quantity is followed by a plural countable noun functioning as a subject.	35	78
2	an expression of quantity begins with ' <i>one of</i> ' functioning as a subject.	25	55.5
3	an indefinite pronoun functions as a head of the subject.	33	73
4	an expression of quantity functions as a subject.	18	40
5	an expression of amount functions as a subject.	35	78
6	an indefinite pronoun functions as a subject.	16	35.5
7	an indefinite expression of amount functions as a subject.	34	75.5
8	an indefinite pronoun functions as a subject.	13	28.8
9	an expression of quantity functions as a subject.	15	33
10	an indefinite pronoun functions as a subject.	<u>33</u> 257	73

Table 18: The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (4) .

3. 5. 4. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task 4: Table (18) shows that the majority of concord problems (35 / 78%) ie in item (1 & 5) occurs when the subjects are expressions of quantity. The verb form in item (1) should agree with the plural count noun (*ie ingredients*) which follows 'of'. Azar (1989:220) states that 'the verb is determined by the noun or(pronoun) that follows of '. Most of the participants have violated this concord rule. The verb form in item (5) should agree with the head of the expression (*ie a member*). Although the subject is notionally plural, grammatical concord is seen to dominate and determine the verb number. Influenced by notional concord, most of the participants have used wrong verb form.

The second highest percentage of concord problems, as table (18) shows, (34 / 75%) ie in item (7) appears when the subject is an expression of a quantity followed by a prepositional phrase. The noun that determines the verb in item (7) is '*news*'. It requires a singular verb form. Most of the participants have misused the verb form because of the influence of the proximity concord principle. They have chosen the plural verb to agree with the noun closest to the verb form ie *newspapers*. This result shows that what causes concord problems in English is the confusion between grammatical and proximity concord rules.

The third highest percentage of concord problems , as table (18) shows (33 / 73%) ie in items (3 and 10) , occurs when the subjects are indefinite pronouns followed by prepositional phrases ending with specific plural count nouns ie *teachers & people*. The indefinite pronoun '*nobody*' in item (3) requires a singular verb, whereas in item (10) the indefinite pronoun '*no*' requires a plural verb since it is followed by '*people*'. Influenced by proximity concord principle, most of the participants have violated the grammatical concord discussed in this study.

Proximity concord ie in item (3) allows the verb to agree with the closest noun (*ie teachers*) which is not the head of the subject. In item (10), the indefinite pronoun '*no*' refers to '*people*'. It requires a plural verb. However, most of the participants have determined the verb form on the basis of the proximity concord principle since the NP closest to the verb form is '*name*'. The results in table (18) show that the influence of the proximity concord principle which causes concord problems. These problems are shown to occur in items (2) (25 / 55.5%), (4) (18 / 40%), (6) (16 / 35.5%) and (9) ie (15 / 33%).

Table (18) shows that concord problems (12 / 27%) ie in item (8) are caused by the respondents being unaware whether they explain things in terms of grammatical or notional concord.

In item (8) the subject, '*more than a thousand inhabitants*', requires a plural verb form. Quirk et al (1985: 758) argue that the grammatical concord is obeyed for '*more than*'.

3. 5. 5 Task 5

3. 5. 5. 1 A General Description of Task 5

Task 5 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences. The subject of each sentence is an expression of amount, a period of time, a fraction, a percentage or a distance. Two alternative verb forms are given. The participants are asked to encircle the correct verb forms which are in concord with each subject in the task. The aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to determine the correct verb number with nouns of measures, periods of time, fractions, and percentages. It tries to test the impact of notional concord on determining the verb form in connection with such expressions.

3. 5. 5. 2 A Description of Task (5) Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 5:

Item 1 is:

The number of human skeletons found at the archaeological site (is, are) seven.

The subject is '*the number ... Site*'. It consists of an expression of quantity. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 2 is:

Two thirds of the area (is, are) under water.

The subject is '*two thirds of the area*'. It consists of a fraction followed by a singular noun '*the area*'. It refers to one unit (the area). It requires a singular verb form.

Item 3 is:

Fifteen years (represent, represents) a long period of time of his life.

The subject is '*fifteen years*'. It is a single period of time. (*That period is ...*). It requires a singular verb form.

Item 4 is:

Ten dollars (is, are) too much to pay.

The subject is '*ten dollars*'. It substantiates a single amount. (*That amount is ...*). It requires a singular verb form.

Item 5 is:

Eight hours of sleep (is, are) enough.

The head noun phrase of the subject is '*eight hours*'. It represents a single period of time. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 6 is:

Four minus two (is, are) two.

The subject is an arithmetical process ie ‘*four minus two*’. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 7 is:

Three pounds (is, are) actually quite a lot.

The subject is ‘*three pounds*’. It substantiates a single weight. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 8 is:

Forty percent of students (is, are) in favour of change.

The subject is ‘*forty percent of students*’. It consists of a percentage followed by a plural count noun ‘*students*’. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 9 is:

A number of journalists (is, are) waiting outside.

The subject is ‘*a number of journalists*’. It is an expression of quantity, ‘*a number of*’, followed by a plural count noun ie ‘*journalists*’. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 10 is:

Five thousand miles (is, are) too far.

The subject is ‘*five thousand miles*’. It represents a single entity of distance. (*That distance is ...*). It requires a singular verb form.

3.5.5. 3 Results of the participants in Task 5

The result of this task is shown below. Table (19) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their choice of the correct verb forms.

The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each student.

No. of Students (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Students (45)	100% Task (5)
1	50	16	40	31	30
2	30	17	80	32	60
3	50	18	30	33	20
4	20	19	20	34	60
5	50	20	40	35	40
6	30	21	30	36	50
7	10	22	50	37	60
8	20	23	20	38	30

9	70	24	50	39	60
10	40	25	10	40	30
11	10	26	10	41	20
12	20	27	40	42	70
13	70	28	70	43	40
14	40	29	40	44	50
15	20	30	60	45	30

Table 19: The marks obtained in Task 5 by all participants.

Table (19) presents that the highest mark obtained by the participants is (80%), whereas the lowest mark is (10%). The results also reveal that (28/62%) of the participants have failed to provide the correct verb forms and that (17 / 38%) of them have managed to get the passing mark in Task 5.

3. 5. 5. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task (5) Items:

Each item of the task consists of an expression of amount, measure, weight, period of time, distance, fraction or a percentage, etc which requires a specific verb form on the basis of English concord. Table (20) below presents the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The participants' responses to Task 5 are, thus, tabulated:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	an expression of quantity functions as a subject.	25	55.5
2	a fraction functions as a subject.	31	69
3	a period of time functions as a subject.	35	78
4	an amount of money functions as a subject.	30	67
5	a period of time functions as a subject.	25	55.5

6	an arithmetical process functions as a subject.	27	60
7	an expression of weight functions as a subject.	28	62
8	a percentage functions as a subject.	31	69
9	an expression of quantity ' <i>a number of</i> ' functions as a subject.	20	44
10	an expression of measure functions as a subject.	21	47
		273	

Table (20): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (5).

