



دراسة عملية في
إنتاج اتفاق
النحو في اللغة
الإنجليزية لدى
طلبة جامعة
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A Practical Study of EFL of Nasiriya Students at College of Education in Producing English Grammatical Agreement

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Abstract

This research intends to investigate undergraduate EFL students' difficulty of using proper grammatical agreement. Learning English at the college level poses linguistic problems, many arise from misuse of grammatical agreement. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that undergraduate EFL students face problems in learning the grammatical agreement in English.

To achieve the aim of the study, a comprehensive test of both production and recognition level is given to the whole sample of the study, comprising (50) students at the college of education / English Department as the sample of the test in order to view their performance in learning agreement in English . The data of the test items are analyzed and measured scientifically using proper statistical formula.

The whole results reveal that undergraduate EFL learners face difficulties and commit errors in using agreement in English .According to the results arrived at, main conclusions as well as recommendations are drawn.

Keywords: Agreement, EFL, Concord

1. Introduction

Although language is not the only form of communication among human beings, it is certainly the most important one . Lado (1964:7) states that language is the chief means by which man expresses thoughts and needs social interaction with other people . As to syntax in English , undergraduate learners of English at college stage often face problems related to the aspects of agreement . They face a great difficulty in using the grammatical agreement . However, Agreement in English occurs with the choices of one or more grammatical categories (such as number, person , gender, case , or tense) which are morphologically marked on certain form classes (such as nouns, verbs, adjectivesetc.) . Also, it refers to " the grammatical process whereby one constituent has the same value for certain grammatical features (such as person, number, gender) (Fromkin etal ,2000: 684), i.e. it is a formal relationship between sentence elements (constituents) whereby "the form of one item requires a certain corresponding form of another" (Crystal, 1991:13). Many other terms have also been used for the same phenomenon , such as " concord , congruence and correspondence " (Hartman and Stork ,1972: 8) . Finally, it is worthy to mention that Agreement falls within the general notion of ' context sensitivity (Lyons ,1968: 239-40) .

2.Types of Agreement

Generally speaking, there are three types of agreement in English on the basis of the way it operates (Quirk etal , 1972: 360) . These are Grammatical Agreement , Notional (semantic) Agreement , as well as Agreement of proximity . The researcher will explain them as follow :

2.1 Grammatical Agreement

The first type is the grammatical (syntactic) Agreement which occurs when sentence elements formally agree with each other . For instance, a complement noun formally agrees with its corresponding subject or object in number (Crystal, 1988: 50). This can be explained in the following examples :

1. a. That is an apple . b. Those are apples.

2. a. I thought him a fool. b. I thought them fools .

In(1b) above, both the controlling element ' those ' and the agreeing element ' apples' are morphologically marked for number Agreement .

2.2 Notional (semantic) Agreement

Agreement occurs according to the notion of number rather than the presence of the grammatical marker for that notion (Quirk et al ,1985 : 757). The number in controller is determined by the speaker's viewpoint . For example, a verb that agrees with singular or plural meaning of the subject regardless of any grammatical markers . This can be illustrated in the following example :

3. Two miles is long way .

There is a plural subject in (3) , yet a singular verb is used since ' two miles ' is viewed as a single entity by the speaker (Crystal , 1988:51).

2.3 Agreement of proximity

The third type is brought about by Agreement of proximity which requires the verb to agree with whatever noun or pronoun closely preceding it (Gramley and Patzold , 1992: 102) . This can be exemplified in the following example :

4. No one expects his friends agree with him .

In (4), the verb agrees with the number of nearby noun phrase , hence (NP) rather than the real subject ' no one ' .

3. Agreement Hierarchy

The question which arises here : which is a more prominent principle in the hierarchy of Agreement , the grammatical or the notional (semantic) parameter ? , one attempt to investigate this issue has been made by (Corbett,1979) who notices that certain sentence elements

allow alternative Agreement form but not in all grammatical positions, This can be explained in the following examples :

- 5. a- The committee has decided .
- b- The committee have decided .
- c- This committee sat late.
- *d- These committee sat late .

