

**Investigating Iraqi EFL Learners' Ability to Recognize
and Use of English Concord**

دراسة استقصائية لقدرة متعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية العراقيين كلغة اجنبية على التعرف
على التوافق في اللغة الإنكليزية واستخدامه

**Ahmed Abdulrazzak
Aziz Al-Tikrety
Assistant Lecturer
Mutafaweqat High
School for Girls**

**احمد عبد الرزاق عزيز التكريتي
مدرس مساعد
ثانوية نينوى للمتفوقات**

ahmed.abd.aziz86@gmail.com

تاريخ القبول

٢٠٢٤/٥/١٣

تاريخ الاستلام

٢٠٢٤/٤/٤

الكلمات المفتاحية: التوافق , علم النحو , معضلة تعليمية , الادراك , التكوين

**Keywords: Road transport, Car roads, Railway, The road to
development in Iraq**

المستخلص

التوافق هو مصطلح نحوي عام يستخدم للإشارة الى الانسجام بين اجزاء مختلفة من الجملة, وعلى وجه التحديد بين الفاعل والفعل. تعد هذه الظاهرة النحوية كجزء جوهري في علم التركيب (النحو) للغة الانكليزية. ان مسالة التوافق النحوي تمثل احدى التحديات الشائعة التي تواجه الطلبة اثناء تعلم اللغة. تنشأ هذه المعضلة عند عدم تطابق الفاعل والفعل في جملة ما, مما يشير الى وجود اخطاء نحوية. ان ادراك واتقان مفهوم التوافق يعد اساسا في التواصل والكتابة الفعالة. تتطلب دراسة هذا المفهوم في علم النحو للغة الانكليزية الى دراسة استقصائية كونها موضوعا محيرا وتمثل معضلة تعليمية لمتعلمي اللغة الانكليزية العراقيين كلغة اجنبية. تسعى الدراسة لتقصي قدرة متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية العراقيين على اتقان تراكيب التوافق وعلى مستويي: الادراك والتكوين

تتبنى الدراسة الحالية الفرضية التي تنص على ان متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية العراقيين يواجهون صعوبة اكبر في تكوين او استخدام جمل تحتوي على قواعد التوافق من تلك التي تواجههم في ادراكهم لها. كما وتفترض الدراسة ايضا انه لا يوجد فرق ملحوظ في نتائج اختباري الادراك والتكوين. وكإجراء لجمع المعلومات فانه قد اشترك في الاختبار المتالف من جزأين (الادراك والتكوين) ٧٥ طالبا من ثلاث ثانويات مختلفة للحصول على نتائج يعول عليها.

و بالاعتماد على النتائج، فقد وجد ان تكوين هذه التراكيب يبدو اكثر صعوبة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية العراقيين من ادراكهم لها. وعلاوة على ذلك، فان النتائج تشير الى وجود فرق ملحوظ في نتائج اختبار التكوين عندما تمت مقارنتها بين المدارس الثلاثة.

Abstract

Concord is a general grammatical term used to indicate harmony or agreement between various parts of a sentence, particularly between subject and verb. Such a grammatical phenomenon is regarded as an essential part of English syntax. The issue of grammatical concord is one of the common challenges that students encounter in their language learning. This problem arises when there is a mismatch between the subject and the verb in a sentence, leading to grammatical errors. Understanding and mastering concord is crucial for effective communication and writing. Dealing with this aspect of English grammar requires due attention and thorough investigation as they are said to be a perplexing area and represent a pedagogical problem for the Iraqi learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). The aim of this paper is to investigate the Iraqi EFL learners' mastery of concord constructions at both recognition and production levels. The study adopts the hypothesis that that Iraqi EFL learners face more difficulty in producing sentences using concord rules than recognizing them. It is also hypothesized that there is no significant difference between the scores of the recognition test and production test . As a procedure, seventy-five students from various high schools took part in a test which is divided into two parts, Recognition Test and Production Test to reach reliable results. The results obtained indicate that Iraqi EFL learners encounter greater difficulty in producing these constructions compared to recognizing them. Moreover, the results show that a significant difference was found when the scores of the production test of the three schools were compared to each other.