3. 5. 5. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task (5)

Table (20) suggests that the majority of subject-verb concord problems (35 /78) ie in item (3) occurs when the subject is a period of time. The subject, '*fifteen years*', though plural in form, refers to a single period of time. Notional concord principle prompts the singular verb form here. Most of the participants follow the grammatical concord rule which causes concord problems, especially when the intended meaning is singular. This is supportive of the results in Task 2, and also what has occurred in the Teachers' Questionnaire.

The second highest percentage of the wrong answers, as table (20) shows (31 / 69%) ie in items (2 and 8), occurs when the subject is a fraction or a percentage. In item (2) the fraction is modified by a singular noun. It requires a singular verb form. In item (8) the percentage is followed by a plural count noun. It requires a plural verb form. Most of the participants have been unaware of the concord rules of fractions or percentages and have, therefore, given wrong responses.

The results in table (20) also reveal that concord problems (30 / 67% & 28 / 62%) ie in items (4 & 7) occur when the subject is an amount of money or weight. When the subject is a measure of distance (21 / 47%) as in item (10), or an arithmetical process (27 / 60%) as in item (6), concord problems also occur. The verb form is usually determined by the notional concord when these expressions function as subjects. They take singular verb forms even when they occur in plural.

3. 5. 6 Task 6:

5. 6. 1 A General Description of Task 6:

Task 6 is a completion task. It consists of ten sentences .Each sentence contains coordinate noun phrases which function as subjects. The participants are asked to supply the correct forms of the given verbs using only the simple present. The aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to determine the correct verb form for different coordinate subjects on the basis of concord rules.

3. 5. 6. 2 A Description of Task 6 Items.

The description of the ten items of Task 6 is as follows:

Item 1 is:

The teacher's conceptions, expectations and perceptions of the educational research ... quite different from those of researchers. (be)

The subject is a coordinate expression ie ‘*the teacher...research*’. It consists of more than two singular items. It requires a singular verb because ‘*the teacher*’ is the obvious candidate for triggering off the verb form.

Item 2 is:

The Department members but not the Chair... decided not to teach on Valentine’s Day. (have).

The subject is ‘*the Department ...Chair*’. It consists of two coordinate noun phrases linked by ‘*but*’. The first is a plural noun phrase and the second is a negated singular noun phrase. Grammatical concord requires the verb to agree with the first noun phrase.

Item 3 is:

Neither my brother nor my father ... going to sell the house. (be)

The subject is ‘*neither my brother nor my father*’. It consists of two singular noun phrases coordinated by the negative correlative ‘*neither ... nor*’. It requires a singular verb, because each member of the coordination is a singular noun phrase.

Item 4 is:

The mayor, as well as his brothers, ... going to prison. (be)

The subject is the ‘*mayor, as well as his brothers,*’. It consists of two coordinate noun phrases coordinated by ‘*as well as*’. Grammatical Concord requires a singular verb if the first noun phrase is singular.

Item 5 is;

The professors and the student ... on this point. (agree)

The subject is the '*professors and the student*'. It consists of two noun phrases coordinated by '*and*'. It requires a plural verb.

Item 6 is:

Our old friend and former colleague, Bob, ... passed away. (have)

The subject is '*our...,Bob,*'. It consists of two coordinate noun phrases referring to one person. It requires a singular verb.

Item 7 is:

What I say and what I think ... my own affair (be)

The subject is '*what ...think*'. It is coordination comprises cases that correspond to fuller coordinate forms. It requires a plural verb.

Item 8 is:

The stars and stripes ... marked on his forearm. (be)

The subject is the '*stars and stripes*'. It consists of two plural noun phrases coordinated by '*and*'. It signifies a single entity and therefore, requires a singular verb in this sentence.

Item 9 is:

John, unlike his colleagues, still skeptical. (be)

The subject is '*John, unlike his colleagues*'. It is quasi-coordination, where the two noun phrases are linked by '*unlike*'. Grammatical concord requires a singular verb if the first noun phrase is singular.

Item 10 is:

Either my father or my brother ... going to build my house. (be)

The subject is '*either ... brother*'. It consists of two coordinate noun phrases coordinated by '*either—or*'. It requires a singular verb because the two noun phrases are singular.

3. 5. 6. 3 Results of the participants in Task 6

The result of Task 6 is shown below. Table (21) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their supplying of the correct verb forms.

The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)
1	60	16	50	31	60
2	70	17	30	32	30
3	60	18	50	33	30
4	50	19	60	34	40
5	60	20	40	35	20
6	50	21	30	36	10
7	60	22	40	37	40
8	30	23	50	38	20
9	50	24	40	39	30
10	40	25	20	40	50
11	50	26	20	41	0
12	30	27	0	42	30
13	40	28	60	43	50
14	30	29	40	44	40
15	60	30	30	45	0

Table 21: The marks obtained in Task 6 by all participants.

Table (21) presents that the highest mark obtained by the participants is (70%) whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results also show that (27 / 60%) of the participants have failed to supply the correct verb forms and that (18 / 40%) of them have managed to get the passing mark in Task 6.

3. 5. 6. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task 6 Items:

Each item of the Task 6 consists of two coordinate noun phrases which function as subject. Different coordinators are used to link these coordinate subjects which require particular verb forms on the basis of English concord. Table (22) below presents the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

Here are the participants' responses to Task 6:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	the coordinate subject consists of many noun phrases.	34	75.5.
2	the coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases linked by 'but'. The first is plural and the second is a negated singular.	32	71
3	the coordinate subject consists of two singular noun phrases coordinated by ' <i>neither ... nor</i> '.	28	62
4	the subject is quasi-coordination.	32	71
5	the coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases linked by ' <i>and</i> '.	10	22
6	the coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases referring to the same person.	32	71
7	the coordinate subject consists of two nominal relative clauses linked by ' <i>and</i> '.	16	35.5
8	the coordinate subject is two plural noun phrases coordinated by ' <i>and</i> ' and referring to a single unit.	33	73
9	the subject is quasi-coordination.	26	58
10	the coordinate subject consists of two singular noun phrases coordinated by ' <i>either ... or</i> '.	30	67
		273	

Table (22): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (6).

3. 5. 6. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task 6

Table (22) reveals that the majority of the concord problems (34 / 75.5%) (ie in item 1) occurs when the subject consists of more than two coordinate noun phrases which can be considered, from strictly grammatical point of view, as plural. Here '*the teachers*' is the obvious element which determines the verb form rather than the other singular units.

The second highest percentage of the concord problems, as table (22) shows (33 / 73%) (ie in item 8) , occurs when the subject is a coordination of two plural noun phrases referring to a single entity . The principle of notional concord explains the use of a singular verb with this kind of construction, a thing which means that concord problems occur as a

result of the conflict in the users' mind between notional concord and grammatical concord.

The third highest percentage of the concord problems, as table (22) clarifies (32 / 71%) (ie in item 4) , occurs when the coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases linked by of a quasi-coordinator , or when a coordinate subject consists of the same person (ie in item 6) or when coordination consists of two noun phrases where the first is a positive singular noun phrase and the second is a negative singular noun phrase (ie in item 2) .