The subject verb number Agreement in (5-a) is syntactically motivated in that both ' the committee ' and the auxiliary verb 'has' are singular , while in (5-b) , it is semantically motivated , however , the ungrammaticality of (5-d) shows that the semantic principle is restricted by the grammatical environment . The problem is why example (5-d) should be ungrammatical , given that committee can take semantic (plural) agreement. The answer is that Agreement is controlled by the element's position in the sentence . The Agreement position can be arranged in the following hierarchy (ibid : 204) :

Attributive – Predicative – Relative pronoun – Personal Pronoun

Corbett (1983: 260) states that attributive modifiers are more likely to show grammatical agreement than personal pronouns or even predicates. Moreover, The predicate hierarchy (which covers the verb – participle adjective – noun) reveals that adjectives are more likely to show semantic agreement than verbs (Quoted by Comrie , 1988: 413-13).

4. Areas of Agreement

English manifests the following areas of agreement : Subject Verb, Subject Complement, Object Complement , Subject Reflexive - Object , as well as Gender. However, The researcher will adopt Greenbaun and Quirks' 1990 classification of agreement. (Greenbaun and Quirk ,1990: 22-214)

4.1 Subject-verb

Fogiel (1998: 8) views that the subject must agree with its verb in number (singular vs. plural) and person (1st vs-2nd vs-3rd). This is the most important area of concord in English . However, This can be illustrated in the following instances :

- 6. a- The girl comes .
- b- The girls come.

Thus, (girl) in (6.a) refers to a single girl, while (girls) in (6.b) refers to more than one girl. However, a subject verb agreement refers to a change in the form of a verb depending on its subject .

In English, a verb changes form only when its subject is third person (he/ she/ it) and only in the present tense . In this respect , the main verbs have only two forms in the present and one form in the past . There is no agreement variation in the past tense and modal verbs. (Leech and Svartvik , 1994: 260). However, verb to be has the following forms in both present and past . This can be exemplified in the following instances :

- 7. a- You are taller than I am .
- b- We are just good friends .
- c- I was your teacher .
- d- You are my pupil .
- e- I will play the piano .
- f- They will play the piano . (Chalker 1984: 65; Greenbaun and Quirk 1990: 65)

4.2 Subject – complement

There is usually an agreement of number between subject and subject complement . Subject complement often expresses a quality or an attribute of the subject and are realized as NPs , adjectives or nominal clauses . This can be illustrates in the following examples :

- 8. a- Nada is a capable girl . (NPs)
- b- Nada is capable .(adj.)
- c- The trouble with Nada is that she never does any homework .

However, subject complement number agreement takes place in clauses of the type SVC (Quirk and Greenbaun , 1973:181) , as in :

- 9. a- The child was an angel .
- * a- The child was angels.
- b- The children were angels .
- * b- The children were angel .

However, there are certain exception as in :

- 10. What we need most is books . (ibid : 288).

4.3 Object –complement

Here, the agreement occurs between the direct object and object complement (Quirk and Greenbaun , 1973: 181; Huddleston ,1984: 195). This can be illustrated in the following example :

- 11. He considered Suha a genius .

4.4 Subject- Reflexive Object .

Subject object Agreement in number , person and gender is necessary where the second item is a reflexive pronoun and is always coreferential with a noun or another or another pronoun (the antecedent). (Fogiel, 1988: 57) , as in :

- 12. a- She cut herself .
- b- You are just yourself.
- c- We should give ourselves another chance .
- d- The dog was scratching itself .
- e- Ahmed and Mazin gave themselves rest .

4.5 Gender

It has been observed that English does not have a system of grammatical gender –adjectives and articles do not have separate forms

depending on the gender of the noun they modify. However, it is possible to indicate the gender of some entity by referring back to a pronoun, as in:

13. The girl helped her mother .

In the above example (13) ; we might argue that the girl is in the feminine gender and the mother is neutral . (ibid : 333)

However, gender marking is generally not overt ; rather , the categories appear subtly in the way we use pronouns and other gender specific terms .

The following table illustrates Gender in pronoun (Chalker,1984: 85).

Table (1)

Gender in English Pronouns

Gender	Subject	Reflexive
Masculine	He	Himself
Feminine	She	Herself
Neuter	It	Itself
Neuter	They	Themselves
Neuter	One	Oneself

5. Data Collection

This section is devoted to the description of the data collection procedures. It is planned to include statements on the objective of the test including recognition and production items. Validity and reliability are identified as far as the test is concerned. The rest of the section deals with the topics such as the description of the test, the scoring scheme adopted, the main administration of the test and statistical means.