Introduction

Language is considered the best means of communication among the individuals of a society. It is the human ability in communicating complex thoughts behind making language a perpetual phenomenon. However, in order to use a particular language eligibly and effectively, one has to master all its grammatical patterns and constructions and to have the potentiality of recognizing and producing them in writing and

speech. Concord (or agreement) is one of these grammatical constructions which must be mastered as a fundamental part of learners' mastery of English as a foreign language. The origin of the word concord was derived from Latin for agreement. From the grammatical perspective, it refers to a formal relationship which exists between elements of grammar. In other words, it means that a form of one word requires a corresponding form of another. In fact, some linguists argue that the terms concord and agreement can be used interchangeably, while others maintain that the former is used in reference to the relationship between adjectives and the noun they modify, whereas the later indicates the relationship between verbs and their subjects or objects. Different authoritative definitions of concord have been provided by various authors. According to Quirk et al (1985:755), the relationship exists between two grammatical components such that if one component shows a given feature, the other has to display the feature itself is known as concord.

For Trask (1996:12), The notion of Concord is the grammatical phenomenon by which the appearance of a particular element in a sentence in a particular form demands another element which is grammatically related to it in order to appear in a particular form. Concord (also agreement) occurs within the range of choices offered within one or more grammatical categories which are morphologically marked on particular classes of words, such as number, gender, case, person or tense. For instance: *These cars are available*. This sentence illustrates concord in number between the plural noun (*cars*) and its determiner (*these*), the plural of (*this*). The sentence also clarifies the agreement between the plural noun phrase (*these cars*) and the verb *be* (of which *are* is a plural form).

Kroeger (2005:111) points out that agreement is referred to as a general term used to account for a situation in which the grammatical characteristics of a noun or noun phrase specify the morphological form of a specific word that is syntactically related to the noun or noun phrase in some way. This syntactic relationship can be anaphoric, as in the case of agreement between a pronoun and its antecedent, or it can involve a relation between a head and its dependent , as in the case of agreement between a verb and its subject or object.

Afolayon and Newman (1983:126) cited in Arthur (2009:12) sheds light on the fact that concord as a grammatical term is utilized to indicate the relationship which exists between the inflectional forms of different elements within a sentence. Moreover, Richards and Schmidt (2010:20) suggest that concord (the traditional term for agreement) means that two constituents agree if they have at least one feature in common. Consider the following sentence in which the subject (*Peter*) must be followed by the form of the verb (*try*) that is also marked for the third person singular: *Peter tries to attend the conference*. Depending on the definitions stated above, the term concord implies the fact that if a grammatical constituent has a certain property for instance, a plural noun, that plurality feature of the noun has to be matched appropriately with the verb.

1. Problem of the Research

Learning the grammar can be challenging for many learners due to several reasons. Firstly, grammar rules can be complex and have numerous exceptions, making them difficult to grasp fully. Second, learners might find it hard to apply these rules correctly in different contexts, leading to errors in speaking and writing. Another issue is the fear of making mistakes which in turn can inhibit learners from experimenting and actively practicing grammar rules. Iraqi EFL learners face several challenges in mastering such grammar rules particularly Concord rules and the formulating of sentences accurately. Concord, or subject-verb agreement, is a fundamental aspect of English grammar that requires verbs to agree with their subjects in number (singular or plural). The difficulties Iraqi learners encounter in this area stem from various linguistic and educational factors. One major challenge is the influence of the learners' native language, Arabic, which has different grammatical structures and rules compared to English. In Arabic, for instance, verb conjugation is more complex, and subject-verb agreement isn't as rigidly enforced as in English. This difference often leads to errors in concord when Iraqi learners transfer their native language structures into English sentences. Another issue lies in the lack of exposure to authentic English usage. Many Iraqi learners have limited opportunities to interact with native English speakers. As a result, their exposure to correct concord usage is limited leading to persistent errors in their written and spoken English.

This lack of exposure also affects their ability to produce grammatically accurate sentences consistently. Furthermore, educational challenges contribute to the difficulties Iraqi EFL learners face in mastering concord rules. Inadequate resources, outdated teaching methodologies and overcrowded classrooms are common issues in many Iraqi educational institutions. These factors hinder effective language instruction and make it challenging for learners to comprehend complex grammatical concepts like concord.

2. Aims of the Study

- The present study aims at giving a theoretical survey on the concept of concord in English and identifying its various types.
- It also aims to test and evaluate learners' ability in recognizing and producing concord rules. This goal is achieved by means of a test composed of two parts: Recognition Test and Production Test.
- Analyzing the data collected and giving useful suggestions to overcome the difficulties , regarding concord, that the learners face while writing or reading English texts.