In item (4), most of the participants, misled by the quasi-coordination '*as well as*' , have used the plural form of '*be*'. Most of the participants have been guided by the notional concord which prompts the plural (ie in item (6). The principle of proximity concord also prompts the singular verb since the noun '*Chair*' is the closest word to the verb (ie in item 2). However, the correct verb in such constructions is plural because the verb agrees with the positive NP.

The fourth high percentage of the concord problems, as the results show (30 / 67%) (ie in item 10), occurs when the subject consists of coordinate noun phrases linked by '*either ... or*'. Most of the participants have considered them as plural. However, Quirk et al (1985:762) argue that whichever phrase comes last determines the number of the verb.

Table (22) reveals that where the subject consists of coordinate noun phrases linked by '*neither ... nor*' subject-verb concord problems (28 / 62%) ie in item (3) are likely to occur. Most of the participants have interpreted the two nouns as plural; not knowing that whichever phrase comes last determines the number of the verb.

Table (22) also demonstrates that concord problems with coordinate subject occur in item (9) (ie 26 /58%) when two NPs are linked by quasi-coordinator ie *unlike*. Most of the participants think that the two opening noun phrases *John & colleagues* are combined together, thus making a mistake.

The results also indicate that concord problems (16 / 22%) ie in item (7) occur when the subject consists of two relative clauses coordinated by '*and*'. Some of the participants have perceived that each relative clause is separately related to the verb rather than that the two clauses are corresponding to fuller coordinate forms.

The results in table (22) demonstrate that subject - verb concord problems (10 / 33.5%) ie in item (5) occur when the subject consists of coordinate noun phrases coordinated by '*and*'. Some of the participants have used a singular verb form since the

noun which is closest to the verb is singular ie '*the student*'; whereas the correct verb form must be plural.

.3. 5. 7 Task 7

3. 5. 7. 1 A General Description of Task 7

Task 7 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences. Two alternative verb forms are given. The participants are asked to tick off the correct verb form that is in concord with each subject of the sentences. This task aims at testing the participants' ability to determine the correct verb number in cases of existential '*there*' or in yes-no questions sentences.

3. 5. 7. 2 A Description of Task 7 Items.

The description of the ten items of Task 7 is as follows:

Item 1 is:

There (is / are) a lot of sheep in the field.

The '*there*' of existential behaves like the subject of the sentence. The notional subject of this sentence is '*a lot of sheep*'. It is an expression of quantity. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 2 is:

(Are / is) either my brother or my friends responsible?

The coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases linked by '*either ... or*'. Whichever phrase comes closest to the verb determines the verb number. It requires a singular verb form in the sentence already given.

Item 3 is:

There (is / are) a banana and two apples left in the bowl.

The '*there*' existential acts as a subject in this sentence. The notional subject is '*a banana and two apples*'. It is a coordination of two noun phrases linked by '*and*'. The verb should be plural.

Item 4 is:

Do / Does any of you know the answer to this question?

The subject of this sentence is '*any of you*'. It is an indefinite expression of quantity. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 5 is:

(Are / is) my friend or my sisters visiting Cairo?

The subject of this sentence consists of two noun phrases coordinated by '*or*'. The first is singular and the other is plural. It requires a singular verb fo

Item 6 is:

(Isn't / Aren't) there a hospital close to those villages?

The 'there' existential acts as the subject in a yes-no question. The notional subject is a 'hospital'. It requires a singular verb.

Item 7 is:

There (is / are) some pens and note books on Jack's desk.

The 'there' existential acts as the subject of the sentence. The notional subject consists of an expression of quantity ie 'some pens' and a plural noun phrase ie 'note books' coordinated by 'and'. The required verb form is plural.

Item 8 is:

There (are / is) over 60,000 kinds of insects in the world.

The 'there' existential acts as the subject of this sentence. The notional subject is 'over 60,000 kinds of insects'. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 9 is:

There (is / are) sheep grazing in the field

The 'there' existential acts as the subject of this sentence. The notional subject is 'sheep'. It is a zero plural noun. It requires a plural verb.

Item 10 is:

Where (is / are) the scissors?

The subject is 'scissors'. It is a singular noun phrase ending in the plural inflection -s. It requires a singular verb.

3. 5. 7. 3 Results of the participants in Task 7

The result of this task is shown below. Table (23) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their process of ticking off the correct verb forms. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)
1	80	16	50	31	40
2	50	17	60	32	20
3	80	18	50	33	60
4	40	19	80	34	70
5	50	20	90	35	30
6	60	21	40	36	50
7	60	22	60	37	70
8	70	23	40	38	60
9	50	24	40	39	40
10	40	25	80	40	50
11	20	26	50	41	60
12	70	27	40	42	50
13	70	28	60	43	30
14	70	29	80	44	20
15	50	30	60	45	0

Table 23 : The marks obtained in Task 7 by all participants.

Table (23) shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in this task is 90%, whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results reveal that (14/31%) of the participants have failed to supply the correct verb forms and that (31/69%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3. 5. 7. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task 7 Items:

Each item of Task 7 is concerned with a specific problem of number concord either in relation to existential, there, or question sentences. Table (24) below shows the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The participants' responses are tabulated as follows:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form in)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	an existential sentence when the notional subject is an expression of quantity.	15	33
2	a yes – no question when the subject coordinates two noun phrases linked by (<i>either... or</i>).	20	44
3	an existential sentence when the notional subject coordinates two noun phrases linked by <i>and</i> .	22	49
4	a yes – no question when the subject is an expression of quantity.	32	71
5	a yes – no question when the subject coordinates two noun phrases linked by ‘ <i>or</i> ’.	28	62
6	a yes – no question when the notional subject is a singular noun phrase modified by a plural noun phrase.	16	35.5
7	an existential sentence when the notional subject coordinates two plural noun phrases linked by ‘ <i>and</i> ’.	18	40
8	an existential sentence when the notional subject is an expression of quantity.	15	33
9	an existential sentence when the notional subject is a zero plural.	26	58
10	a question when the subject is a singular noun ending in <i>-s</i> .	22	49
		273	

Table (24): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (7).

3. 5. 7. 5 Discussions of the Results of Task 7

Table (24) reveals that the majority of subject–verb concord problems (32 / 71%) ie in item (4) occurs when the subject is an indefinite expression of quantity in a yes-no question. Most of the participants have misused the singular verb form .However, the verb form

should agree with plural pronoun ie 'you' that follows the indefinite expression of amount 'any of'.

The second highest percentage of concord problems (28 / 62%) ie in item (5) occurs when the subject of a yes-no question consists of two noun phrases linked by 'either ... or'. Most of the participants have considered these coordinate noun phrases plural and used plural concord. However, the verb number in such constructions is determined by the noun phrase closest to the verb form.

The third high percentage of subject-verb concord problems, as table (24) shows (26 / 58%) ie in item (9), is shown when the notional subject is a zero plural.