5.1 The population

This refers to any set of items , individuals, etc. which share some common and observable features from which a sample can be taken (Richard etal , 1992: 282) .

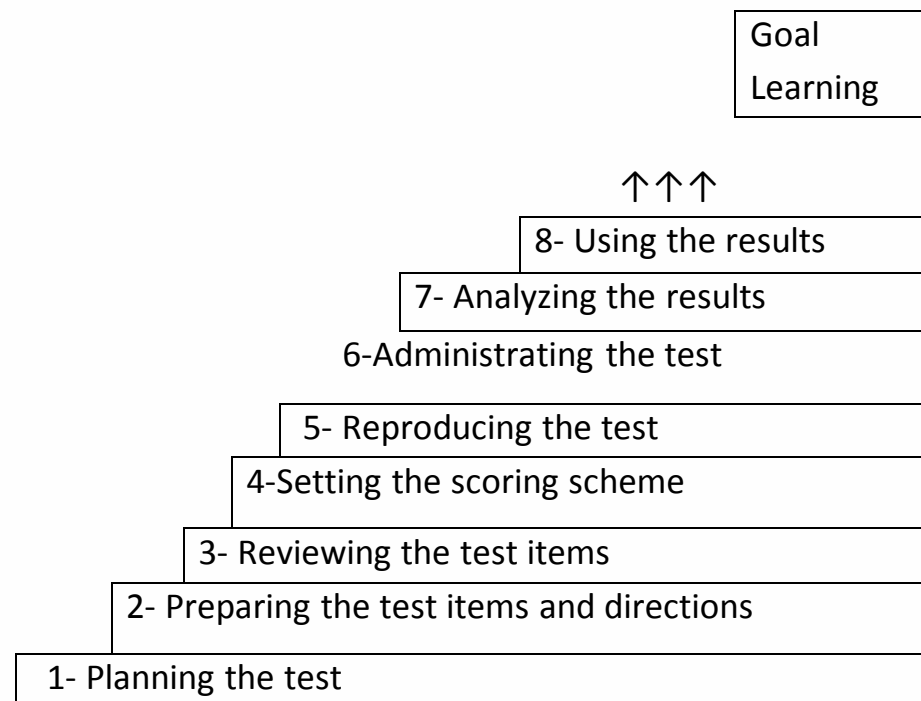
So, the population of the study included (50) Undergraduate EFL learners for the academic year 2014-2015 .

5.2 The Sample

This refers to any group of individuals which is selected to represent a population (ibid : 321) . However, the sample or the experimental group of the present study includes (25) students from the males and the same equal number from the females .

5.3 Test Construction

The construction of an educational test includes the following steps as far as the test items are concerned : planning, preparing, reviewing, setting the scoring scheme, as well as reproducing. However, these steps are later followed by test administration, results analysis and application. The following figure illustrates these steps (Spolsky,1989: 72) :



Basic steps in construction a teacher – made test

Moreover, the test items used in this study cover some major grammatical agreement in English language, namely the kinds and areas of agreement. The test items include statements with multiple choices and specifying the type of the grammatical agreement in some simple sentences. In such a way, various kinds and areas of agreement could be noticed for the sake of picking up the errors in structural aspects that are related to the notion of agreement in English.

5.4 Objectives of the Test

The first step in constructing a test is to specify its objectives. In other words, the test serves as a means of achieving certain ends. The contents are considered essential in which the next steps of the experimental work are built.

5.5 Test Validity

Al-Jarah (1991: 4) states that a validity has to do with how well a test actually measures what it purports to measure. For example, a dictation or composition test would not be valid for the purpose of testing punctuation .

Lado (1961 : 30) argues that " validity can be achieved and verified by correlation the source of a test with those of another test or criterion which is valid ". Two types of validity are considered important: content validity and face validity. Therefore, both types have been adopted for the purpose of the study.

The researcher has constructed the test assuming that it will measure the students' ability in grammatical agreement . The test is valid from the researcher's point of view since it has been calculated according to content validity through listing most of the points encouraged in the research area of agreement . He has also accounted for face validity .