3. Research Questions

The current study addresses the following research questions to deal with the problem already mentioned:

- 1- What aspects of English concord are considered the most difficult for the Iraqi EFL learners and at which level: recognition or production?
- 2- Is there a significant difference between the scores of the three schools in both recognition and production tests?

4. Hypotheses

Depending on the research questions raised above, literature review and the intuition, the study hypothesizes that:

- 1- Iraqi EFL learners face difficulty in producing rather than recognizing English concord.
- 2- There is no a significant difference between the scores of the three schools in both recognition and production tests

5. Syntactic Aspect of Concord

Many grammarians (Quirk et al (1985), Leech and Svartvik (2002) and Biber et al (2002)) distinguished three main sorts of concord, namely: grammatical concord, notional concord and proximity concord (attraction).

5.1. Grammatical Concord

Grammatical concord means the alignment in the form of a constituent because of the exact form of another constituent in the local domain of a grammatical sentence. Grammatical number, person and gender are considered to be some of the grammatical categories which are highly marked for Concord in many human languages, (Ejeba:2016:116).

For Leech and Svartvik (2002:273), the principle of grammatical concord is that certain grammatical items agree with each other in number and person. The former deals with singularity and plurality, whereas the latter deals with first person, second person and third person.

5.1.1. Concord of Number

According to Quirk et al (1985:757), the principle of grammatical concord implies that the verb matches its subject in number. The most significant kind of English concord is that of third person number between subject and verb. However, the subject-verb agreement is the case in which the subject and the verb in a sentence agree in number. That is, they both have to be singular or plural. In other words, it is important to note that the singular subject is followed by a singular verb but if a sentence contains a plural subject it's followed by a plural verb.

Biber et al (1999:180) and Leech and Svartvik (1999:200) clarify the general rules of of number concord which are restricted in several respects. Number concord is a question which arises only with present tense verbs (except of the verb be) and with the past tense of (be).

- *My brother reads* a poem. [Singular subject with singular verb]
- *My brothers read* a poem. [Plural subject with plural verb]
- *The student was reading* in the class.
- *The students were reading* in the class.

In addition, number concord can not be displayed with the modal auxiliaries which lack s-forms. For instance:

- *The boy may watch* the match.
- *The boys may watch* the match.

It is a fundamental issue to focus on is that number concord is displayed only in the indicative. That is, there is no number concord with nonfinite verbs, imperatives and subjunctives, (Quirk and Greenbaum: 1973:52).

-He spoke to me *as if I were deaf*.

5.1.2. Concord of Person

The lexical selection of the subject rather than the inflection for person in the subject expressions is the criterion on which this type of concord depends on. This means that on the one hand when a singular subject is used, the verb has to be in the third person form. On the other hand, second and first person pronouns are used, (Lockwood,2002: 139). In fact, Leech and Svartvik (1999:202) examine the correlation between the subject and the verb concerning person. The verb "be" has three forms in the present tense, while main verbs have only two, and modal auxiliaries have just one. Consider the following examples:

I *am* ready. -

- He *is* your brother.
- They *are* your friends.
- He *writes* an article.
- They *write* quickly.

I (we/ you/ she) *can* help that man.

Depending on that, Quirk et al (1985: 766) indicate that person concord can only be applied to the indicative verbs. Moreover, concord of person often takes place in combination with number concord, (Zandvoort, 1975:255).

5.2. Notional Concord

The principle of notional concord is built on the notion that the meaning rather than the form is the criterion on which the agreement between a subject and its verb depends on. Greenbaum and Quirk (1990:215) explain that such a kind of concord bases on the notion of number rather than the existence of the grammatical marker for that notion. In other words, it is the meaning (not the form) of the subject which determines the selection of the verb form. Moreover, certain special cases can be clarified by means of notional concord.

5.2.1. Concord with Collective nouns

Collective nouns are those names which denote a collection or a number of people or things. According to Vantellini (2003:46), many foreign learners and native speakers of English are frequently encountered with the problem of how to deal with collective nouns, because one has to choose either a singular or plural concord marking. In other words, the verb which follows the singular collective nouns can be either singular or plural. It is viewed as singular when the elements of the group are viewed as a unit. Otherwise, the verb is plural when the members are viewed as individuals, (Biber et al,2002:235).

- The committee *has/have* rejected the project.

5.2.2. Concord with Indefinite expressions

Quirk et al (1985: 763) and Leech and Svartvik (1999: 202) claim that indefinite expressions often cause concord problems. Such expressions usually end in *-body* and *-one*. Other indefinite expressions of amount are " *any, no, none, some, few, several, more, most, all and many*".

