

STUDENTS' MASTERY IN SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to identify the subject-verb agreement errors in the students' descriptive writings. This study discussed the reasons for the productions of subject-verb agreement errors in students' writings. A total of 25 writings were collected from the second semester students of Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of University of Stikubank Semarang in the academic year 2009-2010. The average number of clauses of each writing was 40. The researchers took 20 clauses (50%) from each writing as samples, so there were 500 clauses to be analyzed. The frequency of errors was identified through the analysis of the students' descriptive writing. The findings of the study showed that there were 124 errors (24.80%) in subject-verb agreement produced by the students in their descriptive writings. From the findings of the study, the researchers summarized that the errors produced by the students were due to the L1 (Indonesian language) interference whereby the students transferred and translated their L1 into L2 (English language). Other reason for the error production was errors whereby the students could not apply the rule of the subject-verb agreement appropriately in their writings. The results of the study showed that the students still need more instruction and practice in using subject-verb agreement in their writings.

Keywords: *descriptive writing, subject-verb agreement, clauses*

INTRODUCTION

Every sentence must have a subject and a verb and must express a complete thought. The subject of the sentence must agree with the verb in order to create a correct sentence. There are many things that cause disagreement between subject and verb, among others:

- The irregular plural noun which has no s ending may confuse the students so that they choose wrong form of verb, such as: mouse (singular) – mice (plural). The students might write an incorrect sentence: "The mice is big," instead of "The mice are big."
- The uncountable noun which has no plural form may confuse the students if they do not know that the word is uncountable, such as: homework (uncountable noun). The students might write an incorrect sentence: "Their homeworks are difficult," instead of "Their homework is difficult."
- The singular noun ending in s may also confuse the students, such as: economics (singular). The students might write incorrect sentence: "Economics are the studies of scarcity," instead of "Economics is the study of scarcity."

Based on the writer's observations on the written work, when he taught the subject of "Sentence Based Writing," produced by the second semester students of Faculty of Language and

Cultural Studies of Stikubank University (Unisbank), there were incorrect sentences caused by subject-verb disagreement. Therefore, he needed to perform further study on the students' written work to find out the students' mastery in the subject-verb agreement in order to make improvements in the next learning-teaching process.

Statement of the Problems

Based on the above background of the study, the problems of the research can be formulated as follows:

- How far do the second semester students of Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of Stikubank University (Unisbank) master the rules of the subject-verb agreement?
- What types of errors do they make in their descriptive writings concerning the subject-verb agreement?
- Which type of error has the highest occurrence?

The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To find out how far the second semester students of Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of Stikubank University (Unisbank) master the rules of the subject-verb agreement.
- To describe what types of error they make in their descriptive writings concerning the subject-verb agreement.
- To identify the error which has the highest occurrence.

Significance of the Study

The writer thinks that the study will help those who are interested in knowing the students' mastery in subject-verb agreement made by the second semester students of Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of Stikubank University (Unisbank). He hopes that the finding will give valuable contribution to the process of learning and teaching the English structure and writing. By knowing the kinds of errors the students made, the readers will make improvement both in learning and teaching English structure and writing, and reduce the errors in subject-verb agreement which are often made by the students.

Scope and Limitation

The scope of the study is the error analysis of the clauses of the students' descriptive writings concerning the subject-verb agreement. The study is limited to the descriptive writings produced by the second semester students of Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of Stikubank University (Unisbank) in the academic year 2009-2010.

Definition of Key Terms

Descriptive Writing

Descriptive writing vividly portrays a person, place, or thing in such a way that the reader can visualize the topic and enter into the writer's experience. (www.thewritingsite.org)

Expository writing is a type of writing, the purpose of which is to inform, explain, describe, or define the author's subject to the reader. Expository text is meant to deposit information and is the most frequently used type of writing by students in colleges and universities. A well-written exposition remains focused on its topic and lists events in chronological order. (www.en.Wikipedia.org)

Subject-verb agreement

According to McCray Hill Grammar Dictionary, subject-verb agreement is the rule of grammar that states that singular subjects must agree with singular verbs and plural or compound subjects must agree with plural verbs. The verb in a sentence must agree with the subjects and not with any other word that is placed between them. (www.ehow.com)

Clauses

Clauses come in four types: main [or *independent*], subordinate [or *dependent*], relative [or *adjective*], and noun. Every clause has *at least* a subject and a verb. Other characteristics will help you distinguish one type of clause from another. (www.chompchomp.com)

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are four language skills which must be mastered by students in order to be able to use the language as a means of communication both orally and in written discourse. Those four language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students need to practice each skill seriously as to gain enough mastery of the skill in question. The grammar of the language is the basic knowledge to learn those four skills, since there are many rules which should be obeyed in order to produce correct sentences either spoken or written.

