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EDITORIAL

Agbor Journal of Languages and Literature (AJOLL) is a collection of scholarly packaged menu that is sure to nurture the mental health of interested readers. It is a yearly publication of the school of languages, College of Education, Agbor, Delta State., Nigeria.

AJOLL has over the years attracted articles from highly acclaimed and versatile academics from tertiary institutions and similar academic bodies across the nation. This sixth edition is particularly unique. Among other things, it offers more articulate, robust, incisive, informative and challenging scholarly articles woven around the disciplines of language, literature and library studies.

There are twenty-four articles in this edition, all straddling the areas of languages (English, French, Igbo) linguistics, literature and library. The language- based articles examine essentially the problems associated with the teaching and learning of the languages and recommend model approaches and methods that are geared towards effective teaching and learning of the languages. The role of the English Language as a tool for national integration is also underscored in this volume. The edition also features articles on the need for communicative competence among students of Banking and Finance and for secretarial duties. From the literary front, the edition attempts an overview of female imaging in Nigeria Literary drama. The problem of bad leadership offered by various regimes of Nigerian government over the years, is also captured from the literary perspective. From the library department, we also have an article on fire prevention in Nigerian libraries.

We wish to thank all the members of the editorial board for their hard work. We also thank our esteemed contributors for accepting to share their wealth of knowledge in this volume. We thank them also for their patience and understanding.

Eziechine, Augustine Oblajulu, Ph.D
Editor- in-Chief

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MANAGEMENT OF CONCORD IN SENTENCES

BY

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Abstract

That one must maintain the relationship of concord in order not to do fracture the common core of the English language when speaking or writing whether in standard British English (SBE) or Nigerian English (N.E.) is now a very clear fact. This study is focused on concord. The first section examines the concept of concord, its importance and indispensable nature in grammatical constructions. The second section explains and illustrates the rules and the linguistic conventions that must be maintained in order to achieve concord in sentences while the third section is the conclusion of all that have been done in the study.

Introduction

What is concord? Different scholars have defined 'concord' in several manners depending on the perspective from which they view it. Crystal (2008), considers it as "A term used in grammatical theory and description to refer to a formal relationship between elements whereby a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another." According to O'Grady (1999), concord "means the agreement of some words with one another in number, person and gender." To Anene (1997), concord is simply "the agreement between subject and verb in a sentence." The third definition above is rather not comprehensive as 'concord' does not assure agreement between only SUBJECT and VERB in a sentence. From the first and second definitions, concord of the study of the different elements of the sentence that can be used and positioned to function harmoniously in a grammatical construction (sentence).

Closely related to the concept of 'concord', is the 'agreement'. What then is agreement? Omenogor (2014), puts it,

Accounting for agreement in a language requires a description of how elements in a given construction in that language relate, with regards to the phi-features that they share.

The phi-features which include 'person' 'number' and 'gender' are so important that if they are not observed in any sentence, the sentence will be ungrammatical and unacceptable to the native speakers of the language. In an attempt to explain what 'agreement' is as a term used in grammar is; O'Grady (2009) says,

Agreement takes place when one word is inflected to match certain grammatical properties of another word. Especially common is agreement for number (singular Vs. Plural) and for person (first person-speaker, second person-addressee, third person- anyone else).

From the above quotation, English gives us a very clear instance: the suffix-s is added to a verb that is in the present form if the subject is the third person singular. E.g Tejiri speaks. This is why Omenogor (2014) says; for a sentence to be considered grammatical and acceptable, its subject must agree in number with its verb. Kachru (1982) quoted in Dadzie (2014) made the point that

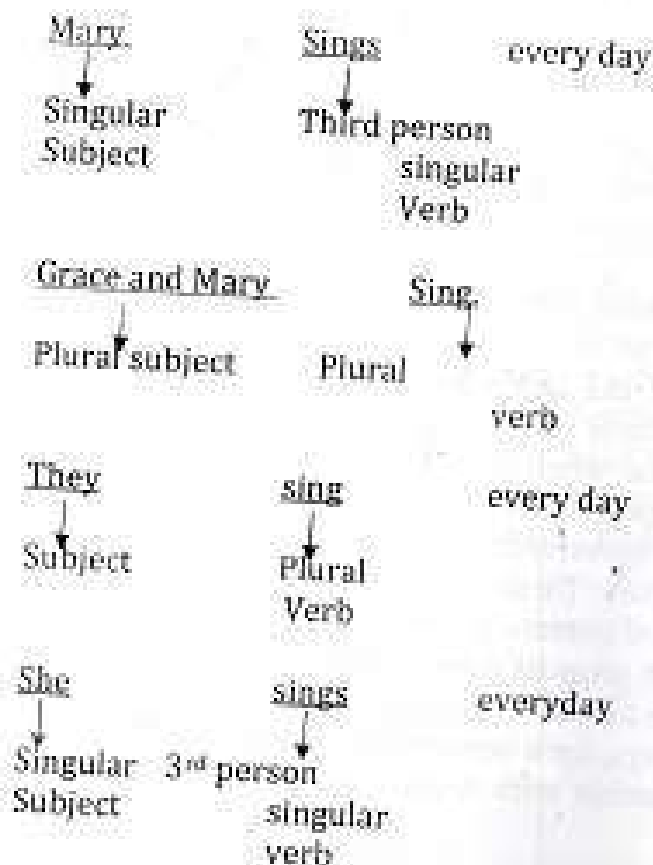
In second language situations... as in English in its second home, where it is used as a first language (second language), the common core... is the same as what it is in its original habitat... the relationship of concord is mandatory... therefore no one will accept a sentence in which this relationship is flouted,