The basic rules of indefinite expressions concord are presented as follows:

A- The indefinite pronouns " *anybody / anyone / everybody / everyone / nobody/ no one and somebody / someone*" take singular verbs:

No one wants to stay here. -

- *Somebody has* called me.

B- Several indefinite pronouns (*none / all / some / any*) and the fractions can be combined with either singular or plural. They take a singular verb if they denote one thing:

- *Some* (of the cement) *has* arrived.
- *All* (the fruit) *has been* washed.
- *Half* (the county) *is* under water.

When they denote more than one person or thing, they combine with a plural verb:

- *Some* (of the papers) *are* found.
 - *All* (my friends) *are* invited.
 - *Half* (of the ministers) *have* approved the decision. (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002: 146)
- According to Greenbaum and Quirk (1990: 218), the plural verb is more frequently used with "*none*" than the singular. The notional concord is the reason behind this choice: *None* (of the students) *are* ready to have a test.

C- *Few*, *many* and *several* always need plural verb forms:

- *Few* of the passengers *are* on the plane.
- *Several* of the buildings *were* destroyed in the war.

D- With "*either* and *neither*" the singular verb is almost used:

- *Neither* of these activities *is* useful.

If a prepositional phrase with a plural complement is placed after "*either* or *neither*", a plural verb is used:

- *Neither of them believe* in useless symbols. (Biber et al, 2002: 235)

5.2.3. Concord with Coordinated Subjects

Quirk et al (1985: 759), Biber et al (2002: 232), Leech and Svartvik (1999: 201) and Greenbaum and Nelson (2002: 762) explain concord with coordinated subjects. The subject which implies two or more subjects linked by a conjunction (*and*, *neither...nor* or *either...or*) is known as the coordinated subject. According to Quirk et al (1985: 759), on the one hand, a plural verb is required when a subject has two or more nouns or noun phrases coordinated by "*and*". On the other hand, a singular verb is used if the coordinated nouns or noun phrases denote the same person or thing:

- *John and Peter are* at home.
- *My friend and my father has* won the prize.

Neither...nor / Either...or

When the subject nouns or noun phrases are coordinated by *or*, *neither...nor* or *either...or*, the verb can be singular or plural. That is, if the nouns or phrases are singular, a singular verb is used. But in the case of plural coordinated nouns, a plural verb has to be used.

- $\left(\begin{matrix} \text{Neither} \\ \text{Either} \end{matrix} \right)$ she $\left(\begin{matrix} \text{nor} \\ \text{or} \end{matrix} \right)$ her husband *has* travelled. [Singular coordinated nouns]

- *Either* the students *or* the teachers *have* rewarded the manager.
[Plural coordinated nouns]

If one noun or noun phrase is singular and the other is plural, the verb tends to agree with the closest one:

- *Neither John nor his brothers are* washing the car.
- *Either the students or the teacher reads* the story. (Greenbaum and Nelson, 2002: 762)

5.3. Proximity (Attraction) Concord

Proximity concord is a grammatical term used to describe the tendency for the verb to agree with the noun or noun phrase which is closer to it rather than the head word of the subject: A large *number* of *books* were printed last week.

Although the head word (*number*) is singular, a plural verb is used because the noun preceding the verb is plural, (Gupta, 2019:523). In other words, the head of the noun phrase is *number* (singular), and one may expect the verb form (*was*). The plural noun(*books*) is the postmodifying of-phrase influences the form of the nearby verb.

For Quirk et al (1985: 762), proximity concord is the solution for the dilemma which arises when one of the coordinated nouns by a correlative conjunction, *either...or* and *neither...nor*, is singular and the other plural. In that, whichever noun or noun phrase comes last specifies the form of the verb, singular or plural. (See: 2.2.3)

6. Other Types of Concord

6.1. Subject complement-verb and object-complement concord

Scott et al (1968: 44) point out that in English there is concord of number but not of person between the subject and its complement. This means that when the subject is singular, it demands a singular complement and vice-versa. But it is significant to note that if the complement is not represented by a noun structure, there is no concord between them:

- *Jane is a nurse.*
- *Those students are intelligent.*

In the first sentence above, concord exists by means of the presence of a noun as a complement. Whereas the second sentence does not bear concord between the subject and its complement because the latter is an adjective (not a noun structure).

For Quirk et al (1985: 767), concord of number can also be shown between the direct object and object complement: They elected *Jack a priminister*.