Table (24) also reveals that concord problems (22 / 49%) ie in item (10) arise when the subject is a singular noun phrase ending in -s. Yet the subject in item (10) 'scissors' requires a singular verb, some of the participants have considered it plural, thus making a mistake.

Table (24) also demonstrates that concord problems (22 / 49%) ie in item (3) occur when the notional subject in an existential sentence is a coordination of two noun phrases linked by 'and'. Some of the participants have considered the first noun phrase of the coordination a notional subject and used singular concord

The results in table (24) also display that concord problems (20/44%) ie in item (2) occur in a yes –no questions when the coordinate subject consists of two noun phrases linked by 'either ...or'. Some of the participants have supplied a plural verb, whereas the correct one is singular.

The results show that concord problems (18 / 40%) ie in item (7) and (15/33) ie in item (1) occur in existential sentences when the notional subjects are expressions of quantity. Some of the participants have misused the concord rules that determine the verb forms in these expressions.

Significantly, the results in table (24) indicate that concord problems (16 / 35.5%) ie in item (6) in a yes –no question occur when the subject is a singular noun phrase followed by a prepositional phrase ending with a plural noun. Some of the participants have supplied a plural verb form, whereas the correct verb must be singular. Table (24) also reveals that concord problems (15 / 33%) (ie in item 8) in an existential sentence arise when the notional subject is an expression of quantity requiring a plural verb number.

3. 5. 8 Task 8

3. 5. 8. 1 A General Description of Task 8

Task 8 is a multiple choice task. It consists of ten sentences which are concerned with pronoun concord. Two alternative pronouns are given. The participants are asked to choose

the correct pronouns that are in concord with their antecedents. The aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to determine the correct pronouns which are in concord with their antecedents.

3. 5. 8. 2 A Description of Task 8 Items

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 8:

Item 1 is:

The government is cutting (its / their) losses.

The subject of this sentence is a singular collective noun ie 'government'. It refers to one entity. The correct pronoun that is in concord with this noun is (its), since the antecedent is viewed as a single unit.

Item 2 is:

Either he or his son is going to have to change (his / their) attitude.

The subject is 'either he or his son'. It is a coordinate subject which contains two noun phrases having the same gender. The first is a masculine singular pronoun 'he', the second is a singular masculine noun ie 'son'. The correct pronoun that is in concord with such antecedents is 'his'.

Item 3 is:

Has anybody brought (their / his) camera?.

The subject is 'anybody'. It is a compound indefinite pronoun. In formal English, the tendency is to use 'he' as unmarked form when the gender is not determined, but many prefer to seek gender impartiality by using a plural form (they / them) when possible in reference to the indefinite pronouns 'everyone, anybody', etc.

Item 4 is:

Donald and John brought (his / her; / their) spouses to the party.

The subject is 'Donald and John'. It is a coordinate subject which contains two singular noun phrases linked by 'and'. It requires a plural pronoun.

Item 5 is:

John's mother hurt (himself / herself) .

The subject is 'Johns' mother'. It is a third singular feminine noun .The correct suitable reflexive pronoun which agrees with this antecedent is 'herself'.

Item 6 is:

Everybody crossed (themselves / himself).

The subject is 'everybody'. It is an indefinite pronoun. The correct pronoun that refers back to the antecedent is 'himself'. But many prefer to use 'themselves

Item 7 is:

A student should always do (his / their) assignments.

The subject is 'a student'. It is a singular noun phrase of a generic reference. The correct pronoun referring back to that generic reference is 'his' since the gender of the antecedent is not determined. Many English speakers use (his / her) to refer back to generic nouns.

Item 8 is:

Every adult was holding (his / their) flag.

The subject is 'every adult'. It is a singular expression of quantity. The correct pronoun that refers back to this antecedent is 'his'; but many English speakers now use both masculine and feminine pronouns (his / her).

Item 9 is:

Each of them has assigned (his / their) petition.

The subject is 'each of them'. It is a singular expression of quantity. The correct pronoun that refers back to the antecedent is 'his'.

Item 10 is:

The family was large. (It / They) was composed of nine members.

The antecedent is not within the sentence where the referent pronoun is located. It is a singular collective noun ie 'family' which is viewed as a single unit. The correct pronoun which refers back to that antecedent in this case is 'it'.

3.5.8.3 Results of the participants in Task 8

The result of Task 8 is shown below. Table (25) displays the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their correct use of pronouns. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)
1	50	16	60	31	30
2	60	17	70	32	70
3	60	18	40	33	20
4	50	19	50	34	20
5	60	20	50	35	0
6	50	21	30	36	20

7	60	22	40	37	30
8	70	23	40	38	30
9	50	24	80	39	20
10	80	25	30	40	40
11	50	26	60	41	20
12	60	27	70	42	20
13	60	28	50	43	20
14	50	29	50	44	10
15	60	30	40	45	0

Table 25 : The marks obtained in Task 8 by all participants.

Table (25) shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in Task 8 is 80 %, whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results also show that (20/ 44 %) of the participants have failed to use the correct pronoun forms and that (25 / 56%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3. 5. 8. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task 8 Items

Each item of Task 8 shows a specific problem concerning pronoun concord and its antecedent. Different antecedents are used to indicate where pronoun problems occur. Table (26) below reveals the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

The participants' responses are tabulated as follows:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determining pronoun concord when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	a pronoun refers back to a collective noun.	22	49
2	a pronoun refers back to a coordinate subject which consists of two singular noun phrases having the same gender.	25	55.5
3	a pronoun refers back to an indefinite pronoun.	39	87

4	a pronoun refers back to a coordinate subject which consists of two noun phrases having the same gender.	23	51
5	a reflexive pronoun refers back to a third singular feminine noun.	18	40
6	a reflexive pronoun refers back to an indefinite pronoun.	31	69
7	a pronoun refers back to a generic noun.	28	62
8	a pronoun refers back to a singular expression of quantity.	30	67
9	a pronoun refers back to an expression of quantity.	22	49
10	a pronoun refers back to a singular collective noun.	14	31
		252	

Table (26): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (8).

3. 5. 8. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task 8:

Table (26) demonstrates that the majority of pronoun concord problems (39 / 87%) ie in item (3) occur when the pronoun refers back to an indefinite pronoun. The majority of the participants have used a plural pronoun to refer back to the indefinite pronoun. Quirk et al (1985:770) argue that in formal English the tendency has been to use 'he' as unmarked form when the gender is not determined. The influence of the plural in informal English usage has misled the participants to use plural pronouns.

The second highest percentage of pronoun concord problems (31 / 69%) ie in item (6) occurs when the reflexive pronoun refers back to an indefinite pronoun. Most of the participants have used a plural reflexive pronoun ie 'themselves' to refer to the indefinite

pronoun. The correct pronoun is singular because a reflexive pronoun must agree with the subject in terms of gender, number and person. However, Chalk (1984:60) argues that plural reflexive pronoun is used to refer to indefinite pronouns.

