EFFECTS OF CONCORD ERRORS IN THE ESSAYS OF STUDENTS IN SELECTED SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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APRIL, 2015.

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Submitted to the Department of English Language and Literary Studies, Faculty of Arts, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Masters Degree in English Language.

APRIL, 2015.

DECLARATION

This research or any part has not been presented in any form to the university or any other body whether for the purposes of assessment, publication or for any other purpose. I confirm that the intellectual content of this work is the result of my own efforts and of no other person.

CERTIFICATION

This research titled Effects of Concord Errors in the Essays of Students in selected Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis by Atinga Larai Azuwo Adamu meets the regulations governing the award of Masters Degree of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to God, my patient husband Adamu Deki Atinga, my mother Mrs. Deborah Audu and my lovely children Cebene, Rekwi, Aninbran and Deborah.

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ABSTRACT

This study is on effects of concord errors in the essays of SS II students in selected secondary schools in Kaduna metropolis. One hundred and twenty scripts ranging from tests and assignments were collected from Government Girls Secondary School Kawo, Government College Kurmin Mashi (boys), Rimi College Tafawa Balewa (boys), Government Secondary School Narayi (mixed), Queen Amina College (girls) and Government Secondary School Sabon Tasha. Thirty concord errors were analysed using the structuralist paradigms of SVCOA. Students' good and bad usage of concord were highlighted and discussed. The research revealed that students have difficulties in subject verb concord, tense concord, pronoun antecedent, subject object concord, complementation, prepositions, comparisons etc. especially as they narrate or report events in sequence and time. It is also evident that students try to avoid making complex or compound complex sentences even in the simple sentences, they have faulty concord. The study finally recommends methods and approaches that could be adopted by teachers and learners to ameliorate the prevalence of such concord error. One of these methods is to expose students to a lot of writing drills.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of Study

English Language in Nigeria serves as the official language, second language as well as the medium of instruction and communication in educational institutions. Its invaluable position is attested to by the requirements set by various examination bodies that English has to be passed at credit level before a candidate is admitted to most Nigerian tertiary institutions. The English language in Nigeria has varieties as studied by many scholars like Brosnahan (1958) four varieties, Banjo (1971) four varieties, Bamgbose (1982) two varieties, Odumu (1987) three varieties and Jowitt (1991) three varieties.

These varieties of English have great impact on the Nigerian students because, they listen to news on television and radio, read books, journals, newspapers and magazines written by authors who have used the Nigerian Standard English. It is also pertinent to note that the English Language has what we call formal and informal varieties that are, the written and the spoken form. In the written form, formal rules are applied strictly while the spoken form which is largely informal, these rules are not obligatory. The Nigerian English does not differentiate between formal and informal usage in speech; but keeps strictly to the formal in writing.

From the various varieties of English discussed above, the Nigerian student who is a second language learner is confused or ignorant on which to use. The student might choose to use that variety which he/she is exposed to or that which is commonly used. The student may even use that which his/her teacher uses even when it is sometimes incorrect. These

students have their individual Languages (L_1) which have great impact on their English especially when expressing themselves in essays. As a result of students not being able to use English appropriately in the written form; there have been cries over the proficiency and performance of these students in the subject at the Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) level.

Therefore, the need to improve proficiency in English has led many studies on the use of English among students. Various scholars like Ofuokwu (1982), Anasiudu (1983), Banjo (1969), Olaofe (1986) among others studied the grammatical errors made in the written and spoken English of users of English in Nigeria. They all agree that errors vary in complexity and source. Many researchers carried out studies in the use of English among University students e.g. Ofuokwu (1982) and Olaofe (1986) in Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. While Olagoke (1981) and Anasiudu (1983) investigated the English of students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Likewise other researchers mainly in the field of linguistics pedagogue, have for sometime dwelt extensively on providing possible solutions to the problems militating against the smooth learning of the English language especially by second language learners. Areas of Syntax, Phonology, Morphology, Semantics and Literature in English (language) have continued to receive attention. In this effort, myriad problems relating to the wrong use of tenses, unacceptable operations in lexical constructions, poor pronunciation etc. are found among non-native speakers of English. These researches substantiate various assertions involving the low performance in English among Nigerian students. The various problems have also influenced the present study on the effects of concord errors in the essays of SSII students in Kaduna metropolis.

The desire to improve the use of concord in the spoken and written English of Senior Secondary II students in Kaduna metropolis is the motivation behind this research. The SSII is the class in which students write a lot of essays and have already been taught concord.

It is also the class in which students write their qualifying examinations for promotion to the SSIII. The Kaduna State Education Resource Centre organizes external examinations for its students that is, those of the Government and Private schools. It is also observed that the Military and Command Unity Schools also organize similar examinations for their SSII students. Therefore, during marking, chief examiners and assistant examiners have observed the various errors in concord in the essays of these students. These errors have posed concern on the minds of teachers because they are committed by students who are supposed to have been exposed to the category (concord).

Concord as a grammatical category confuses a lot of people who lack proper mastery of grammatical rules. Maclean (1981:42) says "carelessness" on the part of the writer or speaker as the major factor affecting a speaker's speech or a writer's article. As a result of the foregoing there arises a need to correct the misuse of concord among learners of English language.

1.1 Need for the Study

The researcher has observed that earlier studies on the grammatical errors of Nigerian students have been treated generally. Various grammatical categories are treated in some studies like the use of tenses, verbs and prepositions. Concord has also been treated by researchers who have observed students of tertiary institutions like the Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities.

In this study, the researcher looks at the effects of concord errors in the continuous writing of SSII students. It is observed that many students are either confused or ignorant of the use of concord. A number of concord errors are made by Nigeria students when writing essays.

Most Nigerian students construct sentences that lack agreement between subject and verb, agreement between object and verb, pronoun antecedent, complementation and in tenses. It is obvious, that the teaching of grammatical structures happens to be the most fundamental aspect of language study and especially that of English. That is why, it is important to examine all aspects of grammar of English. This study, concentrates on concord in English Language. Therefore, there is the need for this research to observe some errors of concord in the essays of students in some selected Secondary Schools in Kaduna metropolis. It is expected that this study will reflect similar experiences in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Various writers, teachers and examiners have pondered over the rate of mass failure and poor performance of students at the Secondary School level in English Language.

Adeyanju (1984) states:

> *…however, many students at secondary and tertiary levels, as well as others in various professions have not mastered the English language structure usage, mechanics, and therefore communicate ineffectively.*

The wrong application of concord in student essays is a common feature in the spoken and written English of many Senior Secondary school students in Kaduna metropolis. Concord errors affect the students' overall ability to communicate and thereby, militate on their performance in public examinations. There is this general contention that the students' failure to correctly use concord is due to insufficient knowledge of its functions. Various studies on concord have been based largely at the tertiary level, but not much work has been done on its usage in the expression of Secondary School Students in Kaduna State. This

implies that the students' knowledge of this grammatical category is limited or it is not properly handled at this level. It might be based on the forms of their indigenous language and the Nigerian English. This affects the production of correct sentences as those produced in their local languages are not applicable to English. Therefore, the wrong use of concord leads to lack of fluency in their expressions in essays and causes distortion and wrong interpretation of messages in any written and spoken discourse. This study will dwell on the effects of concord errors in student essays.

1.3 Basic Assumptions

This research makes the following basic assumptions:

1. Students of Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna State use sentences that lack agreement between subjects and verbs. Example, The player score us two goals yesterday.
2. Students of Senior Secondary Schools in Kaduna produce sentences that lack concord between pronouns and their antecedents. Example:

   The male students have much time for them class work.

3. Students of Senior Secondary School in Kaduna use sentences that lack concord in tenses. Example

   I went to school library but I cannot find the book I am looking for.

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to expose the concord errors that student make as they attempt to write essays. The specific objectives of this study include:

i. To identify the effects of concord errors in the essays of SSII students in Kaduna metropolis.

ii. To examine the possible causes of concord errors.

iii. To show prevalence of concord errors among SSII students of the various schools under study.

iv. To highlight the implications of the findings of the study for the teaching of English in Secondary Schools in particular and improve on the curriculum in general.

Research Questions

The following are the research questions for this study:

i. What are the effects of concord errors in essays of SSII students in Kaduna metropolis?

ii. Why do students have concord errors in their essays?

iii. In what areas are concord errors prevalent among SSII students?

iv. How can the findings be relevant to the teaching of English language?

1.5 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

Time is very important while conducting a research, but it is pertinent to limit the scope of our study to a manageable proportion for better results. Hence, this work covers only concord errors and not all forms of grammatical errors; punctuations, spellings etc in the essays of students.

This study should have covered all Secondary Schools in Kaduna State, but for the constraints of the researcher that whatever knowledge is gained from this study would give

an insight into what obtains in other Secondary Schools. The study is limited to selected Secondary Schools in Kaduna metropolis. The research is focused on grammatical concord errors in essays of students. In the course of the research, tests and assignments would be administered to the subjects which would bring out the problems of concord and proffer measures to tackle them.

This research therefore, includes investigating, identifying, projecting, explaining and describing these concord errors. About thirty (30) examples of errors culled from the essays (60) scripts of students from selected Secondary Schools in Kaduna metropolis, the schools are: Government Girls Secondary School Kawo, Government College Kurmin Mashi, Rimi College Kaduna, Government Secondary School Narayi, Government Secondary School Sabon Tasha and Queen Amina College Kakuri.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Research on grammatical structure is important for the enhancement of language usage. Students of English as a second language (ESL) face challenges in the mastery of English language. Therefore, an in-depth study of concord as one of the most confusing class of grammatical category to learners', is a worthwhile contribution to attempt, to improve peoples knowledge of the value and application of structural linguistics as a tool for analyzing concord errors.

This study is significant in a number of ways. Thus, the research will help students by providing appropriate ways of using concord and correct any wrong use. The students would find it as an aid to efficient communication within and outside the classroom situation. It

would be useful to teachers of the English language as a material for teaching students how to use concord correctly. Authors of English language textbooks and those with grammar bias would find this study a useful guide in projecting the areas students need exposure and more detailed treatment. This would promote easier understanding of concord by students. Finally, the data collected and analyzed for the study is hoped to help in the generalization of the basic difficulty students' face in the use of concord.

In our study, we shall use the term concord to cover what others have distinguished as "agreement", "government" and "cross reference".

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Preamble

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first discusses syntax, syntagmatic relations, paradigmatic relations, essay writing and different types of essays. The second section, reviews related literature on concord and different types of concord. The third deals with the treatment of concord in journals and international magazines. Lastly it looks at the different grammars and the various ways they treated concord, the theoretical framework and the choice of the model which includes the three basic components of concord which this study investigates.

2.1 SYNTAX

Syntax according to Crystal (2008) is a traditional term for the study of RULES governing the way WORDS are combined to form SENTENCES in a language. It can also be defined as the study of interrelationships between ELEMENTS OF SENTENCE STRUCTURE, and of the rules governing the arrangement of sentences in sequence. In this use one might then talk of syntax of the word.

Yule (2007) says syntax is 'a setting out together' or 'arrangement'. It also concentrates on the structure and ordering of components within a sentence.

From the above definitions, it is obvious that syntax has to do with the rules ordering the way words are combined. These words enter into a relationship which is syntagmatic and paradigmatic to give meaning. Murphy (2010) says a syntagmatic relation exists between words that go together in a syntactic structure. For example eat and dinner. Syntagmatic relations also involve members of different grammatical categories. Syntagmatically, elements relate with one another in a horizontal or linear pattern. For instance "He beat James" ('he' as the subject relates with the verb 'beat' which makes 'James' the object, a victim).

Paradigmatic relation occurs when the set of words form some sort of paradigm, such as a semantic paradigm that contains members of the same grammatical category that share some semantic characteristics in common. Robin (1989) says paradigmatic relations are those holding between comparable elements at particular places in structures. Murphy (2010) says paradigmatically related words are, to some degree, grammatically substitutable for each other. For example, blue, black, green, grey and any other member of the color paradigm can sensibly and grammatically occur in the phrase a …chair. Allerton (1978) says paradigmatically, different grammatical constructions could be regarded as the same in

pattern due to the substitutional possibilities existing between the elements have the same pattern; For instance, they ate the food.

She beat Joseph…

I killed a leopard…

The words 'They, She, I' as subjects and nominals; 'ate, beat, killed' as verbs (active and transitive) and 'Joseph, food and a leopard' as objects and nominals.

It is as a result of the knowledge of the rules of grammar that sentences are formed to express feelings, and give account of events or happenings in written form (essay).

2.2 Essay Writing

The teaching of English and indeed any other language taught in a formal situation involves a learner's acquisition of some basic skills like, listening, speaking, reading and writing. Osasona and Onjewu (2005:186) say although writing is the last of the skills in the hierarchy, it is the most appreciated, because it enables the learner or student to use the knowledge acquired from the skills. The student is able to communicate his feelings and ideas effectively. Writing helps to display the student's ability in grammar, and vocabulary construction of sentences and punctuations.

An essay is the logical presentation of ideas or, a piece of writing that is logically presented and connected to the force of the idea or topic. It also affords the writer the ability to express his/her ideas and feelings with coherence. Osasona and Onjewu (2005:186) say an essay can also be seen as a piece of discourse which could be on any topic.

Oluikpe (2006:207) says an essay is only as good as the thought it conveys. While clear thinking alone does not necessarily produce clear writing, clear thinking does result in clearer kind of writing than the kind produced by jumbled thinking.

There are various types of essays, but the following are the most common: Narrative, Descriptive, Expository and Argumentative.

Oluikpe (2005:217) says a narrative essay is an attempt of relating a series of events or telling a story. The events in the story may be factual or imaginary. C. Ukwuegbu and Okebukola (2006:24) say the narrative essay usually follows a chronological order; that is the order in which the events occurred. It is also possible for a writer to start a story from the end; that is, the present state of affair and then go back and recount how and why the present situation arose.

An important aspect in a narrative essay is the choice of tenses. Since the narrative focuses on actions and involves use of action words (verbs). Sometimes it includes description. In a narrative essay, if the event happened in the past, the use of tenses should be observed. It is also pertinent for the writer to decide on the point of view.

Adaji and Agamah (2006:133) say a descriptive essay, describes an event, a situation or a person. Oluikpe (2005:215) says in a descriptive essay, the writer must select carefully those details which will create for the reader a vivid picture that appeals to all the senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch.

Ukwuegbu and Okebukola (2006 :32) say while describing, the writer must take into consideration the use of words which give the qualities of the subject or object of description; words like “dull”, “friendly”, “good”, “bad” and “nice”, for example, Kabir is a bad boy. He smokes profusely and usually wears a brown shirt over an orange shirt.

Ukwuegbu and Okebukola (2006:33) say the expository essay, gives detailed explanation of a process, an idea or a feeling. Adaji & Agamah (2006:136) say the expository essay is a formal writing which does not tell a story but discusses an issue giving convincing reasons. Oluikpe (2006:225) says exposition is one of the most important forms of communication. It is one of the most important essay types for students or learners to use in term papers and examinations, in colleges and in letters memoranda and professional reports in the workplace. He also says that while explaining things in writing, the writer should set out his/her information in a particular pattern. These patterns are: classification, comparison and contrast, definition, cause and effect and illustration. The expository essay is usually written quite often in the present tense which involves the use of the active voice. The present tense is usually preferred because the process, concept or idea being explained has relevance not only for the particular time.

Oluikpe (2006:220) is of the view that "an argumentative essay is an attempt to prove and persuade with sound reasons the validity of your point of view. In the argumentative essay, the writer takes a stand, states his/her opinion, support it or defend it". Osasona & Onjewu (2006:189) say "an argumentative essay demands reasoned opinions and logical presentation of facts". In an argument, there are usually two sides, what the writer does is to persuade the readers by appealing to their reasoning rather than emotions. The writer's points should be presented in a logical manner.