Checking for Subject-Verb Agreement

As mentioned above, there are many rules of grammar and one of the rules is the rules of subject-verb agreement. There are many rules of subject-verb agreement. They are listed below in the order in which you are likely to encounter them. The first few rules are the ones most frequently broken. (http://www.methodist.edu/english/dd_sva.htm)

1. A subject and a verb must agree even when other words or phrases come between them. Frequently, prepositional phrases come between subjects and verbs. Ignore these prepositional phrases.
 - Example: The **group** of students *is* going on a field trip. (The subject is **group**, so the verb should be *is*. You should ignore the prepositional phrase *of students*.)

- Example: The **teacher**, along with her students, *finds* the instructions confusing. (The subject is *teacher*, so the verb should be *finds*. You should ignore the prepositional phrase *along with her students*.)

2. Subjects joined by "and" usually take a plural verb.

- Example: **Joe and Mary** go to town.

Note: For phrases like *each girl and boy* or *every cat and bird*, where the subjects are considered individually, use a singular verb.

- Example: **Each** girl and boy in the class *has* a different story about the field trip.

Note: Use a singular verb for two singular subjects that form or are one thing.

- Example: **Iced tea and lemon** *quenches* your thirst on a hot day.

3. Collective nouns are words that refer to groups of people or things (e.g., *class*, *jury*, *family*, *crowd*, and *audience*). Collective nouns can be either singular or plural depending on the context of the sentence. If the context of the sentence makes you visualize the group doing something together, as one unit, then the noun is singular and takes a singular verb. If the context of the sentence makes you visualize different members of the group performing different actions, then the noun is plural and takes a plural verb.

- Example: The **group** *agrees* that action is necessary. (The group is acting as a unit, so the word *group* is singular.)
- Example: The old **group** *have gone* their separate ways. (The group members are acting individually, so the word *group* is plural in this sentence.)

Note: To avoid awkward-sounding plural collective nouns, place *the members of* before the collective noun.

- Example: The **members** of the old group *have gone* their separate ways.

4. Indefinite pronouns that include *one*, *body*, or *thing* require singular verbs. The words *each*, *either*, *every*, *much*, and *neither* also require singular verbs.

- Example: **Neither** *wants* to work hard.
- Example: **Everybody** *knows* the answer to that question.

5. The indefinite pronouns *all*, *any*, *more*, *most*, *none*, and *some* can be either singular or plural, depending on whether the word they refer to is singular or plural.

- Example: **All** the money *is* reserved for emergencies. (Here, *all* refers to *money*, which is singular.)
- Example: **All** the funds *are* reserved for emergencies. (Here, *all* refers to *funds*, which is plural.)

6. The indefinite pronouns *both*, *few*, *many*, and *several* take plural verbs.

- Example: **Both** *know* the answer to the question.

7. The verb must agree with its subject even when the subject follows the verb. Questions, sentences beginning with *here* or *there*, and sometimes sentences beginning with a prepositional phrase place the subject after the verb.
- Example: *Is **voting** a right or a privilege?*
 - Example: *Are **a right and a privilege** the same thing?*
 - Example: *Playing in the sand **were three children and their mother**.*
 - Example: *Here **are my birth certificate and passport**.*
 - Example: *There **is my coat**.*
8. Many nouns ending in *-ics* (such as *economics*, *statistics*, and *politics*) take singular or plural verbs, depending on how they are used. When these words refer to a course of study or a body of knowledge, they are singular. When they refer to activities or qualities, they are plural.
- Example: ***Statistics** (a course of study) **is** the one course Beth failed.*
 - Example: *The **statistics** **indicate** that the demand for American-made products is increasing.*
9. Subjects that look plural (because they end in *s*) but refer to only one thing are singular.
- Example: *The **lens** **is** broken. (The plural of *lens* is *lenses*.)*
10. Some nouns (such as *glasses*, *pants*, *pliers*, *scissors*, and *trousers*) are considered plural unless they are preceded by the phrase *pair of*.
- Example: *My **glasses** **need** cleaning.*
 - Example: *This **pair** of glasses **needs** cleaning.*
11. A linking verb (usually a form of the verb *to be*) agrees with the subject (which usually comes before the verb), not the subject complement (which usually comes after the verb).
- Example: *Low **wages** **are** the problem.*
 - Example: *The **problem** **is** low wages.*
12. In a dependent clause with a relative pronoun (*who*, *that*, *which*), the verb agrees with the antecedent.
- Example: *I have a friend **who** **studies** day and night. (The antecedent of **who** is the third-person singular noun **friend**, so the verb in the dependent clause is third-person singular, *studies*.)*
 - Example: *Bill bought one of the three thousand cars **that** **have** leather upholstery. (The antecedent of **that** is **cars**, so the verb is third-person plural, *have*.)*
13. Titles and words referred to as words take singular verbs.
- Example: ***Star Wars** **is** my favorite movie.*
 - Example: ***Children** **is** misspelled in your essay.*
14. With subjects joined by *or* or *nor*, the verb should agree with the subject closer to it.

- Example: **Neither the teacher nor the students** *understand*.
- Example: **Either her brothers or Mary** *mows* the lawn.