The results in table (26) also suggest that pronoun concord problems (30 / 67%) ie in item (8) occur when the pronoun refers back to singular expressions of quantity. Most of the participants have used the plural pronoun '*their*' in reference to the antecedent '*every adult*' whereas the correct pronoun must be '*his*'.

Table (26) similarly demonstrates that pronoun concord problems (28 / 62%) ie in item (7) arise when the pronoun refers back to a generic noun .The singular noun phrase '*a student*' requires a singular masculine pronoun (*his*), because the gender is not determined.

The results also reveal that pronoun concord problems (25 / 55.5%) in item (2) arise when the pronoun refers back to coordinate antecedents linked by '*either ...or*' and having the same gender. Most of the participants have used the plural pronoun '*their*', whereas the correct form to be used is the singular '*his*'.

Problems of pronoun concord of gender (23 / 51%) ie in item (4) also show when the pronoun refers back to coordinate antecedents linked by '*and*' and having the same gender. Some of the participants have used the combination of (*his / her*), whereas the correct pronoun form is '*their*' since the two NPs refer to the same gender.

Table (26) significantly reveals a greater number of pronoun concord problems (22 / 49%) ie in item (1) occur when the pronoun refers back to a singular collective noun within the clause ,thus , exceeding the number of problems (14 / 31%) ie in item (10) occurring when the pronoun refers back to a singular collective noun beyond the clause or in previous clause. In item (1) the antecedent is '*government*' and in item (10) it is '*family*'. They are singular collective nouns which are viewed as single units. So they require singular pronouns referring back to them.

Table (26) shows that pronoun concord problems (18 / 40%) (ie in item 5) occur when the reflexive pronoun refers to a feminine singular noun .The correct pronoun, in this case, is '*herself*'. Some participants have used '*himself*' considering '*John*' is the subject.

3. 5. 9 Task 9

3. 5. 9. .1 A General Description of Task 9:

Task 9 is a completion task. It consists of ten sentences. The participants are asked to fill in the gaps by supplying the simple present of the given verbs which are to be in concord with relative clause antecedents. The basic aim of Task 9 is to test the participants'

ability to specify the correct verb forms which are in concord with various relative clause antecedents.

3. 5. 9. 2 A Description of Task 9 Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 9:

Item 1 is:

It was one of the best speeches that ... ever been made in the parliament. (Have)

The relative clause antecedent is 'one of the best speeches'. The verb form which is in concord with this antecedent is 'has'. Quirk et al (1985:765) argue that if a relative clause follows a noun phrase containing 'one of plus a plural noun phrase', there is a choice as to whether the verb in the relative clause should agree in number with 'one' or with the plural noun phrase. So the choice of singular or plural can depend on whether attention is directed to the generality or the uniqueness. The attention in the relative clause is directed to the uniqueness of the antecedent in this sentence.

Item 2 is:

I am one of those who ... equal rights. (favour)

The relative clause antecedent is 'one of those'. The verb in the relative clause should agree in number with 'those' since the attention is directed to the generality of the antecedent.

Item 3 is:

Marsh is one of those rare individuals who ... finish the M.A. early. (have)

The relative clause antecedent is 'one of those rare individuals'. The verb should agree in number with 'individuals' since the attention is directed to the generality of the antecedent.

Item 4 is:

It is not the faculty numbers but the president who ... this issue. (decide).

The relative clause antecedent is 'not the faculty ... president'. The verb in the relative clause should agree in number with 'president' since it is the positive noun phrase.

Item 5 is:

He gives several reasons only few of which ... valid. (be)

The relative clause antecedent is 'only a few'. The verb in the relative clause should agree in number with 'a few'. It must be plural.

Item 6 is:

The teacher discusses Jim, one of whose problems ... poor study. (be)

The relative clause antecedent, *'one of'*, is a singular expression of quantity. It requires a singular verb form.

Item 7 is:

There are a few students who ... their home works regularly. (do)

The relative clause antecedent is *'a few students'*. It is an expression of quantity. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 8 is:

They provide me with some books and a map which ... very helpful. (be)

The relative clause antecedent is *'some books and a map'*. It consists of an expression of quantity and a singular noun phrase coordinated by *'and'*. It requires a plural verb form.

Item 9 is:

It is one of the most interesting novels which ... appeared this yea. (have).

The relative clause antecedent is *'one of the most interesting novels'*. The verb in the relative clause should agree in number with *'one'*, since the attention is directed to the uniqueness of the antecedent.

Item 10 is:

This is the only one of his poems that ... worth reading. (be)

The relative clause antecedent is *'the only one of his poems'*. It requires a singular verb, since the attention in the relative clause is directed to the uniqueness of the antecedent (*the only one*).

3. 5. 9. 3 Results of the participants in Task 9

The result of Task 9 is shown below. Table (27) presents the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their attempt to supply the correct verb forms which occur in the relative clauses and which are in concord with their antecedents.

The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)
1	40	16	30	31	40
2	80	17	30	32	40
3	60	18	30	33	40
4	60	19	20	34	10
5	60	20	30	35	40

6	60	21	50	36	20
7	50	22	70	37	0
8	80	23	50	38	10
9	70	24	30	39	20
10	50	25	30	40	0
11	70	26	70	41	0
12	80	27	0	42	0
13	10	28	10	43	20
14	30	29	0	44	10
15	70	30	0	45	0

Table 27: The marks obtained in Task 9 by all participants.

Table (27) shows that the highest mark obtained by the participants in Task 9 is 80%, whereas the lowest mark is 0%. The results reveal that (29 / 64%) of the participants have failed to supply the correct verb forms and that only (16/35%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3. 5. 9. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task 9 Items

Each item of Task 9 shows a particular antecedent which determines the verb form in relative clauses on the basis of English concord .Table (28) demonstrates the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Determination of the verb form in a relative clause when)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	a relative clause antecedent is ' <i>one of + a plural noun phrase</i> '.	29	64
2	a relative clause antecedent is ' <i>one of + a plural pronoun</i> '.	31	69
3	a relative clause antecedent is ' <i>one of + a plural noun</i> '.	29	64
4	a relative clause antecedent is a coordinate subject containing a negative noun phrase and a positive noun phrase.	32	71

5	a relative clause antecedent is an expression of quantity (<i>a few of</i>).	30	67
6	a relative clause antecedent is an expression of quantity ' <i>one of</i> '.	27	60
7	a relative clause antecedent is an expression of quantity.	24	53
8	a relative clause antecedent is a coordinate subject containing singular and plural noun phrases linked by ' <i>and</i> '.	29	64
9	a relative clause antecedent is ' <i>one of + a plural noun phrase</i> '.	30	67
10	a relative clause antecedent is ' <i>one of + a plural noun phrase</i> '.	32	71
		293	

Table (28): The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task (9).