To check face and content validity, the whole test has been, submitted to a jury of experts in ELT, who have been provided their workable comments on the items concerned. In this regard, some items have been modified and changed.

The jury members, which are arranged alphabetically according to their academic ranks, consist of the following :

- 1- Prof. Saad S. AL-Rawi, PH.D. (University of Baghdad , College of Education / Ibn - Rushd) .
- 2- Asst. Prof. Abbass Lutfy , PH.D. (University of Baghdad , College of Al-Mustansyriah) .
- 3- Asst. Prof. Abdulkarim Fadhil , PH.D. (University of Baghdad , College of Education/ Ibn - Rushd) .
- 4- Instructor Ismail Ibrahim , PH.D. (University of Baghdad , College of Education) .

After constructing the test, a pilot–study was required to find out exactly whether the test items are well –constructed or not. Results of the pilot –study can be a good indicator for making any necessary modifications in the final version of the test and estimate the time allotted for answering all the items of the test as a whole .

To achieve these aims (30) students from the remaining members of the population have randomly been adopted to form the subjects for the pilot –study . The finding of the pilot –study indicated that the time required to complete the test is 40 minutes .

5. 6 Reliability of the Test

Reliability of the test is a necessary feature of any good test . A test first should be reliable as a measuring instrument . Lado (1962 : 31) views that " Reliability is measured by a correlation between the scores of the same set of students on two consecutive administrations of the test . This is known as the re-testing coefficient of reliability" .

According to this study, the same sample of the study has been subjected to the test on two different occasions. The test papers have been distributed among students who are told to read the items carefully in a normal speed . All students smoothly answered all items within the time allotted . Then, The researcher scored the whole test papers and assigned students marks .

5. 7 Test Administration

The test administration is carried out during the first term of the academic year 2014-2015 . After handing out the test to the testees, The instructions that accompanied each question have been explained in order to clarify the ambiguity that the testees may face when answering the questions. According to Carroll (1980 : 16), a good test is expected to "provide as much information as is required with the minimum expenditure of time effort and resources " . The test papers are distributed among the students who are told to read the items carefully in a normal speed . All students smoothly answered all items within the time allotted .

5. 8 Statistical Means

To achieve the objectives of the study, the following statistical means have been adopted:

Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient Formula has been used to estimate the reliability of the test .

$$r = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d^2}{n(n^2-1)}$$

r=Spearman rank order correlation coefficient formula .

$\sum d^2$ = The sum of the squares among the differences .

n = The size of the sample .

6. Data Analysis

This section mainly concerns itself with the presentation and discussion of the results obtained by testing (50) students, (25) males and (25) females from College of Education / Department of English . To fulfill the aim and investigate the hypothesis of the study, a practical test has been administrated to measure some aspects of English grammatical agreement used by these students .

Accordingly, identification and classification of these errors will be made . Also, some relevant remedial work will be suggested.

6.1 Overall Performance

In order to investigate the hypothesis of the research which reads as follows : " it is hypothesized that Undergraduate EFL students face problem in learning English Grammatical agreement ".

The subjects, performance in English grammatical agreement at both recognition and production levels are assessed .The statistical analysis yields the results shown in table (2). The comparison of the results of the male and female subjects reveals that there are apparently similar errors made by the two groups . This means that both groups make , in general , significant errors in their performance, in grammatical agreement of English. This leads to the acceptance of the hypothesis of the research stated above .

6.2 Error identification and Classification

Having finished the conduction of grammatical agreement test, the researcher himself has scored the responses of the subjects of the study .

6.3 Misuse of Grammatical Agreement

This category has actually been proved as problematic because it has been difficult to find causes for explanation . The responses have been diversified and each student has made a different type of mistake in this respect .

(1) S.V. Obj. Complement Agreement

The total number of this type of errors is (22) . (11) wrong responses have been made by male students. Thus, this forms a percentage of (44%) in comparison with those made by female students which have been (11) and it constitutes the percentage of (44%) . Example of such type of error is :

I thought him fools .

(2) S.V. Agreement in Relative Clauses

The total number of this type of error is (11) .(6) errors have been made by male students and (5) errors by female students. The

percentage for both has been (24 %) and (20 %) respectively . An example of such type of error is :

The girls who sings the song feel shy .