6.2. Subject-Possessive Pronoun Concord

When the subject pronoun is singular, it demands a singular possessive pronoun ; when the subject pronoun is plural, a plural possessive pronoun has to be used, (Gupta, 2019: 522).

- *He* bought *his* car last year.
- They bought *their* cars last year.

6.3. Subject-reflexive Object Concord

Quirk and Greenbaum (1973: 181) state that subject object concord of number, person and gender is necessary if the second element is a reflexive pronoun. In other words, when the objective member is a reflexive pronoun, there is a concord of person, number and gender between that element and the subject:

- *She* injured *herself* in the arm.

7. Literature Review

Investigating Iraqi EFL learners' mastery of English concord has not been greatly studied, yet the researcher has shed light on few studies which are expected to pave the way for the present study. These studies will be examined and analyzed regarding their objectives, research questions, hypotheses, the procedures and the results.

A. Al-Shaer's Study (2005)

The study is carried out to show the extent to English native speakers' abide by the grammatical rules of Concord (agreement between the verb and its subject in number). The study also aims at highlighting the implications of the obtained results for EFL teaching/ learning process. To reach these aims, the research addresses the following research questions:

To what extent do native speakers follow the traditional grammar rules of concord? What are the implications of such results for EFL teachers and learners?

To answer the questions raised above, thirty native speakers, divided into two group, were invited to do a test which consisted of twenty three concord items. The items were presented orally and in writing. The results indicate that a greater number of native speakers do not follow the formal rule of concord. These results imply pedagogical implications for EFL teaching / learning process. For EFL teachers, not only what traditional grammars say, but also what native speakers say should be taken into consideration.

B. Boahemaa's Study (2014)

This study was conducted to ascertain the actual concord errors in the students' writings. It aims at identifying the factors which are responsible for the concord errors committed by the students. It also aims at finding out the best ways of enhancing the students' accomplishment in this part of English grammar (concord). To achieve these aims, the following questions are raised: What are the specific concord errors the students

of Koforidua Sectech make? What factors account for the concord errors they make? What can be done to help students to overcome the problem they face?

To answer the questions raised above, this study tested final year students of Koforidua Sectech by means of questionnaires, an in-class essay test, summary test and objective test. The tests were analyzed using a statistical programme (SPSS). The results show that the students of Koforidua Sectech commit all types of concord errors, mainly subject-verb concord errors. The results also show that subject-verb concord is the most difficult category of concord for the students. The results reveal that negative attitude of students towards their personal study of English language influences their accomplishment negatively.

C. Igaab's and Altai's Study (2017)

The study aims at comparing and contrasting concord in both English and Arabic languages to highlight similarities and differences in this linguistic area. The hypothesis posits that both languages exhibit concord, with a higher prevalence of grammatical concord.

Concord serves to elucidate the syntactic and semantic relationships within sentences in both languages. The study anticipates a greater difference than similarity between English and Arabic in terms of concord.

As a procedure, a full description of concord is given in both languages followed by an analysis of their respective similarities and differences. Findings reveal that concord functions as a grammatical feature in both English and Arabic, crucial for clarifying relationships between sentence elements. Grammatical concord is highlighted as the predominant form, utilized more frequently than others. Moreover, while English primarily implies subject-verb concord, Arabic categorizes sentences into nominal and verbal types. In Arabic, subject-verb concord extends to case, number, gender, and person agreement.

8. Methodology

The method section represents the skeleton of any study. It makes clear for the reader the content of the study, how the data were collected and analyzed. It also attempts to provide a description of the subjects, instrument and scoring scheme.

8.1. Subjects (Population of the Study)

The subjects participated in the test were the fifth preparatory Iraqi students in Al-Mawali secondary school for girls, Al-Mawali secondary school for boys and Abo-Hanifa preparatory school for boys in the first semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The total number of the subjects were 75 (male and female) who were chosen haphazardly with no male/female distinction. The subjects were twenty-five students from each school.

8.2. Instrument

The test is a method of measuring a person's ability, knowledge or performance in a given domain, (Brown, 2004: 3). In the preparation of any test, the objectives which the test will achieve must be taken into consideration. The test in the present paper is carried out to verify what is proposed by the hypotheses which that Iraqi EFL learners face more difficulty in producing rather than recognizing English concord.

The test aims at discovering the difficulties or problematic areas encountered by these learners concerning concord. In fact, testing learners' performance is fundamental in pinpointing the pitfalls which the learners make.