2.3 Definition of Terms

There are various approaches to the treatment of concord, Quirk, et al (1972:359-371) looks at concord under the sentence. Allerton (1979:149) defines concord as:

A kind of harmony between elements in question whenever context – sensitivity requires that a particular sub-class or syntactic feature should be chosen by reference to another sub-class or syntactic feature elsewhere. The sub-classification will generally involve what is normally called a grammatical category like number, case, gender, voice, aspect, etc.

For Allerton (1979), the focus is number, case, gender, voice and aspect. Robins (1971:235) also sees concord as: the requirement for the forms of two or more words of specific word classes that stand in specific syntactic relationship with each other shall also be characterized by the same paradigmatically marked category (or categories). For Hockett (1958:214) "concord" is found in endocentric instructions and in a tie bar that cuts across hierarchical structure to link certain predicate attributes to subjects, thus, the issue is the relationship between subject and predicate.

In a similar situation, Cook (1969:109) observes that concord occurs in endocentric phrases between the subject and predicate adjective in an equational clause. Concord is marked by a tie bar between the slots concerned and must be specific in grammar as gender, number, case concord or any combination of these. In endocentric constructions in which concord of categories is involved, the category of the head-word normally determines the category of subordinate words in concord with it.

Allerton (1979:149-153) distinguishes three types of concord. The first one is agreement which can be illustrated with examples from either determiner-adjective-noun construction or the subject – predicate construction in a whole range of languages. The second type of concord is "government" which occurs between verb and object and need not be marked. In English this type of syntactic linkage is signaled by case markings (e.g. causative). The third type of concord is "cross-reference". This applies to agreement between nouns on the

one hand and pronouns or genitive type affixes on the other. Quirk (1972:309-371) refer to this type of concord as pronoun – Antecedent concord.

According to Hockett (1958-218) cross-reference occurs between subject and predicate in topic between the subject and the predicate slots and must be specified. English has this concord only in the third person singular present tense. Since English language is peculiar, this particular operation stands English out, for even in Hausa language, the rules go beyond the third person. For instance, the sentence “she sees well” can best be translated as “Ta na gani sosai”. Equally, the sentence “They see well” is translated suna gani sosai. “Gani” means “see”; this does not take any form of inflection as in see-see[s].

Hartman and stork (1972:97-98) defines concord as “agreement” and go on to define government as “the determination of the morphological form of one word”. Although there are different approaches and definitions of concord, grammarians agree that concord occurs when structure changes its form because of the influence of another structure. In English, nominal subjects influence the forms of finite verbs; they also change the forms of pronouns. Occasionally there are distinctions based on ‘gender’, however, ‘number’ is the most common ground on which concord is based.

2.4 Error

Crystal (2008) says in language teaching and learning, error analysis is a technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language using any of the principles and procedures provided by LINGIUISTICS. Errors are assumed to reflect in a systematic way, the level of COMPETENCE achieved by a learner: they are contrasted with ‘mistakes’, which are PERFORMANCE, limitations that a learner will be able to correct. A distinction is often drawn between errors

which are noticed and corrected by the speaker, errors which the speaker can correct when prompted to do so and errors which the speaker cannot correct because of a lack of linguistic knowledge.

2.5 Concept of Concord in Grammar

Dada (2000:97) says: *"the basic notion or underlying principle behind sentence construction must be considered in forming grammatical and meaningful sentences".* This principle, therefore, is concord.

According to Adeyeye and Nwabuwe (2000:78), "agreement or concord is used to describe the relationship (harmony) between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence". In relation to the above definition concord deals with the subject and verb of a sentence which can be inflected. It also means that a verb agrees in form with its subject and that a verb has more than one form, in which each form matches with a particular kind of subject (Hefferman and Lincoln 1982).

Aremo (1987:33) observes that "concord" is the term used to refer to the relationship between two grammatical items whereby a certain feature in the form of the other requires a corresponding feature in the form of the other". Therefore, this means that a singular subject said to be grammatical should be accompanied by a singular verb likewise a plural subject should have a plural verb. Similarly, Corder (1975:72) states that "parts of speech that change form to show gender, number or person should agree or correspond when they are related".

For instance:

The child likes bread and butter

The men were respected for their loyalty

From the above sentences, the subjects correspond with their verbs used.

(a) As a singular subject (child) accompanied by a singular verb (likes).

(b) The plural subject (men) corresponds with the plural verb (were).

Various grammarians have treated concord as rules. For example: Adaji and Agamah (2006) say concord has seventeen rules. Umar (2010) says concord has fifteen rules while Eastwood (2003) treats concord under thirty rules. On the whole it is important to note that early grammarians treated concord under sub-headings like: Subject Verb, Subject Object, Pronoun concord, proximity concord, notional concord etc. we shall use the categorization of the latter.

2.5.1 Types of Concord

Some grammarians who treated concord in terms of subject-verb agreement include the following: Oliphant (1936:74); Hill (1958:248-273); Long (1961:36-38); Brandford (1967:107-108); Scott (1968:20); Quirk et al (1974:359-360); Christophersen & Sandved (1969:244-245); Quirk & Greenbaum (1980:175); Osasona and Onjewu (2003:234-235); Aliyu (2006:195); Oluikpe (2007:109-114) and Sabin (1999:208-209) say, the subject governs the choice of the verb in the present tense. Concord in number between subject and verb (in the present tense) seems to be the most crucial concord in English. Subject-verb concord is a feature restricted to the present tense of the verb except the verb 'to be' which has distinct forms for number and person for both present and past tense forms.

2.5.1.1 Subject-Verb Concord by Number

The rule for number concord states that a singular subject needs a singular verb while a plural subject takes a plural verb. Grammarians like Randolph Quirk, Geoffrey Leech, Jan Svantvik (1974:359); Sabin (1999:208-209); Oluikpe (2007:109-110); says, to apply this rule, three things are essential:

a) The subject governs the verb form and is not distracted by other structures which may be close to the verb;

b) One should be able to determine the subject of the sentence;

c) One should know the correct singular and plural forms of the verb.

We shall use Chomsky's (1957) context-sensitivity model to illustrate subject-verb concord. The following rules are given to handle subject-verb concord by number:

I. S → NP + VP

II. VP → Verb + NP

III. NP → NP sing

NP Plur

IV. Verb → V+S/in the context NP sing + ….

V+Ǿ/in the context NP Plur + ….

V. NP Sing → T + N + Ǿ

VI. NP Plural → T + N + S

1 The child is crying. The child are crying

Subj. Sing V. sing Subj. sing V. Pl

2 The babies are crying. The babies is crying

Subj. pl V. pl Subj. pl V. sing

Quirk, et al (1972:359), points out that a clause in subject position counts as singular for purposes of concord. For instance:

3 How he got there doesn't concern me

Subj. sing V. sing

4 To treat them as hostages is criminal

Subj. sing V. sing

The same is true of prepositional phrases, acting as subject:

5 After the meeting is the time to speak

Subj. sing V. sing

6. The government school are lacking behind, most of the private school are fair in their syllabus because they have enough teachers.

The examples above show that there is concord between subjects and verbs.

2.5.1.2 Notional Concord

Quirk and Greenbaum (1987:176) says Notional Concord is agreement of verb with subject according to the idea of number rather than the actual presence of the grammatical marker for that idea. For example:

The government have broken all their promises
Pl Pl

2.5.1.3 Noun Subject-Verb Concord

We shall illustrate this with the following sentence;

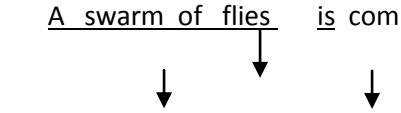
7 One of the books is missing
Pronoun Subj. sing V. sing

The noun as the subject it governs the number of the verb. There are several circumstances where another structure may distract the writer from remembering that the subject (HN) governs the number of the verb.

i. The verb agrees with the subject not with elements in the modifier of the subject.

8 Each of the tables is thirty inches long
Subj. sing V. sing

9 A swarm of flies is coming towards us



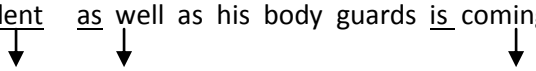
HN Subj. sing V. sing

ii. The verb agrees with the subject (HN) even if the following modifier sounds or looks like a co-ordinator joining the nouns.

Several prepositions such as; 'with', 'like', including 'together with', 'along with', 'no less than', 'in addition to', 'as well as', etc. have a strong co-ordinating sense.

When the nouns connected by any of these phrases differ in number or person, the verb agrees with the noun that stands first. The function of 'as well as' may better explain this relationship. For instance:

10. The President as well as his body guards is coming to



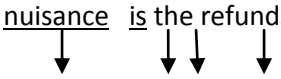
HN Subj. sing V. sing

Dinner.

(The President is the singular subject which governs the verb).

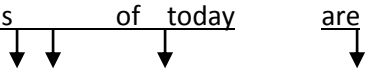
iii. The verb agrees with the subject (HN) not with a complement following it, example:

11. The greatest nuisance is the refunds we have to make.



Subj. sing HN V.sing

12. The youths of today are the hope of tomorrow



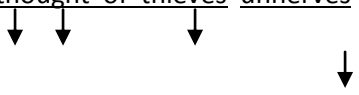
H N Subj Pl V. Pl

(the complement nouns 'refunds' and 'hope' do not control the verb form).

iv. The verb agrees with the head noun where it is contained in a noun-phrase.

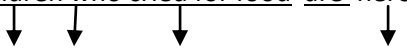
Oruma (1989:203) notes that noun-phrases are groups of two or more nouns acting as the subject of a sentence, out of which one is head noun. In this circumstance, the verb has to agree with the head noun as in the following:

13. The thought of thieves unnerves him



H N Subj. S. V. Sing

14. The Children who cried for food are here



H N Subj. Pl V. Pl

v. If for any reason the subject is moved out of the subject position, it will still control the verb form as long as another nominal is not moved into its place. For instance:

15. There are two girls in the room

V. Pl Subj. Pl

16. Where is the ball that was thrown out?

V. Sing Subj. Sing

Therefore, when 'it' is used with a relative pronoun in Cleft sentences (sentences on which a single clause is divided into two sections, each with its own verb), the relative pronoun subject is followed by the verb 'to be' in agreement with its antecedent as in the following sentences:

17. It is I who am hungry

Subj. Sing V. Sing

18. It is you who are going

Subj. Sing/Pl V.Pl

19. It is she who is stupid

Subj. Sing V. Sing.

VI. The number of noun or nouns functioning as the subject is sometimes not easy to understand. 'Fish' though singular in form can be either singular or plural. A word like, 'News' is always singular despite its plural form. For example items A to D provide us with some of such nouns.

A. Some nouns in the plural form can be either singular in meaning or they can be plural: 'Trousers', 'wages', 'Tactics', Pliers', 'Scissors', 'Odds', 'Barracks', etc are plural in meaning: therefore they require a plural verb.

For example:

20 The trousers are on the hanger

Subj. Pl V. Pl

21 The scissors are in the left-hand drawer

Subj. Pl.V. Pl

Quirk et al (1974:359) says apparent exceptions to the concord rule arise with singular nouns ending with the –s of the plural inflection (measles, mumps billiards, linguistics, physics, phonetics, mathematics) or conversely plural nouns lacking the inflection (cattle, people, clergy).

For example:

22 Measles is sometimes serious



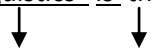
Subj. Sing V. sing.

23 Our people are complaining



Sing. Pl V. Pl

24 Linguistics is the study of Language



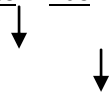
Subj. sing. V. Sing.

B. Some nouns in the plural form can both be singular or plural.

According to Hopper, et al (1984:64) and Sabin (1999:215) says when it denotes field of knowledge or activity, they are singular; in other uses, they are plural.

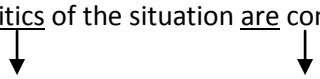
We shall use the following illustrations:

25. Politics has always attracted people



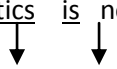
Sing. Sing. V. Sing

The politics of the situation are complicated.



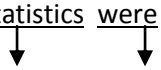
Subj. Pl V. Pl

26. Statistics is not always a dry subject.



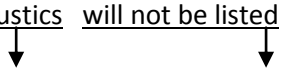
Subj. Sing V. Sing

The statistics were largely erroneous



Subj. Pl V. Pl

27. Acoustics will not be listed in the next course offerings



Subj. Sing V. Sing

The Acoustics in the new concert hall are



Subj. Pl V. Pl

C. Some nouns which specify an amount of things or a number of people are singular when the things or people involved are regarded as a unit. Sabin

(1999:217) says when subjects expressing periods of time, amounts of money, or qualities represent a total amount, use singular verbs. When these subjects represent a number of individual units, use plural verbs.

We shall illustrate with the following sentences:

28. Two plus two is four

Subj. Sing V. Sing

29. Two thirds of the sweater has been completed.

Subj. Sing V. Sing

30. Three months is too long a time to wait.

Subj. Sing V. Sing

Three months have passed since our last

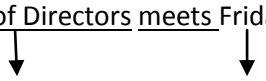
Subj. Pl V. Pl

D. Quirk et al (1979:360), Sabin (1999:216), Digga (1999:33), Chris and Brizee (2010) say collective nouns are usually singular but can be plural. If the collective is regarded as a unit, it is singular and requires a singular verb.

Examples of collective nouns are: ‘Jury’, ‘Family’, ‘Committee’, ‘Orchestra’, ‘Public’, ‘Army’, ‘Audience’, ‘firm’, ‘council’, ‘department’, etc.

In the following sentences, they are considered as units.

31. The board of Directors meets Friday



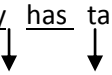
Subj. Sing V. Sing

32. The firm is one of the oldest in the field.



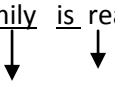
Subj. Sing V. Sing

33. The jury has taken a decision



Subj. Sing V. Sing

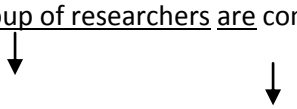
34. The family is ready for supper



Subj. Sing V. Sing

If, the members of the group are acting separately, use a plural verb.

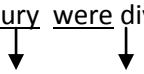
35. A group of researchers are coming from all over the world for



Subj. Pl V. Pl

a symposium next month.

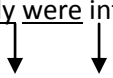
36. The Jury were divided in their decision



Subj. Pl V. Pl

(Members of the jury 'individually')

37. The family were informed as soon as they could be reached



Subj. Pl V. Pl

by telephone. (This means that individual members of the family were informed).

2.5.1.4 Compound Subject-Verb Concord

According to Sabin (1999:209), Quirk et al (1974:360-362), Osasona and Onjewu (2007:235) and Oluikpe (2009:111) say a compound subject is made up of two or more nouns and the subject can be either singular or plural. For example:

I. A compound subject coordinated by 'and' is almost always plural and requires a plural form, for example:

38. The speaker and his spouse were warmly received.



Subj. Pl. V. Pl

39. Miss Rizzo and Mr. Bruce have received promotions.

Subj. Pl. V. Pl

However, if the compound subject refers to just one person, thing or unit then the form is singular. For instance:

40. My friend and classmate has come

Subj. Sing V. Sing

(My friend and class mate refers to one person)

41. Bread and Butter is what he wants

Subj. Sing. V. Sing

(Bread and butter refer to one dish).

42. Our Secretary and treasurer is Frances Eisenberg.

Subj. Sing V. Sing

(Our Secretary and treasurer refer to one person).

II. In the case of singular subjects that are linked by 'or', 'nor', 'either …. Or', 'neither …. Nor' or by 'not only … but … also' (also referred to as coordinating conjunctions) make up a singular subject and takes a singular verb form as in the following examples:

43. Either Mary or Martha has arrived

Subj. Sing V. Sing.