Flouting the rules amount to bending or breaking the rules of English which Osakwe (2011) talked about. According to Uche (2009), 'rule violation could lead to deviant structures and distortion of ideas in English.' Uhumwangho (2016) points out that language, 'to all intents and purposes is a means of communication between a speaker (writer) and a listener (reader). It enhances social mobility and defines or humanness.' If the rules of concord are bent or broken as Osakwe 2011 would put it, communication will be distorted and the intent of language (in this case English language) will not be achieved. Little wonder the holy book in Amos 3:3 'asks can two walk together unless they agree to do so?' To avoid breaking the rules of concord and making language by implication, English not to achieve its intended purposes, we therefore, focus on the management of concord in sentences in the following section of this paper.

2. Management of Concord in Sentences

Different types of concord exists, we will now treat them one after the other.

2.1 **Grammatical Concord:** This is also called concord of number. It states that a verb in a sentence must agree with the subject with respect to number. This means that a singular subject requires a singular verb while a plural subject requires a plural verb for a sentence to be grammatical and acceptable. For example.



She is there.	She was there.
You are Christians.	You were Christians.
They are sleeping.	They were sleeping.

With respect to 'have' and 'has' agreement is shown with pronouns as follows.

Subject	Present tense	Past tense
I	have	had
You	have	had
He./she./ it	has	had
We	have	had
You	have	had
They	have	had

Sentences

Present tense	Past tense
I have a problem.	I had a problem.
You have done it.	You had done it.
He has travelled.	He had travelled.
She has written it.	She had written it.
It has finished.	It had finished.
We have finished.	We had finished.
You have tried.	You had tried.
They have stolen it.	They had stolen it.

It should be understood that whenever all these pronouns change to their noun forms, they still obey the same rules, that is they still take the above stipulated verb forms. E.g.

We are Christians → My wife and I are Christians.

She has made it → Nezoi has made it.

If two nouns or pronouns are joined by 'and' and they denote different things, animals, or persons the subject is plural and the plural form of verb should be used in the sentence. E.g.

Ada and Peter are doing well.
 Plural Plural

Subject Verb

g. If two nouns, noun equivalents or pronouns standing for the same thing or person are joined by 'and', the subject is singular and should be treated as such. E.g.

i. Owlo and starch is the Urhobo man's best food.
 Singular subject singular ↓
 Subject Verb

ii. A singular verb should be used when dealing with co-ordinated elements that refers to a single entity. E.g.

Mrs. Okoro, the headmistress is hard-working.
 Singular subject Singular Verb

h. If a sentence comprises two nouns or noun equivalents linked by 'and' and the two nouns or noun equivalent are recognized as different subjects, where they are of different numbers and the form of verb is not the same for the singular as for the plural both forms of verbs should be used to make sentence correct. E.g.

My office was broken into and my books stolen. Wrong

Singular Singular Plural
 Subject Verb subject

The above sentence is wrong because 'was' cannot serve as the verb of the second subject (my books). To make the sentence correct, it should be written.

My office was broken into and my books were stolen.

Singular singular plural plural
 Subject verb subject verb

i. Distributive adjectives and pronouns such as: each, every, either, every body, anybody, nobody, none etc should in strict grammar be followed by adjectives pronouns and verbs in the singular (pink and Thomas 1970). E.g.

Nobody will be deprived of his right.
 Singular Singular
 Subject adjective

ii. Has either of you written the assignment?

Singular singular
 Verb subject

- j. When using the expression 'one of the subject can be plural or singular depending on what is emphasized. If the emphasis is on more than one thing or person as it is in the first sentence, the subject is plural while it is singular if the emphasis is on one person or thing person as it is in other sentences. E.g.