(3)(Notional Agreement) S.V. agreement

The total number of wrong responses made by male students is (15) with the percentage of (60%) in comparison with those committed by female students that have been (18) with the percentage of (72%). Actually, the total number of type of errors forms a real problem for the students . Here is an example of such type of error :

Two miles are a long way .

(4) Agreement in Coordinative Structures

This type of errors constitutes another problem for the students. The total number of wrong responses made by male students is (13) with the percentage of (52%) in comparison with those committed by female students that have been (14) with percentage of (56%) . The example below reveals this type of errors :

Apple and ice cream are my favorite food.

(5) Correlative Agreement

The total number of this type of errors is (7). The wrong responses made by the male students are (4) but those made by female students are (3) . The percentages have been (16%) and (12%) respectively . An example of this type of error is :

Neither the headmaster nor his secretary are flying to England .

(6) Indefinite pronoun S.V. Agreement

The total number of errors made by the subjects of this study is (15) . The number of errors made by males (8) with the percentage of (32%) . In female students responses, the number of errors is (7) with the percentage of (28 %) . An example of such type of error is

Someone are waiting.

(7) S.V. Agreement (with countable noun)

The total number of this type of mistakes is (12). (6) wrong mistakes have been made by the male students. This constitutes a percentages of (24%) in comparison with those made by female students which have been (6) and forms a percentage of (24) . An example of such type of errors can be seen in the following :

Two third of the students has succeeded .

(8) S.V. Agreement (with uncountable noun)

The frequency of this error made by the subjects of the present study is (9) . The number of wrong responses committed by the male students is (5) , forming a percentage of (20%) , whereas the number of wrong responses made by female students is (4) , forming a percentage of (16 %) . An example of such type of error is :

Two third of the field were under water .

(9) Numeral S.V. Agreement

The total number of this type of error is (24) . (12) errors have been made by male students and (12) errors by female students . The percentages have been (48 %) and (48 %) respectively. This can be exemplified in the following example :

Ten passengers arrives at the hotel .

(10) Adj. – V. Agreement (with Demonstratives)

Table (2) shows that the total number of this type of errors is (9) . (3) errors have been made by male students and (6) errors are made by female students. However, the percentages have been (12%) and (24%) respectively . An instance of such type of error is :

That shirts are new .

(11) Cleft Pronoun S.V. Agreement

The total number of mistakes is (14) . (6) wrong responses have been made by male students. This constitutes a percentage of (24%) in comparison with those made by female students which have been (8)

that constitute a percentage of (32%) . An example of such kind of error is:

It is I who is to blame .

(12) (Personal Adjective in Plural) adj. – v. –Agreement

The total number of this type of error made by the subjects of the study is (23) .However, error made by male students are (12) with percentage of (48%). Whereas, the error made by female students are (11) which form a percentage of (44 %) . An example of such type of error is:

The poor has many problems .

(13) Object- Complement Agreement

These errors appeared in (23) out of number of responses .(13) mistakes have been committed by male students and (10) errors made by female students with percentage of (52%) (40%). An example of the type of such errors made by students is as follows :

He considered Layla geniuses.

(14) Plural Personal Pronoun S.V. Agreement

The total number of this type of errors is (14) . The number of errors made by male students is (8) with a percentage of (32 %) and the number of errors made by female students is (6) with a percentage of (24 %) . Here, is an example of such type of error that the students are made :

Mazin and Ali hurts their feet .

(15) Relative Pronoun Gender Agreement

The total number of errors of this type is (13) . Male students have made (7) errors, whereas the number of errors made by female students is (6) with percentage of (28%) and (24%) respectively . An example of such type of error is :

That is the man which I met in the park yesterday .

As to the production level of the test , the students are asked to mention the type of the grammatical Agreement in five sentences . However, the number of errors and percentages in this aspect are illustrated in Table (3) .