In this paper, the test comprised of two parts. Recognition test is the first part which was carried out to measure the learners' ability of specifying and recognizing various concordant structures. In this part the students were asked to choose the most appropriate choice among four alternatives.

Production test is the second part which was conducted to measure learners' ability to use concord rules. In deed the second part (Production Test) demands more attention and competence than the first one (Recognition test). In the second part, the students were provided with sentences which contain underlined words and they were required to underline and correct the grammatical error in each sentence.

8.2.1. Validity of the Test

One of the essential features of a good test is validity and a test is considered valid when it satisfies the purpose that it is intended to measure. Brown (1988: 221) defines validity as the degree to which the test measures what is supposed to measure. In order to secure both face and content validity, a test should be submitted to a jury in the field of linguistics in order to be approved. The experts agreed upon it and the researcher took their suggestions and modifications into consideration. As a result, that test has taken the form of the version in the appendix and forwarded to the subjects to conduct the study.

8.2.2. Reliability of the Test

Reliability is an essential characteristics of a good test. Any test must have the property of reliability which is the stability of test scores. The reliability is affected by a number of factors. One of the most important factor is the adequacy of the sampling of the tasks. In other words, the more sample will lead to more reliable test. Test reliability is also evaluated by the use of a number of techniques, the technique used to measure reliability of the current study test is the (SPSS) which is purely a statistical computer programme. In this programme, alpha scale has been applied to verify the results statistically.

8.3. Scoring Scheme

The total number of the test items was 20 divided equally between two parts (Recognition and Production). The test was scored out of 100 on the basis that every item in the test receives five marks if it was answered correctly and zero in case of failure.

9. Data Analysis and Discussion

This section implies the practical part of the present study in which the data collected are analyzed and discussed

9.1. Data Analysis

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is considered the most appropriate tool to compare the test mean scores of the three or more groups. ANOVA findings present an F- value, which is the ratio of the amount of variation between the groups to the amount of variation within the groups. Actually, an ANOVA determines if there is a difference or not, but it doesn't specify the location of that difference. To specify the location of the difference when the F-value is significant, a post-hoc analysis is utilized. Also, to determine if the means of two groups was significantly different from one another or not, the test scores were analyzed by means of the t-test.

Analysis and interpretation of the statistical will primarily focus on the results gained by the F-test and the paired t-test applied to the three schools. The procedures to be adopted is to show the statistical data illustrated by tables followed by related analysis.

SV= Source of Variance SS= Sum of Squares MS= Mean Square
N= Number SD= Standard Deviation SE= Standard Error of Mean

1- A comparison was conducted among the three schools in their recognition mean scores. The aim of this comparison was to determine the statistical significance of the differences among the scores. The table below summarizes the results obtained from this comparison:

Table(1): The F-test of the difference between recognition mean scores of concord of the three schools

SV	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Between Groups	6.140	2	3.070	2.380	.100
Within Groups	92.880	72	1.290		
Total	99.020	74			

Duncan

School	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Al-Mawali Secondary School /Boys	25	2.2200	
Al-Mawali Secondary School /Girls	25	2.6000	2.6000
Abo-Hanifa Preparatory School /Boys	25		2.9200
Sig		.241	.323

The table reveals that the calculated F-value is 2.380, while the tabulated F-value is 3.13. This indicates that the tabulated F-value exceeds the calculated F-value. Consequently, the finding shows that there is no statistically significant difference among the three schools tested. This implies that the subjects had the same level of linguistic background as far as concord is concerned.

2- A comparison was conducted among the three schools in their production mean scores. The goal of this comparison was to determine whether the differences between the scores were statistically significant or not. The table below sums up the findings obtained from this comparison:

Table(2): The F-test of the difference between Producion mean scores of concord of the three schools

SV	SS	DF	MS	F	Sig
Between Groups	20.480	2	10.240	10.557	.000
Within Groups	69.840	72	.970		
Total	90.320	74			

Duncan

School	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Al-Mawali Secondary School /Boys	25	.5400		
Al-Mawali Secondary School /Girls	25		1.1800	
Abo-Hanifa Preparatory School /Boys	25			1.8200
Sig		1.000	1.000	1.000

The table above demonstrates that the calculated F-value, which reads 10.557, is higher than the tabulated F-value which reads 3.13. This suggests a statistically significant difference in the production mean scores of concord among the three schools in favour of Abo-Hanifa Preparatory School for Boys.