3.5.9.5 Discussion of the Results of Task 9

Table (28) reveals that the majority of relative clause antecedent concord problems (32 / 71%) ie item (10) occurs when the antecedent is formed of '*one plus a plural noun*'. Most of the participants have considered the plural noun '*poems*' the antecedent of the relative clause, whereas the attention in the relative clause is directed to the uniqueness of the antecedent '*one*'. The relative clause, thus, requires a singular verb form. The same result (32 / 71%) ie in item (4) occurs when the antecedent is coordination of two noun phrases, the first is negative and the second is positive. The verb should agree with the positive one. Most of the participants have used a plural form considering the antecedent plural.

The second highest percentage of relative clause antecedent concord problems (31/ 69%) ie in item (2) occurs when the antecedent is formed of '*one of plus a plural pronoun*'. The verb in the relative clause should agree with the pronoun '*those*', since the attention in the relative clause is directed to the generality of the antecedent.

Table (28) also reveals that a high percentage of relative clause antecedent problems (30 / 67%) *ie* in item (5) occurs when the antecedent is an expression of quantity. Similar percentage (30 / 67%) *ie* in item (5) also occurs when the antecedent is an expression of quantity followed by a plural noun. The results demonstrate that the participants have insufficient knowledge of the grammatical rules governing such expressions.

The results in table (28) demonstrate that relative clause antecedent concord problems *ie* (30 / 67%) in item (1) and (29 / 64%) *ie* in item (3) occur when the antecedent has the form of (*one of plus a plural noun phrase*). Most of the participants seem to have paid no attention to whether the relative clause is directed to the generality or the uniqueness of the antecedent.

The results in table (28) also reveal that a number of relative clause antecedent concord problems (29 / 64%), (27 / 60%) and (24 / 53%) occur with the expressions of quantity. These occur in items 8, 6 and 7 respectively.

These results support what has been discussed in Task 4 and in the Teachers' Questionnaire: that such expressions of quantity cause concord problems.

3. 5. 10 Task 10

3. 5. 10. 1 A General Description of Task 10

Task 10 is a completion task. It consists of ten sentences. Two options are given. The participants are asked to fill in the gaps by ticking off the correct option. The aim of this task is to test the participants' ability to specify the correct subject complement and object complement. It also aims to test the participants' ability to determine the correct options for some verb forms which are governed by selectional restrictions. This task also aims to test the participants' ability to determine the correct pronoun either in the subjective or objective case.

3. 5. 10. 2 A Description of Task 10 Items:

Here is the description of the ten items of Task 10:

Item 1 is:

The children were

a. *angle* b. *angles*

The subject of this sentence is '*the children*'. It is a plural noun. Therefore, it requires a plural subject complement.

Item 2 is:

Their principal crop ... potatoes.

a. *is* b. *are*

The subject is '*their principal crop*'. It is singular. It requires a singular verb form. The verb number is determined by the subject not by the subject complement.

Item 3 is:

The police contingent dispersed ...

- a. *The rioter* b. *the rioters*

The subject of this sentence is '*the police contingent*'. It is a singular collective noun. The subject complement is plural '*the rioters*'.

Item 4 is:

... assembled.

- a. *The worker* b. *The workers*

The verb of this sentence requires a plural subject '*the workers*' because of the selectional restrictions (based on semantic requirements).

Item 5 is:

... scattered.

- a. *The man* b. *The men*

The verb of this sentence '*scattered*' requires a plural subject because of the selectional restrictions requirements.

Item 6 is:

A pedestrian saw

- a. *me* b. *I*

The pronoun in this sentence should be in the objective case ie '*me*'.

Item 7 is:

He is cleverer than ... am .

- a. *I* b. *me*

The pronoun should be in the subjective case ie 'I' as the pronoun begins the subordinate clause of comparison.

Item 8 is:

They consider the man

- a. *a fool* b. *fools*

The object of this sentence is '*the man*'. It is a singular noun. It requires a singular object complement ie '*a fool*'.

Item 9 is:

They elected John

- a. *a president* b. *presidents*

The object of this sentence is 'John'. It is a singular noun. It requires a singular object complement ie 'a president'.

Item 10 is:

The houses are

- a. *bricks* b. *brick*

The subject complement in this sentence is 'brick' which, although nominal in form, has a characterizing function closer to that of an adjective. There is often no singular/plural contrast; for example, we don't have: (*The houses are bricks*).

3. 5. 10. 3 Results of the participants in Task 10

The result of Task 10 is shown below. Table (29) displays the marks obtained by the participants as a final result of their choice of the correct options in all items.

The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total mark of each participant.

No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)	No. of Participants (45)	100% Task (5)
1	50	16	50	31	70
2	60	17	60	32	20
3	60	18	40	33	70
4	50	19	30	34	10
5	60	20	30	35	70
6	70	21	60	36	50
7	50	22	30	37	10
8	60	23	50	38	10
9	50	24	20	39	50
10	60	25	50	40	30
11	60	26	20	41	60
12	60	27	50	42	0
13	50	28	30	43	20
14	40	29	70	44	10
15	30	30	40	45	20

Table 29: The marks obtained by the participants in Task 10.

Table (29) shows that the highest marks obtained by the participants is (70%), whereas the lowest mark is (0%). The results also reveal that (19 / 42%) of the participants have

failed to choose the correct options and that (26 / 58%) of them have managed to get the passing mark.

3. 5. 10. 4 Detailed Analysis of Task (10) Items

The items of Task (10) are concerned with the different areas of concord, such as subject -subject complement, object – object complement and selectional restrictions rules, etc. Table (30) below shows the percentage of the wrong responses to each item for all participants.

Here are the participants 'responses to Task 10:

No. of Items (10)	Problem (Specification of)	No. of Wrong Answers (45)	%
1	the subject complement when the subject is plural.	25	55.5
2	the verb when the subject is singular and the subject complement is plural.	22	49
3	the subject complement when the subject is a collective noun referring to a collection of individuals.	26	58
4	the subject whether being singular or plural for a verb on the basis of selectional restrictions.	32	71
5	the subject whether being singular or plural for a verb on the basis of selectional restrictions.	31	69
6	the case pronoun concord as an objective case.	15	33
7	the case pronoun concord as a subjective case.	14	31
8	the object complement when the object is a singular noun phrase.	30	67
9	the object complement when the object is a proper noun.	28	62

10	the subject – subject complement when the subject complement has a function closer to that of an adjective.	34	75.5
		257	

Table 30 : The percentage of the wrong responses to each item in Task 10.

3. 5. 10. 5 Discussion of the Results of Task 10

Table (30) reveals that the majority of concord problems (34/75.5%) (ie in item10) occurs when the subject complement, though nominal in form, has a function closer to that of an adjective. The subject of the sentence is 'houses'. It requires a plural subject complement, but there is often no singular /plural contrast. We do not have:

** The houses are bricks.*

We have:

The houses are brick.

Most of the participants have wrongly used a plural noun 'bricks' as a subject – complement.

Table (30) also demonstrates that concord problems (32 / 71%) (ie in item 4) arise when the determination of the subject depends on selectional restrictions (31 / 69%) ie in item (5). In items (4 and 5) the verbs require plural subjects on the semantic basis. In other words, the verbs require plural subjects in agreement with the plurality as semantic feature rather than as a grammatical feature. Most of the participants have mistakenly used singular subjects because they are not well aware of the relevant selectional restrictions rules.