44. Not only the father but also the son was involved in the

Subj. Sing V. Sing

accident.

45. I think Naomi or Shiyayet has my passports.

Subj. Sing V. Sing

However, when these coordinating conjunctions (illustrated above in II) combine with plural nouns, the verb is plural, when they combine with singular and plural

nouns, the verb agrees with the noun closer to it following the principle of proximity as stated by Quirk, et al (1974:360) and Sabin (1999:210).

We shall illustrate with the sentences below:

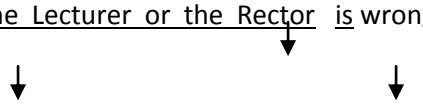
46. Neither his advisers nor the President himself has acted



Subj. Sing H N V. Sing.

wisely in this crisis.

47. Either the Lecturer or the Rector is wrong



Subj. Sing. H N V. Sing.

48. Not only the students but also the teachers were wrong



Subj. Pl H N V. Pl

2.5.1.5 Pronoun Subject-Verb Concord

Quirk, et al (1974:369) and Digga (1999:37) say pronouns can be either singular or plural when used as subjects of sentences they must agree with the verbs as exemplified in I and II below.

I. Distributive pronouns can be found in expressions such as ‘each of’, ‘neither of’, ‘one of’, ‘every one of’, ‘not one of’ are singular therefore, when they are used as subjects of sentences they take singular verb form. The same applies to these indefinite pronouns: ‘every’, ‘each’, ‘nobody’, ‘everybody’, ‘anybody’, ‘somebody’, ‘someone’ and ‘everyone’. For instance:

49. Each of the oranges looks good

Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing

50. Everyone of the girls likes eating rice.

Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing.

51. Someone across the street is playing the guitar

Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing

52. Neither of the two lads is your son

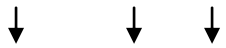
Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing.

II. Sabin (1999:213) says that a few indefinite pronouns such as ‘several’, ‘few’, ‘both’, ‘others’, and ‘many’ are always plural so they take plural verbs. For example:

53. Several members were invited

Pron. Subj. Pl V. Pl

54. Both books are out of print.



Pron. Subj. Pl V. Pl

55. Many were asked, but few were able to answer



Subj. Pl Pl. V. Subj. Pl V. Pl.

In addition, the nouns 'variety' and 'number' also take plural verb forms when they are preceded by 'a' but when they are preceded by 'the', they would be singular. For instance:

57. A variety of books are found in the library.



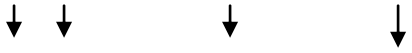
H N Subj. Pl V. Pl

58. A number of lecturers were found in the classes



H N Subj. Pl V. Pl.

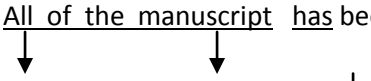
59. A variety of diskettes are found in the disk rack



H N Subj. Pl V. Pl.

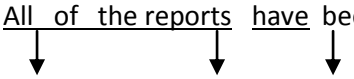
III. Sabin (1999:214), Digga (1999:39) state that some indefinite pronouns could be either singular or plural depending on whether they refer to a quantity or individual units. This could be found in words like, 'some', 'most', 'all', 'none', etc. We shall illustrate with the following sentences:

60. All of the manuscript has been finished.



Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing.

61. All of the reports have been handed in.



Pron. Subj. Pl V. Pl

62. Some of the software seems too high-priced.



Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing.

63. Some of the video tapes seem too high-priced.



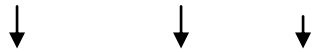
Pron. Subj. Pl V. Pl

64. None of the packages were properly wrapped.



Pron. Subj. Pl.V. Pl.

65. Most of the money is gone.



Pron. Subj. Sing V. Sing.

2.5.1.6 Subject-Verb Concord by Person

According to Oluikpe (2009:121) states that by person, refers to the following categories of pronouns:

	Singular	Plural
1st person	I	We
	Me	Us
2nd person	You	You
3rd person	he, she, it, one	they

It is clear that the subject noun or pronoun has little on the form of the verb. It is only the verb 'to be' that has several forms which change in relation to first, second and third persons of the pronoun. For example, 'I am', 'you are'. 'she is', 'I was', 'you were'. The modal auxiliary verbs are usually unchanged by the person of the subject. For instance: 'I can', 'you can', 'they can', 'she can'. All other verbs change only in relation to the third person singular of the present tense; like, 'I talk'. 'he talks'.

Oruma (1989:212-213) and Eastwood (2007:102) give the following illustrations to show concord of person with the verb 'to be'.

66. I am the child's mother ⟶ 1st person singular.

67. He
She is vigilant ⟶ 3rd person singular concord.
It

In the plural Oruma (1989:212-213) says that all persons – 1st, 2nd and 3rd (i.e. we, you, they) respectively, take the same form of the verb for concord. For instance:

68. We
You } are vigilant
They

69. They
We } were vigilant
You

2.5.1.7 Pronoun – Antecedent Concord

According to Oluikpe (2009:116) and Escalas (2010) a pronoun must agree in number, gender, and case with its antecedent. It means that pronouns depend on another structure for their meaning. Some of these pronouns that are controlled by their antecedents are he personal, demonstrative and relative pronouns.

They go further to say that:

i. A pronoun replacing a noun must have the same number as the noun it replaces.

ii. A pronoun replacing a noun must be masculine if the noun is masculine; feminine if the noun is feminine and neuter if the noun is neuter;

iii. A subject noun must be replaced by a subject pronoun; an object noun is replaced by an objective pronoun.

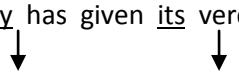
We shall illustrate Oluikpe's and Escalas model beginning with number.

70. Nigeria expects <u>everyone</u> to do <u>his</u> duty



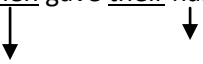
SingularSing.

71. The <u>jury</u> has given <u>its</u> verdict



Sing. Sing.

72. Either the man or <u>the women</u> gave <u>their</u> names



Plural Pl.

73. <u>Each</u> of the students wanted to express <u>his</u> opinion



Sing. Sing.

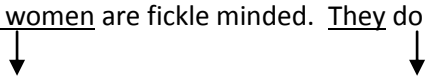
iv. Case: For example;

75. All men are created equal. They are endowed by God



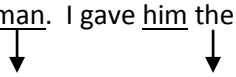
Subj. Pl. Subj. Pl

76. Some women are fickle minded. They do not reason.



Subj. Pl Subj. Pl.

77. I met the man. I gave him the letter.



Object Sing. Object Sing.

v. For gender; we have the following illustrations:

78. Look at this Lady. We believe she is ill.



Feminine Feminine

Sing. Sing.

Life in Nigeria is difficult. We expect Government to improve it.



Neuter Sing. Neuter Sing.

79. Whatever my father orders me to do, I obey him.

Masculine Sing. Mascu. Sing.

Digga (1999:42) also says in Pronoun-Antecedent Concord by number:

I. Selection of correct pronoun is based on the number of the antecedent. The words 'each', 'either', 'neither', 'one', 'nobody', 'anyone', 'someone', 'somebody', etc are referred to by a singular pronoun – 'he', 'him', 'his', 'she', her', 'its' and 'it'. For example:

80. Everyone ate his food.

Ant. Sing Pron. Sing.

81. Has anyone brought his camera?

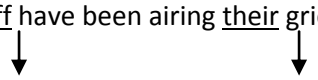
Ant. Sing. Pron. Sing.

II. Collective nouns can be either singular or plural depending on whether the collective or several individuals involved are emphasized. For instance:

82. The staff expressed its confidence in its medical director

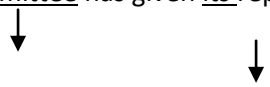
Ant. Sing. Pron. Sing. Pron. Sing

83. The staff have been airing their grievances publicly.



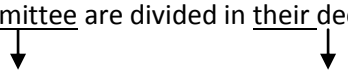
Ant. Pl. Pron. Pl.

84. The committee has given its report



Ant. Sing. Pron. Sing.

85. The committee are divided in their decision.



Ant. Pl Pron Pl.

III. A compound subject is singular when the coordinator is 'or' or 'nor' joining two or more singular nouns and should be referred to by a singular pronoun as in:

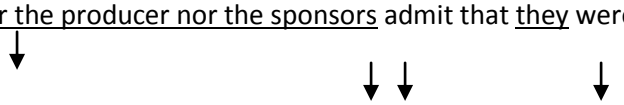
86. Neither Martha nor Alice had her handbag.



Ant. Sing Pron. Sing.

Furthermore, when one of the antecedents is joined by 'or' or 'nor' is plural, the pronoun agrees in number with the closer antecedent to it as in:

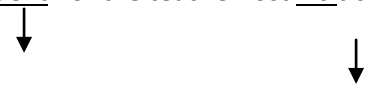
87. Neither the producer nor the sponsors admit that they were



Ant. Pl H N Pron. Pl

fraudsters.

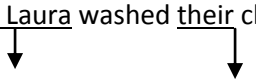
88. Neither the student nor the teacher lost his ticket.



Sing. Sing.

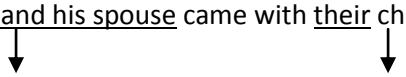
In addition, when two or more antecedents are joined by 'and', it should be referred to by a plural pronoun. For instance:

89. Garba and Laura washed their clothes.



Ant. Pl Pron. Pl.

90. The man and his spouse came with their children



Ant. Pl. Pron. Pl

2.5.1.8 Proximity Concord

Quirk and Greenbaum (1987:177) also say Proximity Concord denotes agreement of the verb with whatever noun or pronoun which closely precedes it, sometimes in preferences to agreement with the headword of the subject. For instance:

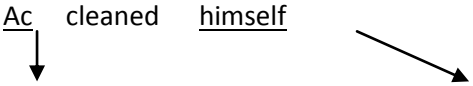
No one except his own supporters agree with him.

One in ten take drugs.

2.5.1.9 Reflexive Pronoun-Antecedent Concord

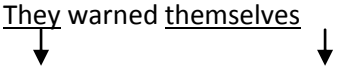
Quirk, et al (1974:369) says pronouns must agree in person, number and gender with their antecedents, for example: 'myself', 'himself', 'herself', 'yourself', themselves', 'ourselves' and 'yourself'. We shall use the following sentences to illustrate:

91. Ac cleaned himself



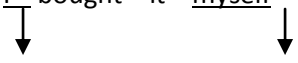
3rd pers. Sing. Masc. 3rd pers. Sing. Masc.

92. They warned themselves



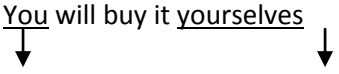
3rd pers. Pl 3rd pers. Pl.

93. I bought it myself



1st pers. Sing 1st pers. Sing.

94. You will buy it yourselves



2nd pers. Pl. 2nd pers. Pl.

2.5.1.10 Relative Pronoun – Antecedent Concord

Quirk, et al (1974:369) goes further to say that the relative pronoun should be selected to agree with its antecedent in number and person. These relative pronouns: 'who', 'whom', 'whose' and 'those' that refer to antecedents which are human, while, 'which' and 'that' refer to antecedents which are inanimate. For instance:

95. She is one of those who know all too well the stories which

Ant. (Hum) pron. (Hum) Ant (non-hum) Pron (non-hum) move us all.

The relative pronoun 'whose' can be used with either animate or inanimate antecedents as in the following sentences:

96. The house whose doors were broken

Ant. (non-hum) Pron. (non-hum)

97. The man whose purse he stole yesterday

Ant (Hum) Pron. (Hum)

2.5.1.11 Pronoun – Antecedent Concord by Person, Number and Case

Sabin (1999:252) and Warriner (1973:105) say English has three major case relationships: that is, the nominative, objective and possessive. The nominative case shows that the noun or pronoun is used as the subject of a verb, or as a predicate noun. The possessive case indicates possession while the objective case implies that the noun or pronoun receives the action of the verb or that it is the object of the preposition. Therefore, it is necessary for us to use Warriner (1973:105) tables to illustrate case relationships.

PERSONAL PRONOUNS

SINGULAR

	NOMINATIVE CASE	**OBJECTIVE CASE**	**POSSESSIVE CASE**
1st person	I	Me	My, mine
2nd person	You	You	Your, yours
3rd person	He, she, it	Him, her, it	His, hers, its

PLURAL

	NOMINATIVE	**OBJECTIVE CASE**	**POSSESSIVE CASE**

	CASE		
1st person	We	Us	Our, Ours
2nd person	You	You	Your, yours
3rd person	They	Them	Their, theirs

The following sentences are used to illustrate pronoun-antecedent concord with respect to number, person and case.

98. Tabitha is a good girl. She helps her mother

3rd pers. Nom. Sing 3rd pers. Nom. Sing.

99. The cooks took their cooking utensils home

3rd pers. Pl. 3rd pers. Pl. poss.

100. I met you yesterday and I gave you the bag.

2nd per. Obj. Sing. 2nd pers. Obj. sing

We have been able to look at the subject-verb, subject-objective concord, by a person, number, gender and case and pronoun antecedents. We shall be dealing with another category of concord; which is the tense concord.

2.5.1.12 Tense Concord

According to Digga (1999:48) tense concord can be examined from three dimensions:

(i) The conditional tense as in 'if' versus 'when' clauses;

(ii) The reported speech as in direct versus indirect speech;

(iii) Tense consistency: If the verb of the main clause is in the present tense then the verb of the subordinate clause has also to be in the present.

Therefore, we shall be discussing each of the items used.

The Conditional Tense

The most important use of the conditional tense is in a main clause when a condition is made in a subordinate clause or an infinite phrase. For example:

101. There is no problem, if he can drive a car.

Main clause — Subordinate clause or Conditional clause

102. He would be able to start the work, if his brother came

Main clause — Conditional clause

However, the conditional tense has some difficulty which is found to lie on the fact that there are three kinds of condition requiring different tense sequences. Another grammarian Forrest (1968:23-25) identifies the three conditions as follows:

i) Open or likely condition;

ii) Unlikely condition;

iii) Unfulfilled or rejected condition.

Other grammarians like Christophersen and Sanved (1968:207- 208) identify only two conditions:

i) Rejected condition which refers to the present and future;

ii) Rejected condition which refers to the past.

The categorization of forrest's model will be used for illustration in the sentences below. For instance:

103. If John writes the examination, He will pass very well

Cond. Cl. M.Cl. fut.

104. If John wrote the examination, he would pass very well.

M.Cl Pr. M. Cl. Condition

105. If Beatrice had written the examination,

Cond. Cl. Pt. perf.

she would have passed very well

M. cl Perf. Cond.

In the first sentence (103) implies that John may or may not write the examination. It is a likely condition.

The second sentence (104) implies that John is unlikely to write the examination. It is called the unlikely condition. This condition is described by Christophersen as a rejected condition which refers to present and future.

Sentence (105) is a hypothetical statement. Beatrice did not write the examination and did not pass. This condition is called unfulfilled or rejected condition by Forrest while Christophersen and Sanved called it a rejected condition referring to the past time which expresses a greater degree of improbability than the construction in sentence (121).

The above sentences can be represented in the following tables as suggested by Forrest (1968:23).

Kind of condition	**Tense in Conditional Clause**	**Tense in main clause**
Open	Present	Future
Unlikely Rejected	Past simple Past Perfect	Conditional Perfect conditional

The errors found in conditional tenses occur when the above tense sequences are not followed.

Furthermore, the following words introduce conditional clauses and require the tense sequences given in the table above, 'on condition that', 'provided that', 'as long as', 'even if', 'suppose that', 'assuming that', and 'supposing that'.

In other constructions like:

106. If she would come with me, I should be glad. The 'would' of the conditional clause is used in an important way to mean <u>was willing</u>.