3- A comparison was conducted between the recognition test and production test mean scores of Al-Mawali Secondary School for Girls in concord. The aim of this comparison was to determine whether the difference was statistically significant or not. The following table summarizes the obtained results.

Table(3): The paired T-test of the difference between recognition and Production mean scores of Al-Mawali secondary school for girls in concord

School	N	Mean		SD	SE	t	Df	Sig.
		Recognition	Production					
Al-Mawali/Girls	25	2.6000	1.1800	.93184	.18637	7.619	24	.000

The provided table indicates that the computed t-value under 24 degrees of freedom and at a significance level of 0.05 exceeded the tabulated t-value of 2.064 for the same degree of freedom and significance level. This finding suggests a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the recognition test and the production test concord, in favour of the recognition test. This case shows that the students have a greater linguistic ability in recognizing than in producing concord rules.

4- A comparison was made between recognition test and production test mean scores of Abo-Hanifa preparatory school for boys in concord. The aim was to figure out whether or not the difference between the scores of the two tests was statistically significant. The table below sums the results obtained :

Table(4): The paired T-test of the difference between recognition and Production mean scores of Abo-Hanifa preparatory school for boys in concord

School	N	Mean		SD	SE	t	Df	Sig.
		Recognition	Production					
Abo-Hanifa/boys	25	2.9200	1.8200	1.27457	.25495	4.315	24	.000

The table indicates that the calculated t-value under 24 degrees of freedom and at a significance level of 0.05 exceeded the tabulated t-value which reads 2.064 under the same degree of freedom and significance level. Consequently, this that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the recognition test and the production test in favour of the former, the recognition test.

5- A comparison was carried out between the scores of recognition test and production test of Al-Mawali secondary school for boys in concord. The target of this comparison was to determine if there was a statistically significant difference between the scores of the two tests. The table below summarizes the results obtained :

Table(5): The paired T-test of the difference between recognition and Production mean scores of Al-Mawali secondary school for boys in concord

School	N	Mean		SD	SE	t	Df	Sig.
		Recognition	Production					
Almawali/boys	25	2.2200	.5400	1.27457	.25801	6.511	24	.000

The table above displays the calculated t-value which reads 6.511 under 24 degree of freedom and at a significance level of 0.05. This value notably exceeds the tabulated t-value which reads 2.064 under the same degree of freedom and significance level. Hence, the result refers to the existence of a significant difference between the mean scores of the recognition test and the production test in favour of the recognition test, a case which implies that the students achieve better in recognition than in production of concord rules.

9.2. Discussion of Results

The following findings are reached to through the analysis of the data collected:

_There was no significant difference observed when comparing the recognition scores of the three schools. Therefore, it can be inferred that the students have a similar linguistic background regarding their ability to recognize concord rules.

— A highly significant difference was found when the production scores of the three schools were compared in favour of Abo-Hanifa preparatory school for boys. Building on this, it can be deduced that the subjects have not the same linguistic background concerning the production of the material they were to be exposed to. This result can be ascribed to the content of their curriculum particularly their activity book. It can also be ascribed to the type of teaching method followed by their teachers. Consequently, the result disconfirmed the second hypothesis.

— The results indicate a notable difference when recognition mean scores were compared to production mean scores for each school in favour of recognition mean scores. This suggests that subjects perform better in recognizing concord compared to producing it. Accordingly, this result confirms the first hypothesis.

10. Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research

10.1. Conclusion

On the basis of theoretical analysis and results and discussion ,the study has come up with the following conclusions:

a- Concord can be of three main types namely, grammatical, notional and proximity concord.

b- Concerning the analyzed data, it has been noticed that Iraqi EFL learners reveal unequal abilities in recognizing and producing diverse kinds of concordant constructions. Depending on the data reached to, Iraqi EFL learners do not face a problem in recognizing concord, but they face the difficulty in producing it. In other words, learners' recognition was much better than their production of such constructions.

c- The learners' answers reveal that they have not equal abilities as far as concord is concerned particularly in producing this grammatical area.

10.2. Suggestions for Further Research

1- The present study was carried out on the students at pre-university level. Thus, the same or broader study can be made upon different levels, particularly at university level or even M.A students as their linguistic background tends to be better in order to obtain more reliable results.

2- Concordant constructions in teaching English for science or technology purposes is a promising area.

3- A detailed contrastive study of the concord forms in English and Arabic or any other language is another topic that needs study.

