

The background features a large, faint watermark of the University of Basrah logo. The logo is circular and contains a palm tree in the center, an open book below it, and the year '1975' on both sides. The text 'جامعة البصرة' (University of Basrah) is written in Arabic at the bottom, and 'UNIVERSITY OF BASRAH' and 'COLLEGE OF EDUCATION FOR HUMAN SCIENCES' are written in English around the bottom edge. The top of the logo has Arabic text: 'الكلية الإنسانية' (Faculty of Human Sciences) and 'جامعة البصرة' (University of Basrah).

**English Grammar**  
**Fourth Year**  
**2019-2020**

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# **Week 3: The Simple Sentence**

## **Lecture No. 8: Concord of Person**

# Concord of Person 1

In addition to 3<sup>rd</sup> person number concord with the subject, the verb in the present tense may have person concord with the subject - 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person concord with BE and only 3<sup>rd</sup> person concord with other verbs :

- I am your teacher. [1<sup>st</sup> Person singular concord]
- He is your friend. [3<sup>rd</sup> Person singular concord]
- He knows you well. [3<sup>rd</sup> Person singular concord]

# Concord of Person 2

A coordinated subject with “*and*” as coordinator requires a plural verb. Person concord does not apply, since there are no person distinctions in the plural:

- You and I know the answer.
- She and I are in charge.



# Concord of Person 3

If the coordinator is *or, either . . . or, or neither . . . nor*, in accordance with the principle of proximity the last noun phrase determines the person of the verb:

- **Neither you, nor I, nor anyone else knows the answer.**
- **Either my wife or I am going.**

Because of the awkwardness of this choice, a speaker may avoid it by using a modal auxiliary which is invariable for person (e.g.: **Either my wife or I will be going**) or by postposing the last noun phrase (e.g.: **Either my wife is going or I am**).

# Concord of Person 4

In relative clauses and cleft sentences, a relative pronoun subject is usually followed by a verb in agreement with its antecedent:

- It is I who am to blame.
- It is Kay who is in command.
- It is they who are complaining.

But 3rd person concord prevails in informal English where the objective case pronoun *me* is used:

- It's me who's to blame.

Similarly, 3rd person singular may be used in informal English in these constructions when the pronoun *you* has singular reference:

- It's you who's to blame.

# Cleft Sentence 1

**Cleft Sentence** is special construction which gives both *thematic and focal prominence to a particular element of the clause*. It is so called because it divides a single clause into two separate sections, each with its own verb. Most cleft sentences begin with the pronoun "It" followed by the verb "be", which in turn is followed by the element on which the focus falls.



# Cleft Sentence 2

From a single clause such as "*John wore his best suit to the dance last night*", it is possible to derive four cleft sentences, each highlighting a particular element of the clause:

- **S as Focus:**
- It was JOHN who wore his best suit to the DANCE last night.
- **Od as Focus:**
- It was his best SUIT (that) John wore to the DANCE last night.
- **A time as Focus:**
- It was last NIGHT (that) John wore his best suit to the DANCE.
- **A place as Focus:**
- It was to the DANCE that John wore his best suit last night.



## **Other Types of Concord:**

### **Subject- Complement Concord**

### **Object- Complement Concord**

Between subject and subject complement and between direct object and object complement, there is usually concord of number (but not of person):

- **My child is an angel.**
- **I consider my child an angel.**
- **My children are angels.**
- **I consider my children angels.**

## **Other Types of Concord: Subject- Object Concord**

Concord of number, person, and gender is necessary between subject on the one hand, and object or complement on the other hand, if the second element is a reflexive pronoun.

- He injured himself in both legs.
- She bought herself a raincoat.
- I haven't been myself for weeks. ['I haven't felt well.']
- They found themselves a new apartment.

# Other Types of Concord:

## Pronoun Concord 1

The agreement between a pronoun and its antecedent should probably be considered coreference rather than grammatical concord. Personal and possessive pronouns in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> persons agree with their antecedents in number. Those in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (he, she, it) also agree with their antecedents in gender:

- Tom hurt his foot.
- Beatrice knows that she is late.
- The books were too heavy, so I left them.



## Other Types of Concord: Pronoun Concord 2

The pronoun **they** is commonly used as a 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun that is neutral between masculine and feminine. It is a convenient means of avoiding the dilemma of whether to use the **he** or **she** form. At one time restricted to informal usage, it is now increasingly accepted even in formal usage, especially in AmE. Many prefer to seek gender impartiality by using a plural form where possible in reference to the indefinite pronouns **everyone, everybody, someone, somebody, anyone, anybody, no one, nobody**:

- **Everyone** thinks **they** have the answer.
- Has **anybody** brought **their** camera?
- **No one** could have blamed **themselves** for that.



## Other Types of Concord: Pronoun Concord 3

The use of the plural pronouns *they*, *their*, *themselves* in the above sentences is frowned upon in formal English, where the tendency to use the masculine pronouns when the sex of the antecedent is not determined. The formal equivalents of the above sentences are therefore:

- Everyone thinks he has the answer.
- Has anybody brought his camera?
- No one could have blamed himself for that.

## Other Types of Concord: Pronoun Concord 4

A similar use of the plural occurs with coordinate subjects referring to both sexes, as in: ***Either he or she is going to have to change their attitude,*** and with a singular noun phrase subject having a personal noun of indeterminate gender as head, as in: ***Every student has to hand in their paper today.***