Digga (1999:51) notes that the conditional sentences containing a past perfect can begin with 'had' followed by the subject; in this situation, no 'if' is necessary. For instance:

107. <u>Had she seen the hole</u>, <u>he would not have fallen into it</u>.

Cond. Cl. Pt.perf. M.Cl. perf. Cond. M.cl perf. Cond.

Christophersen and Sanved (1980:208) also note that an 'if' clause is not the only way of expressing a condition; for example:

108. <u>Unless you tell me to go</u>, <u>I'll stay</u>

Cond. Cl. M.Cl.

109. Had I known this, I wouldn't have come

Cond. Cl. PT M.Cl Perf. Cond.

110. But for him we would have been lost

Cond. Cl. M.Cl. Pf Perf. Cond.

In the same vain, 'when' clauses have tense sequences. Where the subordinate clause is in the present tense, the main clause is in the future as in.

111. When they come, I shall give them the books

Cond. Cl pr M. Cl. Fut.

112. You shall start answering the questions

M. Cl. Fut.

when the examiner tell you to

Cond. Cl. Pr.

2.5.1.13 Tense Consistency

According to Oluikpe (2009:120) to maintain a single idea, the tense used should be consistent; that is, one should not shift from one sense to another because the shifts result in lack of concord in sentences. For example:

113. We rushed to the party, but nobody is there.

Past Present

114. We rushed to the party, but nobody was there.

Past Past

115. The theme of the novel is the horrors of traditional beliefs.

Pr.

116. The novel described how Ikemefuna was killed by his step father to

Past Past

appease the gods.

Corrected – The theme of the novel is the horror of traditional

Present

beliefs. The novel describes how Ikemefuna is killed by his step father to



Present

appease the gods.

117. We went to the bookshop but we cannot find the book we



PT



Pr.

were looking for.

Corrected – we went to the bookshop but we could not find the



PT



PT

book we were looking for.

PT

Oluipke (2009:121-124) asserts that a single idea should be maintained in number, person and voice. That is to say shifting from one person to another, one number and voice creates concord errors. For example:

By person to maintain a single idea, we state the following don’ts:

I. Do not change from one person to the other, as in

When you get into the bus, one feels comfortable.

2nd pers 3rd pers

Corrected - When one gets into the bus, one feels comfortable.

3rd pers 3rd pers

For one to succeed in the examination, I must study hard.

3rd pers 1st pers

For one to succeed in the examination one must study hard.

3rd pers 3rd pers

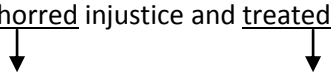
2.5.1.14 Voice

Do not shift from one voice to the other, as in:

He abhorred injustice and all workers were treated kindly.

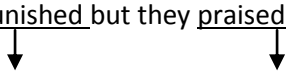
Active Passive

Corrected – He abhorred injustice and treated all workers kindly.



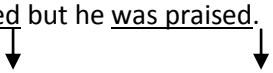
Active Active

We were punished but they praised him.



Passive Active

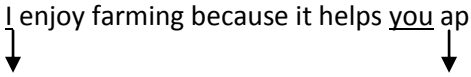
Corrected – we were punished but he was praised.



Passive Passive

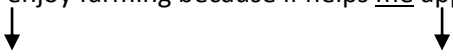
2.5.1.15 Number

I enjoy farming because it helps you appreciate nature.



1st pers. 2nd pers

Corrected – I enjoy farming because if helps me appreciate nature.



1st sing. 1st sing.

From the foregoing we have looked at the various components of concord, it has become clear that for the study of concord we need to look at sentences to see how the elements relate to each other to determine which element connects other words.

For example:

The government have broken all their promises.

Pl. Pl.

2.6.1 Journals on Concord

Nzerem (2008:257-266) in the journal of Nigerian Languages and Culture, gives rules of concord in English language. He says concord is a term in grammar used to show cordial relationship in gender, case, number or person between different words that share a reference. For example, if a sentence contains a proper noun, “Hilda” and somewhat later a pronoun ‘she’, and they refer to the same person, we say that they agree in number (for both are singular) and gender (for both are feminine). Gheredio and Anene-Boyle (2007:67) see concord as a term used interchangeably with agreement, which describes the relationship between the inflectional forms of the different element within a sentence. The source further highlights that agreement involves the relationship between the subject and its verb, on the one hand, and a pronoun and its antecedent, on the other.

The modern rules of concord are few and relatively simple. Supporting this, Eka (2001-181) identifies three types of concord in English. They are:

i. Subject/verb concord

ii. Pronoun/antecedent concord

iii. Time reference concord

Under the subject/verb concord, the subject/verb governed by three principles which are:

Grammatical concord

Notional Concord

Principle of proximity

Pronoun/Antecedent Agreement

An antecedent is the compound noun, or pronoun to which a pronoun refers. The referent pronoun and its antecedent must agree in person, number and gender. The pronoun and the antecedent must be in agreement. There are three forms of the persons in English – the first person, 'I', 'We', second person, 'You' and the third person, 'It', 'He', 'She', 'They'.

Since a pronoun typically restates a noun, called its antecedent, it must agree with its antecedent in gender and number. It means that:

i. A pronoun replacing a noun must have the same number as the noun it replaces. For instance:

The Committee has given its verdict

Singular Singular

ii. A pronoun replacing a noun must be masculine if the noun is masculine, feminine if the noun is feminine and neuter if the noun is neuter. Examples:

Look at the boy: He is handsome

(Masculine) (Masculine)

Singular Singular

Doris is in the house. She wants to see you.

(Feminine) (Feminine)

Singular Singular

Nigeria is difficult. It will improve

(Neuter) (Neuter)

Singular Singular

iii. Indefinite pronoun antecedent such as 'everyone', 'everybody', 'each', 'neither', 'nobody', and 'any person', will take a singular form of the verb. For instance:

Everyone has his role to play.

Nobody has the right to take his son's life.

iv. The impersonal pronoun 'one' is used formally in the following ways e.g.

One must allow oneself to be, an out-law.

One has to correct one's mistakes on time.

v. Collective noun can take either singular or a plural pronoun depending on the intended meaning. For example:

The class keeps its secret to itself (Singular)

The army, have not decided about who to enthrone as President (Plural).

vi. The relative pronoun 'who,' is used when the antecedent is a thing: while 'that' is used when the antecedent is either persons or things. For instance:

The boy who made a first class is here.

The car which (that) I sold is new.

The women that (who) cooked the food have arrived.

Time Reference Concord

This means that for the purpose of maintaining a good idea, sentences must be the same in voice and tense. Eka (2001:184) asserts that with regard to time reference, emphasis has tended to be on the need for consistency. Examples:

Thomas took his cutlass, killed a snake and burnt it.

The footballer trains hard, plays well in matches and maintains a high level of discipline in camp.

Comrie (1990:3) suggests that it would be impossible for any human race to deny acquaintance with the concept of time and make sense.

Fatusin (2004:45) says there are grammatical errors in the English usage by the Nigerian Undergraduates: Adetugbo (1979:167) observes that English is "used with some degree of proficiency by about 10 to 15% of Nigerians". That was way back in 1967. However, the increase in percentage of speakers does not seem to have been matched by an increasing level of proficiency. Orisawayi (1987:6) identifies the fact that poor grammatical performance of secondary school level students is attributable in part to the fact that their teachers who serve as models for them are "themselves at various stages of proficiency or competence" in English. This agrees with what Grieve (1964:77) meant when he says that:

The Universities are increasingly worried about the 'illiteracy' of their undergraduates, all of whom hold at least a school certificate with a credit in English Language.

Fatusin sampled 450 subjects and analysed the following errors under Grammatical Errors, Error of Passivisation, Error of Tense, Errors Associated with Prepositions, Errors of Pronominal usage, Erros Associated with Articles, Errors Associated with plurality and Errrors of Non-sentences.

For example:

Grammatical Errors

Subject verb concord. Out of a total of 450 subjects, 350 manifested problems with subject-verb concord in their writing. Which are thus:

i. "…Billingualism have many functions'

ii. …'an individual learn the second language

iii. …'Whenever there is a matriculation ceremony the students takes'.

Subject-Complement Concord

This type of error manifested in 15 out of the 450 scripts. They are:

i. …"Nigerians became a bilingual as a result.

ii. Code-switching and code-mixing are the problem.

Errors Associated with the use of the Verb BE About 250 scripts out of the 450 had this problem which accounts for 62.5% of the total subjects sampled. The errors were found in the use of –e n participle for the –ing participle (been for being) or using the wrong tense forms of the verb BE. For instance:

"…the English language is been used in Nigeria …

"… the business of the day is been conducted in English.

"… it is been accommodated.

Errors of Passivisation

Two major areas of error identified in connection with passivisation are using the wrong form of the lexical verb and the auxiliary verb BE.

Out of 450 subjects sampled 150 had errors of passivisation which are as follows:

'This can be discuss under two main subheadings'.

"It is English that is use in such cases in order to bring everybody together"

It also serves as a national language use in government".

Errors of Tense

There were errors of tense in the scripts of 351 out of the 450 scripts sampled. This accounted for 78% of the total number of scripts sampled. Among the many errors the following were isolated e.g.

"Despite the fact that it is a language that creep in form the former British Empire".

… People who came to colonized them".

"The will be able to recognized the various problems.

Errors Associated with Prepositions

The following are some of the sentences containing the errors of prepositional usage.

"English serves as a means of interaction between the ethnic groups in Nigeria" This is of two ways namely:

".. may say or communicate with Yoruba instead of English.

Errors of Pronominal Usage

Errors associated with the use of pronouns were of three kinds namely, using a pronoun without an apparent nominal antecedent (as in a & b) using the wrong pronoun (masculine for the feminine gender and vice versa as in c & d). The following are some of the examples of sentences with pronominal errors:

a. …'when they came to colonize us they have the rule to teach us the language so as to make of their journey easy"

b. It enable the entire world to accommodate us in what they do".

c, If a woman is proficient in English then he can climb the career ladder to any level".

d. For instance I know of a girl who is not yet thirty years old and still he is made the manager of a company".

Errors Associated with Articles

There were two major subtypes of errors associated with articles. There were outright omission of articles where necessary and the use of the wrong articles.

For instance:

"The English language is language of white people".

".. is language used in political arena".

"… it is a omen of good things to come when a worker is given leave to do further studies".

"There is limit that one can go in civil service without good mastery of English".

Errors Associated with Plurality

150 out of 450 had problems with plurality. These are:

"It is often difficult to caution ourself when we code-switch".

"The function of English in Nigeria is many and be said to…"

Also in social gathering which involve educated elite.

Errors of Non-Sentences

Several anomalous constructions were found in 51 out of the 450 sample scripts which amounted to 20% of the total scripts studied. These constructions ranged from making a subordinate clause stand as a whole sentence, making more than one sentence stand as a single sentence, to a jumbling together of several though units linked together by coordinating conjunctions. For instance:

i. "Since Nigeria does not have a single language used"

ii. People who came to Nigeria to colonized them and they came with the theory of 3 CS"-

iii. "There are three types of bilingualism we have personal, governmental and society bilingualism".

Summary of Error Types

Table showing the summary of the pattern of performance in the various grammatical error types.

S/N	ERROR TYPE	TOTAL NO OF CANDIDATES	NO. OF CANDIDATES AFFECTED
1.	Articles	350	77.77%
2.	Subject Complement concord	15	3.33%
3.	Subject-verb concord	350	77.77%
4.	Passivisation	150	33.33%
5.	Plurality	150	33.33%
6.	Prepositions	50	11.11%
7.	Pronominals	200	44.44%
8.	Non-sentence	51	11.33%
9.	Tense	351	78%
10.	The Verb (BE)	250	55.55%

From the foregoing table, errors associated with articles and subject-verb concord are the error types with the greatest frequency of occurrence. Next to these are errors associated with the verb BE with 55.55% of the total number of the population sample being involved. Virtually all other errors, ranging from subject-verb concord, passivisation, tense, preposition through pronominalisation and articles to non-sentence, are clearly errors of ignorance or incompetence.

Some errors of concord as culled out from the SAIWA JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION; ISSUE 5 English Department, ABU Zaria 1988. These are samples of errors from the students essays from 1971-1985.

Wrong Concord

1. One of the reasons why I like to be a doctor are that they take care of patients.

2. Everybody in the world need a purpose in life.

3. Developing language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writting are the ways to achieve understanding.

Errors in Noun Phrases

They have shed innocent bloods.

Most people choose a career because of the specialness of the career.

Tense Errors

When I make my plans known to my friends … they only laugh.

Most people choose a career because they think there is pride in it.

Wrong Passive Forms

This kind of question is often ask.

They are often make use of.

Future Tense for Habitual Tense

The masquerade will sing and its members will respond.

Subject Complement Concord

According to Ardehali (2003) when the subject complement in a copulative clause is a noun phrase, there is not always subject-subject complement number concord. In such cases, sometimes the verb agrees in number with the complement, rather than the subject – in other words, the choice of the verb number is dictated by the subject complement rather than by the subject. It is then that a construction having only subject complement-verb concord is derived by transformation from one in which there is only subject-verb concord and that the subject-verb concord can be considered as remaining intact in the derived construction if the conventional labeling of its constituents is revised.

When a subject complement is a noun phrase, there is usually concord of number between subject and subject complement e.g.

Her father is a member of Lloyd's More than 40 conservative MPs are members of Lloyd's.

There are, however, cases when such a concord does not exist, i.e the subject and the subject complement differ in number.

My only hope for the future is my children.

Acknowledging the existence of such cases the prescriptive role of number concord in copulative clauses stipulates that the verb follows the number of subject whatever that of the complement may be.

I Fowler then gives several examples violating.

Examples

Appropriate use of concord by native speakers, excerpts culled from international magazines like; Newsweek and Times Magazine.

Excerpts of concord culled out from Newsweek and Time Magazines (International Magazines)

These excerpts serve as good examples of the effective use of concord in essays to show harmony and coherence.

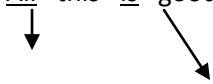
Newsweek April 3, 2006

His coalition and his cabinet <u>are</u> out of control (compound subject and plural verb). But that strategy <u>seems</u> to have backfired (singular subject and singular verb).

He imagined winning a second term by sheer force of personality, thrusting himself onto the public stage. (pronoun concord antecedent) singular pronoun.

Newsweek November 10, 2002

All this is good news



SingularSingular

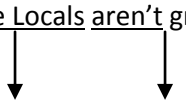
There is no denying that Trag has widened the gap between Britain and its continental neighbours (Singular subject/singular verb).

No one suggests that Blair is entirely out of the European game



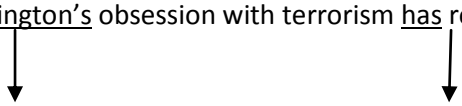
Indefinite pronoun singular verb

The Locals aren't gripping much, either.



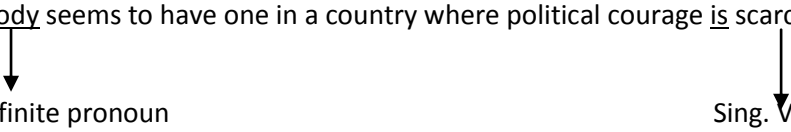
Plural Plural verb

Washington's obsession with terrorism has roots that are horrifically real.



Singular subject singular verb

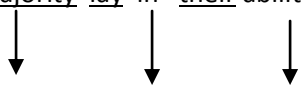
Nobody seems to have one in a country where political courage is scarce.



Indefinite pronoun Sing. Verb

The Federal Government has been dodging any major overhaoul of provincial finances since 1985, preferring a patchwork of temporary fixes. (The government as an entity).