Prof. Wale Soyinka is one of the playrights that are recognized world wide

Plural Subject | Plural Verb ↓

One of my students is a fashion designer.

Singular Subject ↓

Singular Verb ↓

One of my children is very tall.

Singular Subject ↓

Singular Verb ↓

- k. When using fractions such as: half, three quarter, one third and other word such as: most, some, many, few as subjects, it can be plural or singular depending on the emphasis and the sense to be expressed. If they are used with countable plural nouns, they are treated as plural subjects while they are treated as singular subjects. Whenever they are used with uncountable nouns. Examples of sentences expressing various senses are as follows.

i. Half of the students are not here.

Plural Subject ↓

plural verb ↓

ii. Three quarter of the bottle of oil has been used.

Singular Subject ↓

singular verb ↓

iii. Some ministers are experts.

Plural subject ↓

plural verb ↓

- 2.2 **Notional Concord:** This comes up whenever collective nouns and a few other words are used as subjects in sentences. When making such constructions, whether the user will use singular verb or plural verb is determined by the notion or sense the user wants to express. The user is free to treat a collective noun as a singular or as a plural subject. All that is required is that he or she should be consistent in the treatment of collective noun. E.g.

The committee has submitted their report.

↓

↓

↓

Singular
Subject

singular verb plural

possessive
Adjective

The above sentence is wrong on the grounds of inconsistency. That is singular singular verb, and plural possessive adjective. The correct version should read:

ii. The committee has submitted its report.

↓
Singular
Subject

singular verb ↓ plural

↓
possessive
Adjective

The sentence can also be written:

iii. The committee have submitted their report.

↓
Plural
Subject

↓ Plural verb plural ↓

↓
possessive
Adjective

Facts to be noted under Notional concord.

- a. If any word that is originally an adjective is used as a noun and it stands as a subject should be treated as a plural subject. E.g.

The poor are not respected by many Nigerians.

↓ ↓
Plural plural
Subject subject

- b. The singular nouns that terminate in 's' are usually treated as singular subjects. E.g.

Phonetics is my area of specialization.

↓ ↓
Singular verb

- c. The word 'all' can be used either in the singular or in the plural sense. E.g.

i. All that glitters is not gold.

↓ ↓
Singular singular
Subject verb

ii. All is not well Jane.

↓ ↓
singular singular
Subject verb

- d. When introducing yourself and you regard all your names as a single entity, you will say 'My name is' but if on the other hand you regard all your names as different entities, you will say 'my names are' E.g.

My name is Happy Dumbi Omenogor or

My names are Happy Dumbi Omenogor.

Some lawyers see their names as different entities hence they always use 'my name are'. This is usually done in the language of law to avoid ambiguity.

- e. Some nouns that are in pairs take plural verbs but if 'pairs' is stressed, they take singular verbs. E.g.
 John's trousers are dirty.
 John's pair of trousers is dirty.
 Scissors were used to cut the tape.
 A pair of scissors was used to cut the tape.

2.3 **Proximity Concord:** This concord stipulates that where two nouns, or noun equivalents are co-ordinated by conjunctions such as: neither... Nor, either... or, and 'or' the noun or noun equivalent nearer to the verb should be recognized as the subject and so should determine its form. E.g

Neither the police-men nor the suspect was met at the scene of crime.
 Singular Subject Singular verb

Either the students or the lecturer has left.
 Singular Subject Singular verb

The proprietor or the teachers have come.
 Plural Subject Plural verb

2.4 **Tense Concord:** This stipulates that where a sentence is made up of more than one clause, all the verbs in the sentence must agree in tense if the sentence does not express a general truth. E.g.

I asked my father whether I can enter for the JAMB examination. Wrong
 Past tense present tense

I asked my father whether I could enter for the JAMB examination. Right
 Past tense Past tense

iv. The lecturer said that he is busy.
 Past tense present tense. Wrong

The lecturer said that he was busy.
 Past tense Past tense. Right

Dr Okoro said that no condition is permanent.
 My mother said that life is what you make it.

The last two sentences are correct because they express general truths.

2.5 Concord of Person: This states that consistency must be maintained with persons in sentences. E.g

I. *One should love his country. Wrong

↓ First Person Third person ↓

II. One should love one's country. Right

↓ First person First person ↓

3. Conclusion

This paper has stressed the significance of concord in grammar. The different types of concord in English as well as the various principles and linguistic conventions that are applied when determining whether a subject or a verb is plural or singular are discussed. The principles in question ought to be memorized by students and teachers alike because in speaking or writing English even in second language situation, the relationship of concord is mandatory as Dadzie (2009) puts it. Besides, obeying the principles will enhance the fundamental function of language which is 'communication'.

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