Table (2)
Numbers and Percentages of Errors
at Recognition Level

The type of errors	Male		Female		Total NO.
	E.NO.	%	E.No.	%	
1. S. V. Obj. complement Agreement	11	4	11	44	22
2. S. V. Agreement in Relative Clause	6	24	5	20	11
3. National Agreement S. V. Agreement	15	60	18	72	33
4. Agreement in coordinative structure	13	52	14	56	27
5. Correlative Agreement	4	16	3	12	7
6. Indefinite Pronoun S. V. Agreement	8	32	7	28	15
7. S. V. Agreement (with countable noun)	6	24	6	24	12
8. S. V. Agreement (with uncountable noun)	5	20	4	16	9
9. Numeral S. V. Agreement	12	48	12	48	24
10. Adjective V. Agreement	3	12	6	24	9
11. Cleft Relative Pronoun S. V. Agreement	6	24	8	32	14
12. Personal Agreement in plural adj. V. Agreement	12	48	11	44	23

13.Object. complement . Agreement	13	52	10	40	23
14. Plural personal pronoun S.V. Agreement	8	32	6	24	14
15. Relative pronoun Gender Agreement	7	28	6	24	13
Total No.	129		127		256

$r = 92\%$

Table (3)
Numbers and Percentages of Errors
at Production Level

The type of errors	Male		Female		Total NO.
	E.NO.	%	E.NO.	%	
1. Grammatical Agreement singular S. V. Agreement	4	16	6	24	10
2.Grammatical Agreement singular S. V. to be (in past)	7	28	5	20	12
3.Grammatical Agreement plural S. V. to be (in past)	8	32	9	36	17
4.Grammatical Agreement plural S. V. to be (in past)	10	40	8	32	18
5. Pronoun gender V. Agreement	11	44	7	28	18
6. Singular S.V. complement	8	32	6	24	14
7. Singular S.V. complement	8	32	6	24	14
8. Reflexive pronoun functions as S.V.	7	28	5	20	12

Agreement					
9. Personal relative pronoun in gender V. Agreement	8	32	9	36	17
10. S.V. to be (present) complement Agreement	8	32	10	40	18
Total No.	79		71		150

$r = 72\%$

Table (4)

Ranks of Errors in Grammatical Agreement Items made by Male Students
at Recognition Level

The type of errors	E.NO.	%
1. National Agreement S.V. Agreement	15	60
2. Agreement in coordinative structure	13	52
3. Object complement Agreement	13	52
4. Numeral S.V. Agreement	12	48
5. Personal Agreement in plural adj. V. Agreement	12	48
6. S.V. Obj. complement Agreement	11	44
7. Indefinite pronoun S.V. Agreement	8	32
8. Plural personal pronoun S.V. Agreement	8	32
9. Relative pronoun Gender Agreement	7	28
10. S.V. Agreement in Relative Clause	6	24
11. S.V. Agreement (with countable noun)	6	24
12. Cleft Relative pronoun S.V. Agreement	6	24
13. S.V. Agreement (with uncountable noun)	5	20
14. Correlative Agreement	4	16
15. Adj. V. Agreement	3	12
Total NO.	129	

Table (5)

Ranks of Errors in Grammatical Agreement Items made by Female Students at Recognition Level

The type of errors	E.NO.	%
1. National Agreement S.V. Agreement	18	72
2. Agreement in coordinative structure	14	56
3. Numeral S.V. Agreement	12	48
4. S.V. Obj. complement Agreement	11	44
5. Personal Agreement in plural adj. V. Agreement	11	44
6. Object complement Agreement	10	40
7. Cleft Relative pronoun S.V. Agreement	8	32
8. Indefinite pronoun S.V. Agreement	7	28
9. S.V. Agreement (with countable noun)	6	24
10. Adj. V. Agreement	6	24
11. Plural personal pronoun S.V. Agreement	6	24
12. Relative pronoun Gender Agreement	6	24
13. S.V. Agreement in Relative Clause	5	20
14. S.V. Agreement (with uncountable noun)	4	16
15. Correlative Agreement	3	12
Total NO.	127	

Table (6)

Ranks of Errors in Grammatical Agreement made by Male Students at Production Level

The type of errors	E.NO.	%
1. Pronoun gender V. Agreement	11	44
2. Grammatical Agreement Plural S. V. to be (in past)	10	40
3. Grammatical Agreement Plural S. verb to be (in past)	8	32
4. Singular S.V. complement	8	32
5. Singular S.V. complement	8	32
6. Personal relative pronoun in gender V. Agreement	8	32
7. S.V. to be (present) complement Agreement	8	32
8. Grammatical Agreement Singular S. V. to be (in past)	7	28