The power of the Democratic majority lay in their ability to set the



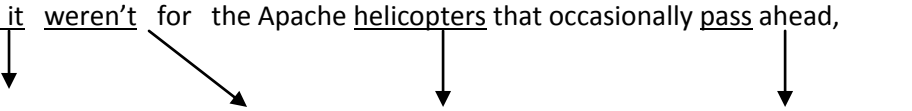
Plural subj. Plur verb Plur Object

agenda and focus attention on issues.

Subject Object Concord

Time Magazine May 3,2010

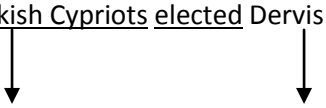
If it weren't for the Apache helicopters that occasionally pass ahead,



Conditional Verb Plur subj. Plural verb Clause

casting ominous shadows across the lawn.

Turkish Cypriots elected Dervis Eroglu President on april 18.



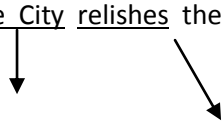
Subj. Plur. Plural Verb

The ash plume reached the troposphere, some 35,000 ft.

Only now, in the wake of SEC suit against Goldman, are investors beginning to suspect they were hoodwinked.

Democrats say it underscores the need to reregulate an industry gone wild.

The City relishes the attention.



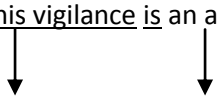
Sing. Subject Sing. Verb

Time Magazine April 8, 2002

The Israelis did get their hands on some interesting papers.

By the time Sharon's cabinet met in an emergency session the next nigh, militants had struck again, killing four Israelis in a settlement near the West Bank City of Neblus.

The flip side of all this vigilance is an anesthetized sensibility



Singular Subject Singular Verb

As a Queen Mother, Elizabeth was an impeccable defender of the Royal Family against modernity and change.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

There are various approaches to the study of concord. We shall review a few of them and some theories in this chapter. They are thus:

VARIOUS GRAMMARS AND THEIR THEORIES

There are various schools of grammer; the structural, the systemic model and the transformational generative approach. Each grammar approach has its mainstay, which distinguishes its basic operations from that of others. It is pertinent to note that the rise of these approaches have been occasioned by the need to understand human language. Therefore, it can be deduced that subsequent perspectives came into the fore to explore the inadequacies of the preceding ones. However, there are many instances where there exists unanimity of standpoints among all the approaches. Although there are sameness of basic technical terms found in all contemporary approaches which are offshoots of the earlier ones.

The traditional grammar makes the assumption that all languages have to conform to the grammatical structures of the Latin without any regard to their difference.

Lyons, (1974) says the traditional grammar is over 2,000 years old, it includes the works of Classical Greek, Roman grammarians, Renaissance writers, and 18th century prescriptive grammarians. Many linguists like Lyons(1974) and Palmer (1971) are of the opinion that, the

term ‘traditional’ is used in a pejorative sense, identifying an unscientific approach to grammatical study in which languages are analyzed in terms of Latin, with scant regard rule are empirical facts. The categorization of syntactic elements known as “parts of speech” or Pryse (1984) tags “Tribes of Words” is a basic contribution of this grammatical thought. Another contribution includes the elements such as case, voice, mood and person which until today are used as important terms in syntactic analysis.

According to Palmer (1971) the traditionalist approach consists of normative rules, rules which tell us what we ought to speak and write. Aliyu, (2006) supports this idea and sum this approach as “rather canonical”. The traditionalist rigid syntax is traceable to Latin. For instance, the rule that one must not end a sentence with a preposition or, that the preposition is a word you must never end a sentence with comes from Latin. In fact, it is true that Latin does not permit sentences with final preposition, and it is even true that ‘form’ words, as they are often called, like prepositions and conjunctions are not permitted at the end of the line or verse, even when this is not the end of a sentence.

Context-sensitivity is used by the traditional school; Lyons (1968:235-247). A grammar is context-sensitive if at least one of its rules refers to the symbols that are required to occur to the left and or right of the rewrite rule. The rewrite rules indicate a restriction in the context in which they are to be applied. For instance: x y /a-b/. Reads as follows: X is to be re-written as Y only in the context indicated between the slants (where the dash shows the place in the string which the replacement occupies). Therefore, in many languages, the constituents of a particular syntactic construction are said to agree or be in concord with respect to such features as gender, number, case and person. The problem of this approach is that it makes the assumption that all languages must confirm to the grammatical structures of the Latin without regard to their uniqueness.

Ferdinand De Saussure was the founder of modern Structural Linguistics. He sees a word as a linguistic sign which is a two-sided entity, consisting of a sound-form and a concept referred to by it, De Saussure, (1916). This idea received a wide acclaim in structural linguistics. A concept representing our knowledge about a real-world object is viewed as having an almost infinitely large number of attributes characterizing this object from all facets, its characteristics and relations with other objects. Aliyu (2006) sees the structural approach as a slight deviation from and or advancement of the traditional.

The main preoccupation of this school of thought was that language had a structure. All linguists try to establish regularities, patterns and rules in languages; however the structuralists, most especially the Bloomfildians envisaged language structure in a very precise and limited way. To them, the structure of a language consists of the unit of phonology – phonemes (sound system) and the morpheme as the unit of grammar.

There is a sharp contrast between the traditionalists and the structuralists because the structuralists emphasize the structural function of grammatical elements as the pattern in syntactic constructions, the traditionalists categorize elements as fixed entities using parsing, and presenting them as parts of speech. Structurally, elements well positioned in construction could have different grammatical labelling due to their functional load. For example, “The young lady is her”, would have “The young lady” as subject by function and noun phrase by name. The idea of “S.V.C.O.A” pattern (S-Subject; V-Verb; C-Complement; O-Object and A-Adjunct) is a structuralists orientation.

The structuralists also formulated the idea that any linguistic element exists and derives its value through relationships with other linguistic elements, Saussure (Ibid).

Lyons, (1977) says linguistic elements at any level of analysis are interrelated in two dimensions – the language as a system and the language in use ("langue and parole in Saussuream terms) or language-system and language behaviour". The relationships in the language system are known as paradigmatic, and syntagmatic elements relate with one another in a horizontal or linear pattern. For instance, "we beat Hassan" ("we' as the subject relates with the verb "beat' which finally makes 'Hassan' the object, a victim). Paradigmatically, different grammatical constructions could be regarded as the same in pattern due to the substitution possibilities existing between the elements.

For instance:

We beat Hassan.

I ate the meat.

She killed a python.

Have the same pattern: 'We', 'I', She as subjects and nominal's; "beat, ate, killed as verbs (active and transitive) and 'Hassan, food and the Python' as objects and nominal's.

Dependency as an offshoot of the structural approach treats concord as a morphological rule: The rules relating verb features to phonological shapes will be context-sensitive, and be able to account for the syntactic-semantic properties of the verb's subject which is easy to point out in (Hudson's) daughter-dependency construction and is connected to the verb by a sister-dependency trace line. Hays (1972:223-239) shares Hudson's view on dependency and adds that in a dependency structure, every element co-occurs with its governor or its dependents if any. Therefore, in English the subject of the sentence governs the verb if the subject is singular, the verb is singular and if the subject is plural, the verb also

is plural. Scott (1968:21) and Quirk et al (1972:359) express a similar point of view. This approach does not indicate how to determine the head noun in a complex subject. Although it gives a good description of concord.

The systemic approach of grammar was propounded by Michael A.K. Halliday (1961). Before Halliday there was J.R. Firth (1890-1960) founder of London school of linguistics. Firth's theory is generally summarized under the term 'context of situation and Halliday's work was based on this Firthian conception; the systemic grammar is also sometimes referred to as Neo-Firthian Grammar. The model has structure at the surface grammar and a system of semantic features at the deep grammar. With this model or approach, grammar itself is a level syntax and morphology are not separated as levels but are accounted for within units on the grammatical rank scale. These explain why this approach is sometimes referred to by a third name Halliday's "scale and category grammar". Out of the three references (systemic grammar, Neo-Firthian grammar or scale category grammar, the systemic grammar is the most descriptive of the nature of this approach. It is a system founded on a complex network – a system of systems.

According to Berry, (1975), Faucett and Halliday (1985), systemic grammar approaches its analysis based on a sewes of systems. Each system is a set of options of which one must be chosen at each relevant point in the production of an utterance. For instance, in English, the speaker or writer makes choices among systems of number: singular or plural, tense: past, present or future, mood: declarative, imperative, actuality, exclamatory, interrogative and subjunctive; person: first, second and third; gender: masculine, feminine or neuter etc.

Eka (1994) explains further that according to this model all languages have units' structure classes and systems. Sentences and clause are instances of the category of unit; verb and noun are instances of classes, subject and complement are instances of classes; subject and

complement are instances of structure. Unit, structure and class form a system of categories of the theory of the grammar, while clause, sentence and subject may be said to be descriptive categories is particular instances for description.

From the above, language is viewed as a resource used for communication and not as a set of rules. The approach affirms the interrelativity of words and grammatical structures (Lexicon grammar) this is to say that words and their structural patterning are closely related to meaning, and therefore language cannot be analyzed in isolation. That is to say in whatever situation, language users continue to make constant choices. These choices are essentially choices of meaning but are expresser for instance, by intonation, words and grammatical structures.

Berry (1975), says the structure of systemic grammar ideas with models that can be grouped under common features. Structures are categorized in terms of likeness and repetition. For example:

a) Jummai pushed the window forcefully.
b) Some ladies played tennis ball in f\dreams.

Sentences A and B have the came patter. “Jummai” and “Some ladies” each play the same part in their respective sentences (Subject). “Kicked” and “Played” are predicators; the “window” and “tennis ball” are complements (objects); “Forcefully” in their dreams” are adjuncts.

The label generative refers to a grammar’s capacity for predicting, from the basis of the small set of sentences on which its rules are founded, every possible sentence of that language. At the same time, the grammar must not predict any sentence which is not accepted as belonging to the language in question.

Anderson (1973) opines that the framework of human language is viewed as a rule-governed phenomenon. He goes further to enunciate that the grammar of a language is a set of rules sounds and meanings. In particular, the generative approach contends that a grammar must contain a syntactic (or syntacto-semantic) and a phonological component. The syntactic component consists of the 'base', which generates abstract underlying phrase-markers (deep structures) for sentences; the lexicon, which specifies phonological, syntactic and semantic information for lexical items; and the transformations, which convert the underlying phrase-markers into derived phrase-markers (surface structures). The rules within each component of a grammar are motivated (synchronically) on the basis of economy and generality.

Lyons (1970) asserts that by publishing the epoch-making book, syntactic structures in (1975), Chomsky revolutionized the study of human language. Chomsky believed that human language goes beyond the mere study of its corpus (predetermined words and expressions). To him, the rules of syntax must account for those unheard constructions which are grammatical.

In the generative approach, every sentence must have an NP (Noun Phrase) and a VP (Verb Phrase) structure, and that all sentences could be transformed to the negative, interrogative and imperative. All sentences – simple, compound, complex or compound-complex have their 'kernel' – a vital and basic sense that contains the thrust of the message.

As more recent approach, the generative advances a more tenable argument in the sub-classification of sentence types as to whether they are passive or active, depending on the role of the verb and verbal group. The clichéd sentences: "John is easy to please"; "John is eager to please" come to mind. The structuralists using the paradigmatic scheme see 'John as the grammatical subject of both sentences. But the generativists, see 'John as the object

in “John is easy to please”, and subject in “John is eager to please”. The argument is, in the first sentence ‘John’ is the object of a pseudo-passive construction, and in the second, a subject who stands to perform, that is, ‘to please others’ (Palmer, 1971).

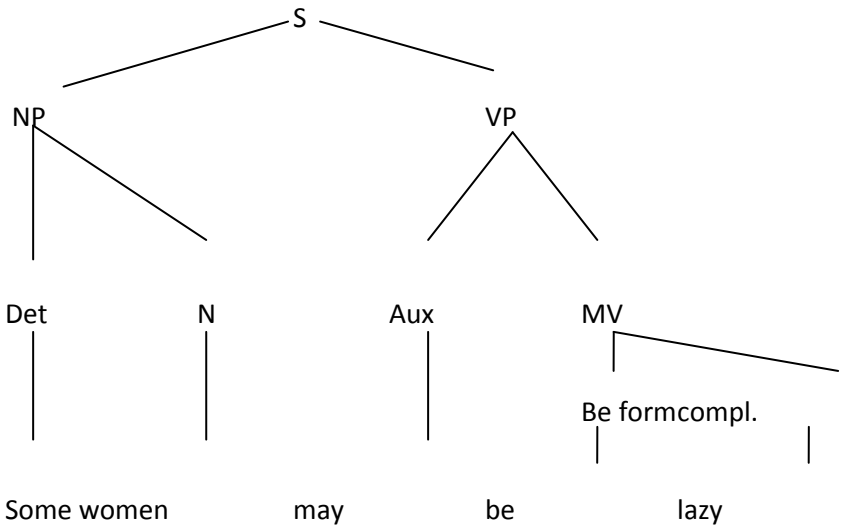
Chomsky’s (1957) grammatical model has a syntactic base-that is, sentences are first specified as a configuration of syntactic categories (noun, verb, adverb, etc) and only later are lexical items inserted into the syntactic frame. A major and most notable syntactic analysis in the generative approach is the phrase-structure grammar. The method is a graphic representation of a given sentence, representing the deep structure relationships which underline a spoken or written sentence. The phrase structure grammar entails some basic rules, numbering at least six.

a. S ⟶ NP + VP
b. VP ⟶ V + NP or VP + AUX + MV or V + NP + PP or VC + COMPL. + NP (Note PP – P + NP)
c. NP Det + N or Det + Adj + N
d. V Vi (Vi + NP) or (Vc + Compl.)
e. Det articles (e.g. the, a, some, an, etc.)
f. N words such as boy, girl, woman, dog etc.

The rules above are fairly easy to interpret. In (a) the sentence can broadly be branched into noun phrase (NP) and verb phrase (VP) and the VP may include constituents such as (a) verb + noun phrase (b) auxiliary verb + main verb. In rule (d), the verb may have optional constituents: intransitive verb (VI), transitive verb (VT) plus noun phrase or verb which is followed by a complement (VC). The braces ( ) show that any of the elements placed therein

may be to generate a grammatical structure. That is, the braces indicate a choice among the optional elements. Let us analyze the sentence:

"Some women may be lazy"



These phrase structure rules will produce a large number of strings. As we increase the number of lexical items in the sentence, we must invariably extend the set of more potential sentences.

Transformational generative approach or theory is relevant to our study but there is more to concord than number concord. There is the need to show how elements in a sentence relate to each other and how they depend on each other, this theory does not capture or give us information on such relationship.

According to Michael Alexander Kirkwood Halliday, Angus McIntosh and Peter Stevens (1964:19) "Errors are seen as an inevitable part of the language learning process. An error is described as the flawed aspect of the learner's speech or writing and specific deviation from a described language feature". By this it means that a learner's error could emanate from

the written or spoken media. Most times, this is caused by such linguistic problems as negative language transfer (a situation whereby a learner wrongly applies the knowledge of his first language to the target language.

Douglas Brown (1990:164) goes further to state that, Errors that are seen as an unavoidable and necessary part of the learning process are no longer regarded as negative and unwanted signs but rather as a positive source of information regarding the state of the learner's target language.

Okamura (1995:26) agrees that researchers have come to judge the occurrence of learner's errors as a stage of language learning process rather than unacceptable behavior to be corrected as soon as possible.

Error Analysis also called a posteriori or weak hypothesis is concerned with the errors that students commit while trying to produce utterances or sentences in the target language. It is this language that Larry Selinker (1972:12) called interlanguage, transitional competence or idiosyncratic dialect. A learner's interlanguage may change as he progresses further in the target language.