The results in table (30) also reveal that concord problems (30 / 67%) and (28 / 62%) ie in items (8 and 9) arise in connection with the object – object complement. Most of the participants have violated the rule of number concord pertaining to object and object complement.

The results also show that concord problems (26 / 58%) ie in item (3) occur when the subject entails notional plurality. It requires a plural subject complement. Most of the participants have mistakenly considered the subject singular as its form is singular. Quirk et al (1985: 729) argue that the subject complement has concord of number with the subject.

Table (30) reveals that a number of subject – subject complement problems (25 / 55.5%) (ie in item 1) occur when the subject is a plural noun. These participants have violated the number concord by using the singular subject – complement.

The results in table (30) indicate that concord problems (22 / 49%) (ie in item 2) occur when the subject is singular and the complement is plural. Some of the participants have determined the verb according to the number of the subject complement. As it is the verb number is determined by the subject number not by the subject complement number. Jacobs and Rosenbaum (1968: 76) state that ‘the surface subject in the sentence determines agreement’. They (1968:130) add that ‘ the verbal agrees with the number of the surface subject’.

The results in table (30) show that case concord pronoun problems (15 /33%) ie in item (6) occur when the pronoun is in the objective case. Table (30) also reveals that case concord problems (14/31%) ie in item (7) also arise when a subjective pronoun is required. Some of the participants have violated both the subjective and the objective case of pronoun as they seem to lack sufficient knowledge of the relevant concord rules.

3. 6 Detailed Analysis of the Results of the Ten Grammar Testing Tasks

3. 6. 1 Summary Sheet

Table (31) shows the marks and percentage obtained by each participant in the ten grammar tasks. The marks are arranged in the rank order of the total marks for all participants.

No. of Patrice-pants (45)	Task '1' 100	Task '2' 100	Task '3' 100	Task '4' 100	Task '5' 100	Task '6' 100	Task '7' 100	Task '8' 100	Task '9' 100	Task '10' 100	Total Marks (1000)	Percentage %
1	90	50	80	60	50	60	80	50	40	50	610	61
2	40	70	80	50	30	70	50	60	80	60	590	59
3	60	40	60	60	50	60	80	60	60	60	590	59
4	60	70	100	70	20	50	40	50	60	50	570	57
5	40	60	70	30	50	60	50	60	60	60	540	54
6	30	40	90	60	30	50	60	50	60	70	540	54
7	70	40	70	70	10	60	60	60	50	50	540	54
8	50	20	70	60	20	30	70	70	80	60	530	53
9	50	30	70	30	70	50	50	50	70	50	520	52
10	50	50	60	40	40	40	40	80	50	60	510	51
11	60	40	90	60	10	50	20	50	70	60	510	51
12	60	20	50	60	20	30	70	60	80	60	510	51
13	40	40	60	60	70	40	70	60	10	50	500	50
14	70	50	60	60	40	30	70	50	30	40	500	50
15	40	30	80	50	20	60	50	60	70	30	490	49
16	60	50	90	10	40	50	50	60	30	50	490	49
17	40	40	30	50	80	30	60	70	30	60	490	49

18	70	30	80	60	30	50	50	40	30	40	480	48
19	30	50	90	50	20	60	80	50	20	30	480	48
20	40	50	60	40	40	40	90	50	30	30	470	47
21	70	20	90	50	30	30	40	30	50	60	470	47
22	50	30	60	30	50	40	60	40	70	30	460	46
23	60	50	60	40	20	50	40	40	50	50	460	46
24	50	50	70	20	50	40	40	80	30	20	450	45
25	60	30	80	60	10	20	80	30	30	50	450	45
26	60	40	70	40	10	20	50	60	70	20	440	44
27	60	50	80	50	40	0	40	70	0	50	440	44
28	40	60	50	0	70	60	60	50	10	30	430	43
29	10	50	60	20	40	40	80	50	0	70	420	42
30	50	30	70	30	60	30	60	40	0	40	410	41
31	40	40	0	60	30	60	40	30	40	70	410	41
32	30	70	50	10	60	30	20	70	40	20	400	40
33	50	30	10	70	20	30	60	20	40	70	400	40
34	20	40	70	50	60	40	70	20	10	10	390	39
35	30	60	50	40	40	20	30	0	40	70	380	38
36	60	50	30	30	50	10	50	20	20	50	370	37
37	20	10	70	50	60	40	70	30	0	10	360	36
38	50	20	90	40	30	20	60	30	10	10	360	36
39	40	20	20	60	60	30	40	20	20	50	360	36
40	30	30	60	20	30	50	50	40	0	30	340	34
41	60	50	40	20	20	0	60	20	0	60	330	33
42	40	30	40	50	70	30	50	20	0	0	330	33
43	30	40	20	40	40	50	30	20	20	0	290	29
44	30	30	40	0	50	40	20	10	10	10	240	24
45	20	20	0	20	30	0	0	0	0	20	110	11

Table (31): The marks and percentage obtained by each participant in the Ten Tasks.

Table (31) shows that the highest average obtained by the participants is (61%), whereas the lowest average is (11%). The statistic overall average of all participants is (44.3%).

The average of each participant is obtained by collecting the marks of the ten grammar tasks, multiplying the result by (100) (the mark of each task) and then dividing it by (1000) (the total marks of the ten tasks).

The statistic overall average of all participants is obtained by collecting the results of the ten tasks, multiplying the total result by (100) and then dividing it by (45000) (the total marks of the (45) participants in the ten grammar tasks).

3. 6. 2 Discussion of the Results of the Ten Grammar Testing Tasks:

Table (32) below shows the total number and percentage of concord problems of each task for all participants. The percentage is obtained by collecting the number of the wrong answers in each task, multiplying the total result by (100) and then dividing it by (450) (the total marks of each item in each task for all participants).

The participants' wrong responses to the ten tasks are tabulated as follows:

Task No. (10)	Total Number of Wrong Answers in Each Task (450)	Percentage %
1	239	53
2	268	59.5
3	178	39.5
4	257	57
5	273	61
6	273	61
7	214	47.5
8	252	56
9	293	65
10	257	57

Table (32): The total number and percentage of the wrong responses to each task.

A close look at table (32) for the ten grammar tasks manageable one to deduce that the highest percentage of wrong answers (293 / 65%) is found in Task 9. That result means that the relative clause antecedent concord is the most difficult problem facing participants in

English concord. Relative clause antecedent concord problems arise because the participants seem to be unable to determine whether the attention in the relative clause is directed to the generality or to the uniqueness of the antecedent in cases where the antecedents consist of *one + a plural NP*. In addition to that, most of the participants, misled by the proximity concord principle, have used plural verbs for plural nouns existing in the antecedents that are close to relative pronoun, whereas attention in the relative clause must be directed to the uniqueness of the antecedent, therefore, it requires a singular verb form.