9. Reflexive pronoun functions as S.V. Agreement	7	28
10. Grammatical Agreement Singular S. V. Agreement	4	16
Total NO.	79	

Table (7)

Ranks of Errors in Grammatical Agreement made by Female Students at
Production Level

The type of errors	E.NO.	%
1. S.V. to be (present) complement Agreement	10	40
2. Grammatical Agreement Plural S. verb to be (in past)	9	36
3. Personal relative pronoun in gender V. Agreement	9	36
4. Grammatical Agreement Plural S. V. to be (in past)	8	32
5. Pronoun gender V. Agreement	7	28
6. Grammatical Agreement Singular S. V. Agreement	6	24
7. Singular S.V. complement	6	24
8. Singular S.V. complement	6	24
9. Grammatical Agreement Plural S. V. to be (in past)	5	20
10. Reflexive pronoun functions as S.V. Agreement	5	20
Total NO.	71	

Conclusion

In the light of finding of the study , it becomes obvious that Undergraduate EFL learners face difficulties in using English grammatical agreement system . The students fail to master this system with its difficult rules . This is attributed to wrong representation of grammatical order as well as substitution by another form largest portion of errors among other types which also constitute large number of errors .

The researcher believes that one of the most important conclusions that has been arrived at in the present study is that identification of the exact sources of error made by the students is not ambiguous and that an error may be attributed to more than on source.

As noted above , most of learners' errors could be traced back to the learner's mother tongue which has its private rules and logic . Most of the errors made by students are transfer error .

However, the main causes of errors may be also traced back to some possible reasons such as : the complexity of English grammatical Agreement system , or whenever it comes to teaching of grammatical Agreement , teachers merely 'brush off the surface ' of the subject for students, and leave other complex issues such as agreement with the relative pronouns, amongst others, still insurmountable to students. Finally, as a word of admonition to students, they must cultivate the culture of reading good grammar books, which have discussed some challenging issues in grammatical agreement and English grammar in general. The percentages of errors can be classified as follow :

- 1- percentages of errors at recognition level 92%
- 2- percentages of errors at production level 72%

Recommendations

As a result of analyzing test results , the researcher has arrived at the following recommendations :

1. Since the results of this study show that the students are weak in the aspect of English grammatical agreement , a great deal of attention should be paid for assessment activity in the program of instruction . Special emphasis should be given to the students as partners in teaching - learning process .
2. Teachers should explain the rules of English grammatical agreement since English grammar plays an important part in learning the English language . Many teachers of English pay little attention to grammatical agreement and sometimes they do not penalize structural mistakes as they penalize other aspects of English . Consequently, many students do not care about structure .

3. Results of Iraqi EFL learners' performance in the area of agreement remains indecisive and undependable in the absence of the model for the learners to follow .
4. Encouraging the students to write free composition about any topic they choose . This is an important tool to improve and correct the students' ability in structural aspects

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Appendix

The Achievement Test Items Adopted

a- Recognition Level

Q1/ Fill in the blanks with the most suitable words given between the brackets :

1. I thought him ----- . (a fool , fools)
2. The girl who ----- the song feel shy . (sing , sings)
3. Two miles ----- a long way . (is , are)
4. Apple and ice cream ----- my favourite food . (is , are)
5. Neither the headmaster nor his secretary ----- flying to England.
(is , are)
6. Someone ----- waiting . (is , are)
7. Two third of the students ----- succeeded . (has , have)
8. Two third of the field ----- under water . (was , were)
9. Ten passengers ----- at the hotel . (arrive , arrives)
10. ----- shirts are new . (These , that)
11. It is I who ----- to blame . (am , is)
12. The poor ----- many problems . (has , have)
13. He considered Layla ----- (a genius , geniuses)
14. Mazin and Ali ----- their feet . (hurt , hurts)
15. That is the man ----- I met in the park yesterday . (whom , which)

b- Production Level

Q2/ Specify the type of the grammatical Agreement in the following sentences :

1. The boys come .
2. Ali and Mazin went to school yesterday .
3. He was a teacher .
4. They were teachers .
5. Those books which are on the table are mine .