Brown (1980:165) maintains that errors, on the other hand, arise from lack of linguistic competence in the target language. They are noticeable deviation from adult grammar, lexis and discourse patterns of a native language reflecting the inter language competence of the learner. According to Corder (1981:167) errors may originate from little or no effort on the part of the learner or inadequate explanation of the target language form and also through insufficient practice activities. They may also arise as a result of interference from the source language or mother tongue. Errors therefore, have to do with insufficient or complete lack of the knowledge or partial mastering of the target language system which involves syntax, phonology, morphology and semantics.

Selinker and Lamendella, (178), and Major (1988) state that once a learner feels that he has sufficient command of the target language he needs to communicate with, he normally ceases to develop his Target Language (TL) grammar. The Learner's TL then depends on the knowledge of the language he has already mastered.

Corder (1981:85) says that errors may occur due to a number of reasons: the major one include negative interlingual transfer, (or interference), intralingual transfer, learning stage, teacher, learner and method induced errors.

From the fore-going, it is clear that errors are found in the language of second language learners, especially in English, which is the Target Language. We shall illustrate with the syntax which deals with the category we are dealing with.

My teacher's house are big.

My names are.

I bought some book.

Error analysis is significant to a language learner. It provides the learner with a means of testing his hypothesis about the nature of the language he/she is learning. The errors that students make are evidence that they are extending previous knowledge to form new utterances and sentences. Errors serve to evaluate and provide feedback on the quality technique and materials. It enables a teacher with a means of finding out the deviation between the standard norm and students' interlanguage. But error analysis fails to account for error avoidance strategies of the L_2 learner. Sometimes, absence of errors is no cause for rejoicing because it might be that the student is avoiding those structures that he is not quite familiar with. The absence of errors therefore, does not necessarily reflect native – like competence since the learner may be avoiding the very structure that poses difficulty to

the learner. According to Brown (1980:166) says in error analysis, there is the overstressing of production data (like writing) to the detriment of comprehension data (like listening).

Lyons (1977) gives examples of two polar approaches to the nature of text. The first is the view of the text as a "product of more or less conscious and controlled literary composition". The second approach is shared by linguists who adopted a broader understanding that the text can be a product of everyday language –behaviour including phonologically transcribed conversations. However, neither of these approaches to defining the notion of text clearly indicates the criteria for distinguishing text from non-text. Hallidey and Hassan (1976) points out those native speakers intuitively know whether any product of language activity is a text or not. This means that there should be some objective characteristics of text that determines our perception of it as a text and not as a sequence of unrelated sentences.

Lawal (2006) says although many linguists agreed that the pivotal characteristics of text is its being a whole unit, their opinion defers considerably as to what exactly holds a text together. The differences are rooted in the overall approach to text: it is viewed either as a grammatical entity or as a semantic unit. Linguists who look at a text as a grammatical entity come from the structuralists background and they study text within the framework of the so-called "text grammar". Most text grammarians use some aspects of the sentence grammar in the analysis of the text. They claim that text has a rigid structure comparable to that of the sentence.

Influential work in this area of text study belongs to Van Dijk (1977). He claims that sentences are interrelated structurally in text just as clauses are interrelated within the sentence, and that both sentences and text can be similarly described at some level using the same methods. He also says that the global structure of a text requires another level of description which must be formulated as a systematic set of rules to derive the semantic

structure of a text from the semantic structures of sentences. Van Dijk introduced the notion of macro-structures to describe the semantic representation of a text or its part. Macro-structures are formal equivalent to the intuitive notion of a topic of discourse. He assumed that a topic of discourse, which denotes what a text or a part of it is about, can be described as a complex logical proposition which is derived from a set of propositions contained in the sequence of sentences.

It is worthy of note that in this study, we shall be subscribing to Van Dijk's view of a text since we are analysing the tests and examinations scripts of particular set of students. It also involves an intense intellectual ability of taking pen to paper; we shall be analyzing proficiency in grammaticality.

O'Grady (1997) says the text exist in two divisible planes: the plane of contents and the plane of expression. The linguistic disciplines that study means of language expression are phonology and grammar, while the discipline which concerns itself with the study of meanings is semantics. Linguistic elements can be described and organised in hierarchy: the smaller units are combined to form larger units of language which are different in kind. The smallest unit of the spoken language is the allophone, which is a sound variant of a structural element of phoneme. The linguistic discipline which studies the sound system of language is phonology. The phoneme, however, does not carry any meaning in itself, but serves only as building block for higher ranked elements.

The next element in the hierarchy is a morpheme, which is a component of a word structure. The essential feature of a morpheme as contrasted to a phoneme is that the morpheme is the unit of a meaning. It is defined as "the smallest unit of language that carries information about meaning of function " (O' Grady 1997). Morpheme is the smallest grammatical

element and is an object of the branch of grammatical study morphology. Morphology is commonly defined as the “system of categories and rules involved in word formation and interpretation (O’ Grady ibid). A word- the next element can consist of one or more morphemes. Complex words normally comprise o root- a morpheme that carries the major part of the word’s meaning and one or more affixes-morphemes carrying grammatical meaning.

The highest grammatical element in a text is a sentence. The branch of grammar that studies the sentence structure is syntax. A sentence, however, does not simply consist of sequences of words. There are several levels of structural components that are combined together to form a sentences. The smallest syntactic unit is called a syntactic category, which is defined as “a group of words or sequences of words in a given language that can replace one another in any sentence of the language whatsoever without affecting grammaticality” (Culicover, 1976:13). A syntactic category can either contain single words, in which case is known as a lexical category, or it can contain sequence of words; a phrase category. The most studied lexical categories are noun, verb, adjective and preposition .Phrase categories are based on lexical categories, and are structured as head + specifiers, where the head is the lexical category which the phrase is built on. Thus, if the head of a particular phrase is represented by a lexical category of noun, the category the phrase belongs to is a noun phrase.

Syntactic categories are combined into clause. A clause is centred on a predicate- a verb phrase, and can also have other syntactic categories functionally related to the predicate, such as subject and complement. A sentence can consist either of only one clause- a simple sentence, or of more than one clause-coordinate and complex sentence. In coordinate sentence the clauses have a coordinate relationship whereas in complex one clause is grammatically subordinate to another. It is on the plane of the sentence level that we shall

analyze the concord errors. The review on the idea of text is quite extensive but by no means exhaustive.

THE SVCOA

The **SVCOA** model analyses a clause as a unit of grammatical expression that contains structure analyzable into the elements of subject(s), verb(v), compliment (c), object(o), and Adjunct (A). These elements perform a meta-function in the sentence. Quirk et al (2000) defines these elements, thus

SUBJECT: it is the doer or topic of the sentence. It composes noun and noun equivalent.

VERB: the action performed by the subject. It is the first elements that mediate between the subject and rest of the sentence elements.

COMPLEMENT: It is a word or phrases especially a noun or adjective which follows the verb and describes for instance a noun or pronoun coming before it. In other words, the compliments usually complete the sense of a clause.

OBJECT: that part on which the subject usually acts; directly or indirectly. If we have two objects in a clause, we must determine which is direct or indirect.

ADJUNCT: it is an adverbial word or phrase which limits or gives a special meaning to another word or part of a sentence. It answers how, when, why, where, at what extend, in what condition, how often etc. Thus, an adjunct is roughly equivalent to the traditional notion of “adverb” or “adverb equivalent”

The **SVCOA** could therefore take the following patterns:

Type 1: Paul/is/a criminal. SVC

Type 2: He /woke up/early.SVA

Type 3: She /bought/him/a car/yesterday. SVOOA

Type 4: She/dances. SV

Type 5: (You) go (an imperative). SV

Type 6: She/made/him/sick. SVOC

These elements however are mobile; they do not have a fixed position but a fixed function. For instance, the sentence:"On the bed/sat/Peter" is AVS

The **SVCOA** shall be used to examine the effects of concord errors on the essays of SS11 students.

Adjunct: a type of adverbial that is fully integrated into the structure of clauses. For example:

He was working in the garden.

She is always in the alert.

There was perfect serenity after the war.

Disjunct: these are adverbials that are peripheral to the clause. They often express the attitude of the speaker. For example:

- To my surprise, Mr Ojo beats the pupils.
- In all frankness, she comprises with him.

Inter-language

This is a term for a dynamic linguistic system that has been developed by a learner of second language (L2) who has not become fully proficient yet but is approximating the target language preserving some feature of their language (L1), or over generalizing target language rules in speaking or writing the target language and creating innovations. An inter-language is idiosyncratically based on the learners' experiences with the L2. It can fossilize, or cease developing in any of its developmental stages. The inter-language rules are claimed to be shaped by several factors, including: L1 transfer, transfer of training, strategies of L2 communication (or communication strategies like circumlocution) and overgeneralization of the target language patterns.

Inter-language is based on the theory that there is a "Psychological structure latent in the brain" which is activated when one attempts to learn a second language. Inter-language theory is usually credited to Larry Selinker who coined terms such as 'inter-language' and 'fossilization' but others such as Uriel Weinreich could be said to have formulated the basic concept before Selinker's (1972) paper. Selinker noted that in a given situation, the utterances produced by the learner are different from those native speakers would produce had they attempted to convey the same meaning.

2.8 Choice of a Model

We shall adopt the inter-language, text structure and SVCOA pattern for this study. This is because of the inadequacies and deficiencies noted and highlighted in the various approaches reviewed earlier on. It affords us an orderly breakdown of the things to be observed in the study of concord. This approach will enhance our investigation of concord in a manner that other approaches will not.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Preamble

This chapter describes the methodology adopted in the research. It comprises five sections. The first section focuses on the sources of the data. The second explains the method of data collection. The third lists the topics for the essays. The fourth gives the reasons for the choice of schools. Finally, the method of data analysis is given.

3.1 Sources of Data

This work focuses on analysing the errors of concord in the essays of students. The researcher is invariably concerned with written text or discourse. The data were sourced from selected Senior Secondary Schools (SS II) in Kaduna metropolis. These schools were: Government Girls' Secondary School Kawo, Government College Kurmin Mashi, Rimi College, Government Secondary School Narayi, Queen Amina College Kakuri and Government Secondary School Sabon Tasha. The students in these schools, use a common syllabus on English, which was designed by West African Senior Secondary Council Examinations (WASSCE), National Examination Council (NECO) and the harmonised syllabus by the Kaduna State Ministry of Education. These students also study English as a subject and a pre-requisite for gaining admission into tertiary institutions. The researcher sampled students' who had spent five years in a formal school which also is an examination preparatory class. These students were familiar with the basic grammatical rules especially in the use of concord in their essays, which this study attempts to test. The main sources of data were primarily from assignments and tests scripts which were sampled out randomly. The use of random sampling technique was used by the researcher so as to eliminate the intrusion of

sentiments. Three hundred scripts were collected, fifty from each school. The number was finally reduced to sixty (ten from each of the schools), using non probability sampling technique about 120 errors were found out of which 30 errors were taken for analyses. The reduction in the number was occasioned by the representative of sixty scripts collected. They also represent the indices of the major difficulties associated with the effect of concord errors in the essays of SS11 students.

The West African Senior Secondary Council Examination (WASSCE), National Examination Council (NECO), National Curriculum and Harmonised Syllabus for Senior Secondary Schools is a good source of data owning to its unitary nature. This is an avenue where students from different Senior Secondary Schools receive common instruction to enhance their language proficiency and performance.

The syllabus for SS II is designed to teach:

Vocabulary development,

Structure: nouns, noun phrases, adverbs, prepositions, verbs, pronouns, nominalization, conjunction, sequence of tense, adjuncts, phrasal verbs and adverbials.

Spoken English.

Comprehension.

Writing: Expository, descriptive, narrative and argumentative.

Letter writing.

Speech writing .

Creative writing.

3.2 Method of Data Analysis

As earlier stated, the random sampling technique was used to collect three hundred scripts out of which sixty scripts were selected using non-probability sampling from the sixty scripts. About one hundred and twenty errors were found, the concord errors found were further scaled down to thirty that is by picking and customising relevant and available errors.

Out of one hundred and twenty concord errors, thirty sentences were selected and analysed showing how the students use concord in the test. Under the following sub headings: subject verb concord, object concord, tense, comparisons, contrast, preposition and pronoun students were given various topics to write on as assignments and tests.

3.3 List of Essay Topics

i. If I had known
ii. It was a dream
iii. The wave of armed robbery in Nigeria
iv. Challenges of Secondary Education in Kaduna State.

3.4 Choice of Schools

The six government secondary schools chosen have a homogenous nature. These variables are:

1. They are owned by government, therefore they are public schools.
2. The teachers are second language learners
3. The parents of these students are mostly, those who are struggling to make ends meet.
4. There are more students with few teachers.
5. Learners, have same home environment of poverty and lack of text books.
6. The time allotted for English is an hour for double periods or 30 minutes for a single period. It is usually twice a week for each class.
7. In a class you have about seventy to eighty students and a teacher handles a whole arm of SS II students.
8. Inadequate classrooms.
9. Students have a poor background of English language from their junior classes.

3.5 Method of Data Analysis

For the researcher to do a comprehensive data analysis, thirty essays were marked and scored. The essays were looked at from the sentences to see how the sentences connect from one to another. The essays were used to bring out the effects of concord errors.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Preamble

This chapter is the presentation and analysis of the data of the study. A total of four topics were given to 600 students of SSII level in selected Secondary Schools within Kaduna metropolis, these schools were: Government Girls Secondary School Kawo, Government College Kurmin Mashi, Rimi College, Government Secondary School Narayi, Queen Amina College Kakuri and Government Secondary School Sabon Tasha. The goal of the task was to identify the concord errors contained in the essays of the students, with the aim of determining how these errors affect their performance and proficiency in English Language. To systematize the analysis, the sentences in the essays that have errors are serially numbered and the errors contained in them are indentified and categorized under such

headings as: subject-verb, object-verb, preposition, tense-consistency, case, number, complementation and pronoun concord etc.

4.1. Presentation of Data

The presentation of data is serially arranged but categorized under sub-headings. The identified concord errors are underlined.

Subject-Verb

1. This dream still engross my mind.
2. I touched it but was surprise because the flame wasn't hot.
3. It happen to be increasing uncontrollably.
4. My whole day have been shattered, making me confused and destabilized.
5. If they has deliberately poured it.
6. I woke up and discover it.
7. My mother don't have the money, my entire life of living, I wish I knew the kidnap man.
8. He involve in my kidnap and busted into tears, the man in club and everyone.
9. I immediately found myself in football team and we have many exciting and some very tough matches with locals.
10. You travelled and they speaks enough like Americans.

11. I was introduce to him.

12. In the sense that you will dream that somebody is death in your dream and you see that is real.

13. It was one good night at about 12:30am when I am at sleep then I had a dream that a man was been bites by a snake.

14. In my dream I see the man.

15. Sometimes students come to school and go any time they likes.

16. The student need to obtain necessary information.

17. Most technical students are facing a lot of problems which I cannot be able to mention some of them.

18. Today, we are see lab no instrument so the teachers want to see instrument to teach us.

19. In the library there is not any textbooks.

20. I was really confused and do not know what to do.

21. And finally she get admission into the Lagos State University where they live.

22. I has never seen this in my life.

23. Those houses that is destroyed by rain.

Subject-Object

24. Government Him alone cannot solve problems that the student have.

25. She jump the fence himself.

26. Us are not treated well.

27. We do not get text books ourself except through our teachers copy.

Preposition errors

28. I was introduce to the match in 15 minutes to go.

29. When I arrive to the Kaduna airport.

30. They come to school in time and not late.

31. He switched by the correct lane.

32. He decided to lodge a hotel for the night.

33. When you are at bed you must dream about something good or bad.

34. I met Grace in a birthday party of one of my family friends.

35. …Light in complexion, just appeared to me.