The second highest percentage of concord problems, as table (32) shows, occurs in Tasks **5** and **6** ie (273 / 61%). In Task **5**, subject – verb concord problems occur when the subjects, though plural in forms, are viewed as single units. This kind of mistake relates to interpreting things in terms of notional concord or grammatical concord. The result is in total agreement with what has been stated in the Teachers' Questionnaire. In Task **6**, concord problems occur when the subjects contain coordinate noun phrases. Sometimes the proximity and notional concord principles prompt the use of a plural verb form, whereas the grammatical concord requires a singular form with these coordinate subjects. However, the verb, in some cases of coordinate subjects, is determined by depending on the proximity principle where there is no guidance from notional and grammatical concord principles.

Table (32) reveals that concord problems (268 / 59.5%) ie in Task **2** arise because the notional concord principle influences the determination of the verb number. Most of the participants have been deceived by the plural forms of the subjects and have ignored the semantic impact beneath. Most of them have followed the grammatical concord rules, whereas the correct verb form is determined, in this case, by the notional concord since the intended meaning is singular.

The results in table (32) also indicate that subject-verb concord problems (257 / 57%) ie in Task **4** occur when the subjects are indefinite expressions of quantity.

The impact of the proximity concord principles has allowed the participants to wrongly use the incorrect verb forms. This result implies that the participants seem to have insufficient knowledge of the concord rules that work with quantity expressions.

Table (32) also shows that concord problems (257 /57%) ie in Task **10** arise in connection with the subject-subject complement, the object-object complement and the selectional restrictions. The participants have violated the number concord relating to subject-subject complement and object-object complement. They seem to be unaware of selectional restrictions or semantics requirements that govern the choice of the subjects with such verbs.

The results in table (32), reveal that pronoun concord problems of *number* or *gender* (252 /56%) ie in Task 8 occur when the pronouns refer back to indefinite pronouns, collective nouns, coordinate noun phrases and generic noun phrases , etc . Most of the participants have violated gender concord due to the antecedents' bias of gender. They have also violated number concord when they refer to indefinite pronouns or singular expressions of quantity or collective nouns as a result of the notional concord and informal English usage. For example, the participants have used a plural pronoun when referring back to indefinite pronoun, whereas the formal use requires a singular one.

Table (32) also shows that subject-verb concord problems (239 / 53%) ie in Task 1 occur when the subjects are nouns used as adjectives, (*nationality, for example*), nouns ending in ___s, zero plural, etc. These have different grammatical rules which specify the verb number (ie *singular or plural*). That result enunciates the participants' lack of knowledge of various concord rules which determine the verb in each case.

Table (32) also reveals that concord problems (214 /47.5%) ie in Task 7 arise with the subject -verb inversion either in existential sentences when the notional subjects determine the verb forms or in yes-no questions when the subjects precede verbs.

The results in table (32) also show that concord problems (178 / 39.5%) ie in Task 3 occur when the subjects are singular collective nouns. Quirk et al (1985:758) argue that in English the verb may be either singular or plural when a singular collective noun functions as a subject. A singular collective noun takes a singular verb if it is being considered a single unit, and it takes plural if it is being considered a collection of individuals or things. The participants have committed mistakes because they have been misled by the meaning or the form of such singular collective nouns.

To sum up, there is a complete match between the results of the Teachers' Questionnaire and the students' results of the ten grammar testing tasks. The teachers have reported that most of the English concord problems arise because they have messed proximity concord, notional concord and grammatical concord principles. Most of the participants' wrong responses to the grammar tasks have precisely resulted from misunderstanding concord concepts.

The highest percentage of concord problems in the ten grammar testing tasks has occurred when the proximity concord and notional concord have worked to determine the verb form.

Chapter Four: Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Introductory Word:

This chapter rounds up things by introducing conclusions, solutions and recommendations that are intended to overcome the various concord problems encountered by EFL learners and to enunciate implications for further studies.

4.2 Conclusions

As stated in chapter one (1.4) this study intends to investigate problems pertaining to concord. It tries to explore why these problems arise and why learners tend to violate the various English concord rules.

The various studies cited in the Literature Review (Chapter Two) confirm that English concord problems arise because EFL learners have not fully realised concord concepts in English.

Chapter Three has emphasized that some of the concord problems occur because learners cannot differentiate between grammatical concord and notional concord.

The findings of the study have revealed that the impact of the proximity principle on determining the verb number causes concord problems. The findings have also revealed that concord problems arise when the speaker/writer is confused about the person or number of the subjects because of intervening words or because he (the speaker /writer) makes the verb agrees with meaning of the grammatical form.

The overall results indicate that the subject verb concord appears to be a process governed solely by syntactic properties. Yet they have shown that the plural grammatical forms have contributed to violations of the verb number.

The findings have also demonstrated that concord problems occur as a consequence of the nouns and pronouns gender bias. The findings obtained from instruments used in this study affirm the hypothesis forwarded earlier in Chapter one.

4.3 Suggested Solutions

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher suggests the following solutions.

1. When English concord rules are taught, the grammatical concord principle should be followed in order to avoid the effect of informal English usage and of proximity and notional concepts.
2. A cause of confusion in English is that nouns and verbs usually form their plural in different ways. It would be seen that the first step to determine concord would be to find the subject and decide whether it is singular or plural.

3. Problems in number concord are often initiated by indefinite pronouns. These pronouns often involve the related issue of gender. Similar concord problems arise in sentences with singular antecedents of undetermined gender. So the easiest solution for such cases is to give their plural forms .
3. Writing in short sentences when teachers give grammar exercises or when learners solve their activities is envisaged by the researcher to solve the various concord problems encountered by EFL learners.

4.4 General Recommendations

Based on the findings, already mentioned, the researcher recommends that:

- 1- the new syllabus of English should focus on concord areas.
- 2- instructors of grammar should follow up recent studies and changes to learn effective ways to teach such grammar constructions involving concord.
- 3- instructors of grammar should deepen their students' awareness concerning the difference between the formal and informal constructions of concord rules.
- 4- the students should be aware that despite the grammatical fact that the proximity concept is decisive on determining the verb number in cases where grammatical and notional concepts provide no guidance, it is generally felt that it lacks validity on its own.
- 5- instructors of grammar should provide their students with grammar activities that help to solve such problematic concord situations.
- 6- instructors of grammar should realise that the most authentic way to teach grammar is to involve students in authentic grammar discovery as teaching rules from textbooks does not work on its own.
- 7- instructors of grammar should help their students to internalize concord rules by encouraging them to get involved in dialogues and in reading short stories and poems. If the students understand the particular meaning of the language, they would be grammatically more able to produce authentic sentences.
- 8- instructors of grammar should focus on the problematic areas of concord instead of complaining about their students' achievements .

4.5 Implications for Further Studies

Little has been written in the field of grammar in the Department of English when the researcher began this study. More studies are now available, a thing which justifies this study. How do we teach non- native speakers grammar? and what do we teach? are important questions that have to be answered. Other problematic areas correlated with concord such as

the status of collective nouns and demonstrative pronouns have to be investigated. These areas together with the responses to the questions already asked have serious implications for further studies.

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