4- The current study does not provide techniques or strategies for developing the students' mastery of concord forms. A further study can be carried out to achieve this matter.

References

- ❖ Al-Shaer, I. (2005). The Collapse of Grammatical Rules Under the Pressure of Semantic Content: Subject-Verb Concord. *An-Najah University. J. Res. (H. Sc.)*, Vol. 19 (1), 2005.
- ❖ Arthur, Ayi. M. (2009). *Teaching Concord at the Junior High School*. M. A. Thesis, University of Ghana.
- ❖ Biber, D.; Johansson, S.; Leech, G.; Conrad, S. & Finnegan, S. (1999). *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- ❖ Biber, D.; Leech, G. & Conrad, S. (2002). *Longman Students Grammar of Spoken and Written English*. London: Longman.
- ❖ Boahemaa, R. (2014). *The Study of Concord Errors in the Writing of Students of Koforidua Senior High Technical School*. M. A. Thesis. Ghana.
- ❖ Brown, J. D. (1988). *Understanding Research in Second Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment : Principles and Classroom Practices*. Longman; London.
- ❖ Ejeba, S. O. (2016). *A Grammar of Egala*. M&J Grand Orbit Communications Ltd.
- ❖ Greenbaum, S. & Nelson, G. (2002). *An Introduction to English Grammar*. London: Longman.
- ❖ Greenbaum, S. & Quirk, R. (1990). *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. London; Longman.
- ❖ Gupta, S. M. (2019). *Current English Grammar and Usage*. PHI Learning Private Limited. Delhi.
- ❖ Igaab, Z. K. & Altai, S. M. M. (2017). Concord in English and Arabic : A Contrastive Study. *International Journal of English Linguistics*; Vol. 8, 2; 2018.

- ❖ Kroeger, P. R. C. (2005). *Analyzing Grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- ❖ Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. (1999). *A Communicative Grammar of English*. New York: Macmillian Education Ltd.
- ❖ Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. (2002). *A Communicative Grammar of English*. New York: Macmillian Education Ltd.
- ❖ Lockwood, D. G. (2002). *Syntactic Analysis and Description: A contrastive Approach*. London: Continuum.
- ❖ Quirk, R. & Greenbaum, S. (1973). *A University Grammar of English*. London; Longman.
- ❖ Quirk, R.; Greenbaum, S.; Leech, G. & Svartvik, J. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.
- ❖ Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. London: Longman.
- ❖ Scott, F. S; Bowely, C. C; Broket, C. S; Brown, J. G & Goddand, P. R. (1968). *English Grammar*. London; Heinemann.
- ❖ Trask, R. L. (1996). *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*. London and New York; Routledge.
- ❖ Vantellini, L. (2003). Agreement With Collective Nouns in New Zealand English. *Victoria University of Wellington*. NZET, 17: 45-49.
- ❖ Zandvoort, R. W. (1975). *A Handbook of English Grammar*. London: Longman.

APPENDIX

The Test

Recognition Test

Q/ Choose the most appropriate options that best complete the sentences below:

- 1- The team _____ preparing for the upcoming competition.
a) is b) are c) were d) be
- 2- Neither John nor his friends _____ able to attend the event.
a) were b) was c) has d) have
- 3- The company's profits _____ increased significantly this quarter.
a) has b) have c) had to d) having
- 4- Each of the students _____ submitted their assignments on time.
a) has b) have c) had to d) having
- 5- The committee _____ not yet reached a decision.
a) has b) have c) was d) were
- 6- The news about the accident _____ shocking to everyone.
a) has b) have c) are d) is
- 7- The collection of rare coins _____ worth a fortune.
a) has b) have c) are d) is
- 8- Everybody _____ their own preferences.
a) has b) have c) has been d) to have

9- The teacher, along with her students, _____ match.

- a) teach b) teaches c) to teach d) teaching

10- Both the parents and the children _____ invited to the party.

- a) be b) are c) to be d) is

Production Test

Q/ Identify and correct the grammatical concord error in each sentence:

- 1- The team members has different opinions on the new strategy.
- 2- Each of the apples were ripe and ready to be picked.
- 3- The committee have made its own decision.
- 4- The jury was divided in their opinions about the defendant's guilt.
- 5- Neither the cat nor the dogs was allowed inside the museum.
- 6- The news about the election results have shocked everyone.
- 7- The collection of antique books are displayed in the library.
- 8- All my friends reads the same chapter in that book.
- 9- He injured themselves in the leg.
- 10- Tom with his friend are planning for the conference.