Tense concord

36. Because I have spend better part-of the day on a football game.

37. I try to plead with them not to bury me but it seem I was talking to stones.

38. Some people have sit round me trying to wake me.

39. The corpses have push me into pit.

40. All I could told them was that I had a nightmare.

41. I laugh and says to myself what a day.

42. After I finish washing the clothes, we climbed into a loading bus not long after the journey begin.

43. I opened my eyes and check the clock for time.

44. The second disaster of the day strikes within the twinkle of an eye.

45. For the competition so I wear my dressing.

46. The competition go on and we were successful.

47. Then a mysterious thing happened when my friend pass the ball to me and I shoot the ball.

48. I was amaze seeing things I haven't seen before.

49. She introduce me to different senators.

50. By mistake when I get out there my guest is standing there with his friends.

51. I get admission in the higher institution.

52. They take me to school in ABU Zaria and that was it.

53. I begin to love the subject so much.

54. After, I continue my journey.

55. Immediately they serves the rice the flight arrive and I have paid the money.

56. Because they know they did not pay a lot of money so they decided to come to school at any time they like.

57. You find out that most of the youths who were opportune to go to school and also happen to finish their masters.

58. I reply by saying that as soon as I get settled abroad, I would arrange for my family to join me.

59. My family members noticed that I've changed but they couldn't say that I am an arm robber because, I disciplined myself not to steal thing at home in order not to be suspected as a thief.

60. The Prince seeing what had happen got angry and scolded the man.

61. One day, the Princess invited her friend to the joint to meet the man she has fallen in love with.

62. On the other hand, the Prince also invited his guard and the taxi driver to see the girl he told them that he has fallen in love with.

63. All those who crossed the path of the Prince and the Princess unknowingly wished they have given them a chance.

64. One day I saw myself with a group of people we were chatting about the problem going on in Libya and the way in which people are been kill their

65. John who was a student one day was dreaming that he has become a leader who was leading people, teaching and encouraging them of how one day, them also will become a leader like him.

66. It is good for one to have a dream which Help him to start preparing for his ambition.

67. Having dreams helps one to know where he is heading to or where one may find himself in the future.

68. After a person was bitten by a rabid animal a month at least before the appearance of first symptoms and it took fourteen day to give the person an injection with give after the bite, it would still prevent the disease and was it going to save humanity.

69. Finally I wake up from the sleep and was afraid about the mad dog so that it cannot effect me and my family but I remember that it was just a dream.

70. I wanted to break the jinx that Benue people don't help I have heard the area he mentioned and I thought by the time we go from the first house to the last house, we would locate the house.

71. It was incredible yet it happened to me in a broad day light I have heard, I've seen but never believed it can happen to me.

72. I have ever dream that I am going to get admission into Rimi College and I see said that dream comes true and now am in Rimi College.

73. Today we are see lab no instrument so the teachers want to see instrument to teach us.

74. When I was in primary school my dream was to become a medical doctor, but as I grow older I started seeing the things of life.

75. After I finish washing the clothes, a tall man, light in complexion, just appeared to me.

Number Concord

76. The soundness and one of the problem we face.

77. I was surprised and very afraid seeing myself in such an environments, it looks so beautiful.

78. Those house that is destroyed.

79. My whole day have been shattered.

80. I was running helter-skelter looking for their family's.

81. Some group of musician came to my school.

82. Whom she have been expecting.

83. The animal are after me in a way that I cannot run even, call for help or walk.

84. I have been down for 20 minute.

85. Immediately they serves the rice the flight arrive and I have paid the money.

86. Advising some parent to put more effort of their children.

87. This problems come from different sources most especially from the student.

88. We have problems of teachers, some teachers did not learn how to teach and how to deal with persons, in fact they didn't even know how to teach.

89. Getting a qualities teachers.

90. We have a lot of problem in secondary education.

91. I want principal of school to put eyes on them that is teaching.

92. We have a good leaders.

93. This problem comes from government and from the student.

94. Student do indulge in exam malpractice.

95. This problem can be solved in the following ways, student should be focused and read the books.

96. Effort should be made to give children good education.

97. Her parent wanted very much for her to school.

98. And when it was time to go to school, her parent sat her down and talked.

99. She promised to make her parent proud.

100. She was lucky while her three friend wasn't.

101. The teacher will tell the student what to do.

102. The student cannot help themselves running from school.

Pronoun Concord

103. I thought by the time me go from the first house to last house.

104. Everyone across our street are waiting to see me.

105. Each of the teachers teaches well.

106. Neither of the boys are around.

107. Animal are after me in a way that he cannot run even call him alone cannot solve problems teachers that the student have some.

108. The student would not be lacking teachers because he can cope with.

Pronoun Antecedent

…them also will become a leader like him.

Passivisation

109. This dream can been see as negative on my life.

110. It is in the dream that is use in a way to bring me back.

111. The teachers serves as a tools in education.

112. The teacher serves as one who give education always.

113. This kind of dream is often terrible.

Complementation

114. The youths become arm robber.

115. Her father is a members of bankers forum.

116. My only hope for the future is my friends.

Concord in comparisons

117. She is the much suitable for the job of teaching than her sister.

118. In the dream, he was tallest than me.

Concord in Contrast

119. It is unfortunate I did the job.

120. She is good yet terrible.

4.2 Data Analysis

The summary of the statistical appearances of the various categories of concord errors, under the following sub-headings; Subject-Verb, Object-Verb, Tense Concord, Pronoun-Concord, number, case, complementation, contrast, passivisation is captured in the table 4.2.

	S-V	O –V	Pr-O	Ten	Con	Pre	Com	Num.	Compl	Pass	Total
No. of Errors	23	04	06	22	02	04	02	27	03	05	98
Percentages	23.5 %	4.1%	6.1%	22.4%	2.0 %	4.1%	2.0%	27.6%	3.1%	5.1%	100

Keys

S-V: Subject-verb

O-V: Object-verb

Pro: Pronoun Concord

Ten: Tense Concord

Con: Contrast

Pre: Preposition

Com: Comparison

Num: Number

Compl: Complementation

Pass: Passivisation

4.3 Syntactic Analysis

The syntactic analysis of the data dwells on the various concord errors found in the sentences presented and culled from the tests and assignments given to students. Other grammatical errors such as punctuations and spellings found in the sentences are down played and only noted by the use of “sic”.

From the list of errors found in the essays of the students, only 30 are analyzed using the structuralists framework of Subject – S, Verb – V, Object – O, Complement – C and Adjunct – A.

From the sentences constructed, it is evident that the words depend on other structures to make meaning. It is from such relationship that we are able to appreciate the concord errors found in each sentence that is presented.

Subject Verb

4. My whole day have been shattered, making me confused and destabilized.

111. The teachers serves as a tools in education

93. This problems come from different sources most especially from the student.

Number

84. I have been down for 20 minute.

99. She promised to make her parent proud.

Pronoun /Antecedent Related Concord

78. Those house that is destroyed .

108. Everyone across our street are waiting to see me.

87. This problems come from different sources most especially from the student.

Preposition

30. They come to school in time and not late.

31. He switched by the correct lane.

Tense

36. Because I have spend better part of the day on a football game.

38. Some people have sit round me, trying to wake me.

44. The second disaster of the day strikes within the twinkle of an eye.

35. I turn to my alarm which is ringing already, I run toward the window.

Object-Concord

24. The Government because him alone cannot solve problems that the student have.

25. She jumped the fence himself.

Complementation

114. The youths become arm robber.

Concord in comparisons

117. She is the much suitable for the job of teaching than her sister.

Subject Verb

According to Oluikpe (2007), the first rule of agreement is that a verb must agree in number with its subject. This means that a singular subject must be followed by a singular verb, while a plural subject should be followed by a plural verb. When there are compound singular subjects the verb is plural. Likewise, compound plural subjects take plural verbs. However, there are exceptions to these rules when words like 'and' is replaced by with, as well as, and together with the verbs become singular. Also, when a compound subject is joined by and which gives the impression of a unit, the verb becomes singular. In addition when a compound subject is connected with correlatives, the singular verb is used. But when the nouns joined by correlatives differ in number, the number agrees in number with the near noun.

Based on the foregoing, the sentences below are in violation of the subject-verb rule of concord.

4. My whole day have been shattered, making me confused and destabilized.

Syntactically, the sentence has the following pattern:

S- My whole day

V- have been shattered

A- making me confused and destabilized

Although the sentence conforms to the syntactic structure of an English sentence, but it is in violation of the subject-verb rule of concord, in that the verb does not agree in number with the subject. The subject of the sentence, ''My whole day '' is singular whereas the verb, ''have been...'' is plural. The writer did not consider the verb and the time of action. This problem could have arisen from the student's poor knowledge of concord.

5. I wake up on bed

S – I

V – wake up

A – on bed

This sentence has the simple structure, but the verb and the subject do not agree. The sense in the structure suggests the action was in the past not present. Therefore the writer's narration of events, become confusing because of the tenses.

14. I see the man in my dream

S- I

V- see

O- the man

A- In my dream

In this sentence both the subject and the verb are singular, but the verb which should be in past tense is in the present. This error could be from the student's poor background in English, because the student was narrating a dream in the sentence.

9. The government school is lacking (sic) behind, most of the private school (sic) are fair in their syllabus because they have enough teachers.

In order to analyse the above sentence comprehensively there is the need to break down the sentence into two –

i. The government school (sic) are lacking (sic) behind

ii. Most of the private schools (sic) are far in their syllabus because they have enough teachers.

The sentence can be structured in the following pattern:

1.

S – The government school (sic)

V – are lacking (sic)

A – behind,

2.

S – most of the private school (sic)

V – are

C – fair

A – in their syllabus

A – because they have enough teachers.

In the first segment the sentence has a subject verb and an Adjunct. In the subject position the word school (sic) has a missing plural marker "s". Likewise in the verb position the word "lacking" could be a misrepresentation of the word "Lagging" since it is closely followed by a preposition "behind".

The second segment has the following structure of a subject, verb, complement and two Adjuncts, one stating the content and the reason. Another missing plural marker "s" is

also found in the sentence the word "fair" in the complement position could be the word "far" being mis-spelt. The writer, of this sentence made comparison between the government schools by using such words as "Lacking" for Lagging and "fair" for far. It is possible that the student does not have the knowledge of the right words to use in his description of the syllabus covered by the government and private schools.

From the summary of errors, 21% of the errors found were under the subject verb category. This indicates that students make sentences that are not in agreement. That is to say, they do not take into cognizance the subject and the verb; when a subject is singular the verb should be singular, and when it is plural the verb should also be plural. These errors are certainly as a result of poor background in grammar.

Pronoun Subject: Verb Concord

Quirk *et al* (1974:369) and Digga (1999:37) are of the opinion that pronouns can be either singular or plural, and when used as subjects of sentences, they must agree with the verbs.

Some pronoun concord errors found in the data of the study are:

78. Those house that is destroyed

S – Those house that

V – is destroyed

The demonstrative pronoun “those” signifies many (plural) and ‘house’ which is singular should have taken the plural form “houses. Probably, the writer wanted to say: This house, is destroyed or “that house is destroyed”. The writer could be referring or pointing to particular houses. The concord error makes the sentence non standard.

80. I thought by the time me go from the first house to the last house I would be tired.

S – I

V –thought

A –by the time me go from the first house to the last house

A –I would be tired

The writer used the objective form of the pronoun “me”, instead of its subjective form ‘I’. This sounds more like Nigerian pidgin or the Sierra-Leonean Creole. For example “me go house”, ‘Me daddy de na house’.

104. Everyone across our street are waiting to see me.

S – Everyone across our street

V – are waiting

A- to see me

The error in the sentence lies in the disharmony between the subject of the sentence, “Everyone” and the verb BE “are”. The indefinite pronoun ''everyone'' should take a singular verb “is”.

87. This problems come from different sources most especially from the student

S – This problems

V – come

A – from different sources

A – most especially from the student.

The demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ which forms part of the subject is singular and is immediately followed by a plural ‘problems’. The ‘student’ in the Adjunct position is also in singular form, instead of the plural form. The sentence is ambiguous. May be the student intended to say, “These problems emanate from the students themselves”. This clearly shows that the student does not know the plural form of the pronoun ‘this’.

Pronoun Concord

The government in Kaduna State can solve all this problems (sic) if the (sic) employ degree holders as teachers and the (sic) should also have enough teachers to teach what every student will understand.

For clarity, the above sentence will be fragmented into two. Thus:

I.

S – The government in Kaduna State

V – can solve

O – all this problems

A – if the (sic) employ degree holders as teachers

II.

S – the (sic)

V – should also have

O – enough teachers

A – to teach what every student will understand.

The sentence above could be considered as two sentences both fragments are patterned as having subject, verb, object and adjunct. In trying to write a sentence the student actually wrote a lengthy sentence. In the first fragment, the demonstrative pronoun "this" in the object position is singular linked with a plural word "problems", in the Adjunct position, the word "the" has a missing (y) for it to be a plural pronoun "they". The error of a missing (y) is again in the subject position of the third person plural where "they" is written as "the". These errors of pronouns distort the intended information of the sentence.

The foregoing analysis shows that 8% of the errors are from the pronoun concord. This goes to confirm the fact that students are not careful in noting the noun which is being replaced by the pronoun. The pronoun should represent the appropriate number of the subject. That is to say, if a singular subject is to be replaced by a pronoun, a singular pronoun should be used. Likewise, a plural subject should be replaced by a plural pronoun. The problem of singular subjects being replaced by plural pronouns or vice versa may arise from the native languages of the students.

Number concord

84. I have been down for 20 minute(sic)

S – I

V – have been

A – down for 20 minute(sic)

This sentence indicates that the subject, who is the performer has been in a particular position for 20 minute (number). The time does not connote the plurality of the time spent. When we look at the sentence the structure is suitable. It is possible the writer wrote in haste, therefore, did not have time to edit his or her work.

99. She promised to make her parent(sic) proud.

This sentence has the following pattern:

S – she

V – Promised to make

O – her parent (sic)

C-proud

From the above sentence, the subject and the verb agree but the "parent" in the object position in the sentence is suggestive of both father and mother which should take the plural form 's'.

Prepositions

According to Eka (1994:159), "prepositions are grammatical elements which typically go between nouns and noun phrases". Oji (1988:57) has similar view when he states that: "a

preposition is a word used with a noun or noun equivalent to show the relationship between the noun and the equivalent and so other word in the sentence".

Preposition errors

30. They come to school in time and not late.

S – They

V – Come

A – to school in time and not late.

The preposition in this sentence "in" should have been the preposition "on" to indicate the idea of promptness or punctuality. The preposition "on" is usually used to indicate time and position. The writer could have been used to listening to people who use the Nigerian English and wrong use of pronoun.

31. He switched by the correct lane.

S – He

V – switched

A – by the correct lane

The structure of this sentence is appropriate. The writer may have wanted to say "He turned to the correct lane. Since it involves movement indicated by the verb "moved" or "swerved", the preposition "to" would have been more appropriate. The preposition 'by' and verb 'switched' distorts the information.

34. I met Grace <u>in</u> a birthday party of one of my family friends.

The above sentence can be analyzed thus:

S – I

V – met

O – Grace

A – in a birthday party of one of my family friends

The subject and the verb do agree but the preposition “in” which forms part of the adjunct is the problematic. This error might be connected to the learner’s poor background in the appropriate use of prepositions. The learner could have transliterated from Hausa e.g [Na sami Grace a cikin bukin na abokane na]. that is, I met Grace in the birthday party of our friends. The hausa word “cikin” means “in.” The writer could also have a faulty use of preposition.

32. He decided to lodge (sic) a hotel for the night

S – He

V – decided to lodge (sic)

A – a hotel

A – for the night.

The sentence has a simple structure, the subject, verb and adjunct are structurally located but the preposition after

About 6% of the essays of the students have errors of preposition because of the L1 interference and wrong use on the part of the students. And when such is forced to take place, meanings of messages are often lost. Apart from their meaning and nature, prepositions constitute a lot of difficulties due to syntactic behavior. They are found to blend in all forms of constructions, and in almost all syntactic positions, the verb “Lodge” is missin

Tenses

Quirk and Greenbaum (1974), Afolayan in Tomori (1977) and Quirk *et al* (1990) share similar views on the use of the English tenses. Their view is that English tense is used to express time. They see time as a universal non-linguistic concept which can be expressed using verb tenses. They also posit that tense verb forms help one to understand the correspondence between the form of the verb used and the concept of time. Here, time is seen in three divisions: present, past and future and these are expressed respectively using the various verb forms chronologically. Each of these grammarians identifies the verbal group as the principal system. They also opine that the three indicators of tense (past, present and future) are realized by changes in the verb form to match the time concept rather than application of rules of tense formation.

Tense errors

36. I have <u>spend</u> a better part of the day on a football game.

S – I

V – have spend

O – better part of the day

A- on a football game

In the sentence above, there is agreement between the subject and the verb model auxiliary. However, the lexical verb “spend” which is in the present tense should have been in the past form “spent”. The grammatical versions of the sentence are “I have spent a better part of the day on a foot ball game” or “I had spent a better part of the day on the game of football”.

38. Some people have sit round me, trying to wake me.

S – some people

V – have sit

A – round me

O – trying to wake me.

The subject of the sentence, “some people” and the verb, “sit” do not agree, and so the sentence violates the rule of concord which makes it ungrammatical. The sentence indicates that the action was in the past therefore, the sentence could read “Some people had sat round me, trying to wake me”. Therefore, “have sit” could be replaced with “had sat”, the past perfect tense of the verb.

44. The second disaster of the day strikes.

S – The second disaster of the day

V – Strikes.

The subject of the sentence and the verb do agree. This sentence could be seen as a report or an account of a series of events. Therefore, it is possible the writer was counting the events as entities, since it had a “first and second disaster”. And in his knowledge of English Language, when it is one it is singular and when it has become the second he just added the ‘s’ which pluralises “strikes”. It makes it present tense instead of the past tense “struck”. This error could have been as a result of the student’s poor knowledge of the past tense form of strike.

80. I turn to my alarm which is ringing already.

S – I

V – turn to

O – my alarm

A – which is ringing already.

1. In the sentence above, the verb "turn to" could be replaced with "turned to" to indicate the time of the action, since it recounts an activity in the past, the Adjunct – which is already ringing could also read "which was already ringing. The progressive tense "ringing" is indicative that it continued and did not stop immediately. However, the intention of the writer could be, to say that "I turned to the alarm, which had already started ringing or began to ring".

58. I reply by saying that, as soon as I get settled abroad, I would arrange for my family to join me.

S – I

V – reply

A – by saying that,

A – as soon as I get settled abroad I would arrange for my family to join me.

In the sentence above, the subject and the verb do not agree, when you look at the sentence critically the student was reporting an event that took place. The verb "reply" is in the present tense form and the event is supposed to be in the past. The "get" in the second Adjunct is in the present tense followed by a past tense "settled". The narration is distorted with present tense. The student mixes the present and the past tense forms while giving accounts of events that were supposed to be in the past.

42. After I finish (sic) washing the clothes, a tall man, light in complexion, just appeared to me.

A – after I finish (sic) washing the clothes

S – a tall man, light in complexion

A – just

V – appeared

A – to (sic) me.

In this sentence the adjunct comes before the subject of the sentence, the adjunct is more like a subordinate clause to the main clause but the word "finish" in the adjunct is erroneously placed. Likewise the last adjunct in the sentence has another error of preposition "to". In this sentence, there are three adjuncts, appearing in the beginning, middle and end of the sentence.

60. The prince seeing what had happen (sic) got angry and scolded the man.

This sentence has the following pattern:

S – The Prince seeing what had happen (sic)

V – got

C – angry

A – and scolded the man.

In the sentence above the subject, verb, complement and adjunct are well structured but the word "happen" in the sentence is in the present tense form.

74. When I was in primary school my dream was to become a medical doctor, but as I grow older I started seeing the things of life.

For proper analysis of the above sentence the above sentence is segmented into two.

I.

A – when I was in primary school

S – my dream

V – was to become

C- a medical doctor

II.

A - but as I grow older

S – I

V – started seeing

O – the things of life (sic)

In the first segment of the sentence above the structure, has an adjunct, subject, verb and complement. While the second segment has an adjunct, subject, verb and an object. The adjunct in the second segment, has the word "grow" which is in the present tense form which distorts the information. The object "things of life," also makes the sentence ambiguous.

61. One day, the Princess invited her friend to the joint to meet the man she has fallen in love with.

The above sentence has the following structure:

A – One day

S – the Princess

V – invited

O – her friend

A – to the joint

A – to meet the man she has fallen in love with.

This sentence is a narration of the student's dream, it starts with an adjunct, followed by a subject, verb, object and two other adjuncts. The first adjunct states the time, while the

two last adjuncts state the place and the reason. In the last adjunct, the auxiliary verb "has" with the perfect tense "fallen" is the problematic.

63. All those who crossed the path of the Prince and the Princess, unknowingly wished they have given them a chance.

S – All those who crossed the path of the Prince and the Princess

A – Unknowingly

V – wished

O – they have given them a chance.

The subject, adjunct, verb and object in the sentence are properly situated except for the auxiliary verb "have" with the perfect tense "given". This sentence and the previous have similar problems of tense form (which id the past perfect tense). This makes the error habitual. The student could be used to the present and the simple past but not the used to expressing the past perfect form. This may be from the student's background or mother tongue which might have the past perfect tense form.

64. One day, I saw myself with a group of people (sic) we were chatting about the problem going on in Libya and the way in which people are been kill their.

For easier analysis, the above sentence is fragmented into two.

Thus:

I.

A – one day

S – I

V – saw

O – myself

A – with a group of people

II.

S – we

V – were chatting about

O – the problem going on in Libya and the way in which people are been kill their (Sic)

From the sentence above, the student, tried to relive his experience in a sentence which is complex and segmented into two. The second segment of the sentence, especially in the object position, the words "been" "kill" and "their" could have been written in a haste and the student might not have gone through to edit his or her work to check the tense forms used and the spelling of "their".

73. Today we are see lab no instrument so the teachers want to see instrument to teach us.

A – Today

S – we

V – are see (sic)

O – Lab no instrument

A – so the teachers want to see instrument to teach us.

This sentence has a syntactic structure of an adjunct, subject, verb, object and another adjunct but grammatically, it lacks coherence. The verb "see" is in the present tense form. The use of the word "instrument" also makes it ambiguous and distorts the thought pattern. This sentence sounds more like the Nigerian pidgin English.

It is observed that the majority of the students made errors of tense. There were about 33% of such errors found in their various essays. These errors could have been as a result of the students' inability to give proper account of events in the present, past and future tenses.

Error of Notional concord

24. The government because him alone cannot solve problems that the student have.

The sentence above though ungrammatical, has the following features.

S-The government

A-because him alone

V- cannot solve

O-Problems that the student have

The subject which is “the government as an entity” and “the student” which is the object of the sentence are not in agreement because the student in the sentence suggests more than one “student”. The modal auxiliary verb ‘have’ shows a plurality. So, “the student” could have been written as ‘the students’ to take the plural verb “have”. The word “because” is an adjunct of reason which is some how improperly placed. However, the above sentence might as well read ''The government alone cannot solve the problems of the students.

Error in Complement

114. The youths become arm robber.

This is a simple sentence with the following structure:

S – The youths

V – become

C – arm (sic) robber

The subject of the sentence, “The youths” is indicative of plurality, whereas the complement noun ‘arm robber’ referencing the subject is improper. Hence, the subject and the complement do not agree. When such occurs, there could be a misinformation or misinterpretation of text to mean otherwise. The writer might have transliterated the text from his mother tongue, since some languages do not have plural forms of some words. The complement would be “armed robbers”. Then the sentence would be “The youths become armed robbers”. The same sentence could be seen as futuristic with the use of “become”, while the act “became” is in the past.

From the essays of the students about 2% have errors on complementation, which goes to show that students find it difficult to appropriately refer to the subject of the sentence. This could emanate from their inability to use the appropriate words in English language.

Errors of comparisons

117. She is the <u>much</u> suitable for the job of teaching than her sister.

The sentence is structured as:

S – she

V-Is

C- the much suitable for the job of teaching than her sister

The subject 'she' and the verb 'is' do agree while the complement 'much' is doing a work of comparison. The word "much" used could be substituted with 'more' since it is a comparison of two people. The sentence could have been written as "she is more suitable for the job of teaching than her sister".

About 2% of the students' essays were found to have concord errors in comparison which shows that the students have problems when comparing two persons than they have when referring to three people.

Error in Passivisation

109. This dream can been (sic) see (sic) as a negative on my life.

S- This dream

V- Can been (sic) see (sic)

O- as a negative

O- on my life

The error in this sentence can be identified in connection with passivisation which is, the use of the wrong lexical verb and the auxiliary verb BE.

About 2% essays had errors of passivisation. This error wasn't rampant probably because, these students did not know how to use the passive form, therefore, they avoided using it in their sentences.

Error in Contrast

119. It is unfortunate I did the job

S- It

V- is unfortunate

O- I did the job

The sentence above is syntactically correct but the use of the lexim "unfortunate" distorts the flow of information. This element brings about the error in contrast. The idea expressed is positive but carrying an element of negation.

It is noteworthy that only 2% of the essays were found to have errors in concord of contrast. The students could have avoided using words of contrast because they were not proficient in using it.

4.4 Findings

The researcher observes that there were numerous concord errors found in the essays of the students of the selected Secondary Schools, within Kaduna metropolis. These concord errors of tense, subject verb, preposition, subject object, comparisons, contrast and complementation etc. make students' work to lack coherence and cohesion. This affects their overall performance when scored in examinations. This means that students will have problems in attaining pass marks in their content, expression and especially Mechanical Accuracy which is the crux of the study on concord as a category.

From the findings of the researcher, Essay writing was taught and given to students more in their SSI through SSIII classes. Some teachers in the course of teaching essays, talked about harmony, coherence and cohesion. It was at that point that concord was mentioned to buttress the topic.

Most students did not display the knowledge of some aspects of concord especially in the areas of contrast and comparisons. The most prevalent concord errors were in Tense which had about forty two (42) concord errors (i.e. about 33%), followed by Subject verb concord which had twenty six (26) concord errors (i.e. 21%), while the least concord errors were found in Complementation and Contrast with two (2) errors each (2% each). As second language learners, the difficulties observed from the students were not only peculiar to few students but almost all the students had one problem or the other on this grammatical category. There were also other observable errors that were not concord related but were down played in the course of the research but attention was particularly placed on concord errors. From the errors the researcher noted that some students tried to make good sentences but still committed more errors which were avoidable.

From the above observation, it implies that English language teachers have the herculean task of making and helping the students to improve in their knowledge and use of concord in their essays. Concord errors can be avoided if students are drilled in the category. Teachers should encourage students to read Newspapers, Magazines, novels and watch educative programmes on the television. The students of Senior Secondary Schools should be made to write more essays frequently. The teachers of English Language should harp on the need for students to master the sentence structure and construct good sentences in their essays.

Concord as a grammatical category should be entrenched in the SSI, SSII and SSIII classes to avoid complacency. By so doing, these students would score high in the Content, Organizations, Expression and Mechanical Accuracy at the external examinations thereby improving in their proficiency and performance in the use of concord in their everyday communication.

Insufficient mastering of basics such as spelling, punctuation and paragraphing.

- Poor mastering of sentence structure, idiomatic expressions and variety of sentence patterns
- Inadequate mastering of mechanical and grammatical transformation such as direct and indirect speech.

Poor reading comprehension and the inability of such students to identify basic word classes, such as: verbs, nouns and other parts of speech, phrases, clauses etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, IMPLICATION TO STUDY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

The study examines the effect of concord errors in selected essays of some Senior Secondary Schools within Kaduna metropolis. The schools are: G.G.S.S Kawo, Government College Kurmin Mashi, Rimi College, G.S.S Narayi, Queen Amina College Kakuri, G.S.S Sabon Tasha. It also attempts to identify the competence of students in using the various concord types. Furthermore, the work identifies the reason for the students' inability to use the different types of concord correctly. This is based on the assumption that the students use the sentences that lack agreement between subjects/ verbs, subjects/objects/, pronouns and their antecedents and tenses.

Concord as a grammatical category in English Language is the focus of this study. The wrong use of the category is pervasive in the nation's secondary schools as reflected in the schools selected for this research. Concord errors affect the overall ability of the students in effective communication, and this is manifested in their performance in public examinations such as NECO and WAEC.

Chapter two presents the literature review of related works to the study. The different grammars/approaches to concord were also discussed, and the model for the study, that is; structuralist orientation and the S- Subject, V- verb, O- Object, C- Complement and A- Adjunct was adapted. Chapter three of the research discusses the methods used for data collection as well as the number of students used. One hundred students were drawn from four schools in Kaduna metropolis for study. Thirty errors were analyzed, through test administered to the students in form of essays.

In chapter four, the researcher presents the concord errors under sub-headings such as subject/ verb, objects/ verbs, tense, pronoun, preposition, comparison, contrast, complementation and number. It was discovered that students performed poorly on number, tense, subject verb concord. The students did not make sentences using the notional and proximity concord, and this is either because they were not conversant or they do not know how to use it effectively in their sentences. Only few students used the contrast, comparison and complementation in their essays. The incompetence of the students in the use of the different types of concord may have been due to their inability to distinguish the semantic content of the respective concord types.

The errors shown in the table reveal that a lot of works still need to be done to enhance students' ability in the use of the different types of concord.

5.2 Implications to Study

The study of concord is very relevant and important. From the research carried out, it was observed that students had problems with concord as a grammatical category. The various concord errors were found in the essays of the students. The most common errors were found under the tense concord, subject verb concord, object verb concord, contrast and preposition. It could have been as a result of poor background of the students, failures of teachers to help the students know and internalize the various types of concord. It could also be as a result of limited time for teachers to be able to assess and assist their students. In some public schools, the teachers have only one hour or thirty minutes to teach the students in a week. The failure of the students to express correctly or appropriately spoils the beauty of their essays and makes interpretation of their intention indiscernible.

5.4 Conclusion

As earlier stated, the high percent rate of failure in the use of concord happens to be on "tense, subject verb concord by number that is, in the formation of plurals and tense. This shows that students do not use these plurals and tenses appropriately in their expressions. The problematic areas were mostly in the use of tense forms to express repeated actions, short time duration `actions and actions completed at specific times in the future. In the light of the above, it can be concluded that there exists poor knowledge on the tense, concord and number concord (plurals forms) among secondary school students. It is also observed that inadequate exposure of students to drills on concord and their exposure to Nigerian languages that do not express the various tense, number concord in the same way

that English Language does, could be responsible for the poor expressions that students make in the use of concord as a category of grammar.

The researcher also discovered that the errors made by most of the students in the study were similar to those heard in the wrong expressions made by various teachers, and journalists in print and electronic media. Thus, it is logical to conclude that faulty teaching with poor knowledge of concord in English Language may be responsible for the failure of students, as exhibited in their performance in the subject in public examinations. In view of the above observations therefore, it is pertinent that more effort be placed into the teaching and learning of English language grammar, concord in particular, to achieve the desired performance. They should be able to get acquainted with model texts; newspapers, textbooks, journals, the dictionary and literacy materials. This will enhance their successful use of concord in English Language.

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