Note: For a more natural-sounding sentence, place the plural part of a compound subject second.

- Example: **Either Mary or her brothers** *mow* the lawn.

How to Write an Autobiography

Whether you have enjoyed a life well-lived or suffered through a life of hardships and mistakes you probably have an interesting tale to tell. Writing an autobiography is an ideal way to capture the stories of your life and the times you've lived in, and unless you're famous, an autobiography or memoirs may be the only way those stories get preserved intact. If you *are* famous, an autobiography may be the only way to tell your side of the story and defend your legacy against those infamous "unauthorized biographies." Regardless of your situation, there's no time like the present to start writing about your past. (<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-an-Autobiography>)

Clause

In grammar, a **clause** is a pair or group of words that consists of a subject and a predicate, although in some languages and some types of clauses the subject may not appear explicitly as a noun phrase. It may instead be marked on the verb. The most basic kind of sentence consists of a single clause. More complicated sentences may contain multiple clauses, including clauses contained within clauses. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clause>)

Clauses are often contrasted with phrases. Traditionally, a *clause* was said to have both a finite verb and its subject, whereas a *phrase* either contained a finite verb but not its subject (in which case it is a verb phrase) or did not contain a finite verb. Hence, in the sentence "I didn't know that the dog ran through the yard," "that the dog ran through the yard" is a clause, as is the sentence as a whole, while "the yard," "through the yard," "ran through the yard," and "the dog" are all phrases. However, modern linguists do not draw the same distinction, as they accept the idea of a non-finite clause, a clause that is organized around a non-finite verb.

METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive and qualitative in nature. It described the observed phenomena in the form of words rather than numbers. The object of the research is the written work of the second semester students of the Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies of Unisbank in the academic year 2009/2010.

The Research Design

The first step taken in this study is gathering the work done by the students. The second step is cutting down the sentences into four types of clauses: main (independent) clauses,

subordinate (dependent) clauses, relative (adjective) clauses, and noun clauses. The third step is identifying the clauses to find out the correct and incorrect subject-verb agreement. The fourth step is separating and analyzing the clauses containing subject-verb disagreement (or incorrect subject-verb agreement). The fifth step is interpreting the kinds of errors, and the last step is presenting the solutions how the clauses should be.

Method of Data Collection

The data of the study consists of 25 pieces of descriptive writing, with a topic “My Autobiography,” produced by the second semester students of the Faculty of Language and Cultural Studies (FBIB) of the Stikubank University (Unisbank) in the academic year 2009/2010. The data to be analyzed consist of 500 clauses.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the sentences, the writers use the rules of subject-verb agreement. The writers only focus their analysis on the subject-verb agreement errors, Other errors produced by the students are neglected. The writers identified all occurrences of errors and classified them as follows:

1. Disagreement: Singular subject – Plural verb.

The basic rule states that a singular subject takes a singular verb, while a plural subject takes a plural verb.

The subject and verb must agree in number: both must be singular, or both must be plural. Problems can occur in the present tense because you must add an *s* or an *es* at the end of the verb when the subject performing the action is third-person singular. (A singular subject would be *he*, *she*, *it*, or words for which these pronouns could substitute.)

In the following example, the subject is in **bold**, and the verb is in *italics*.

- Subject-verb agreement error: **She** *go* to town. (**She** is singular, but *go* is the plural verb.)
- Correct: **She** *goes* to town.

2. Disagreement: Plural subject – Singular verb.

- Subject-verb agreement error: **They** *goes* to town. (**They** is plural, but *goes* is the third-person singular verb.)
- Correct: **They** *go* to town.

3. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect Verb1-Verb2 agreement.

If there are two verbs, the subject must agree with both of them, therefore the combination of Verb1 and Verb2 must obey the rules of the grammar.

- Subject-verb agreement error: **He likes swims** (**He** is singular, *likes* is the third person-singular verb, and *swims* is also the third person-singular verb, but “**likes swims**” breaks the rules of the grammar).
- Correct: **He likes to swim**, or
He likes swimming.

4. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect Modal – Verb agreement.

When there is a modal auxiliary, the verb that follows must be in the form of “infinitive without to.”

- Subject-verb agreement error: **He could to go** (**He** is singular, *could* is the modal auxiliary – functioned as the helping verb, and *go* is the verb – functioned as the main verb, but “**could to go**” is incorrect connection).
- Correct: **He could go.**

5. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect be/do/have – verb agreement.

When there is a helping verb **be**, **do** or **have**, the verb that follows must be obey the rule of the **grammar and tense** used.

Subject-verb agreement error: **He is go** (**He** is singular, “*is*” is the helping verb, and “*go*” is the main verb, but “**is go**” does not obey the rule of the grammar).

- Correct: **He is going** (*Present Continuous Tense*)
- Subject-verb agreement error: **They don’t going** (**They** is plural, “*don’t*” is the helping verb (negative), and “*going*” is the main verb , but “**don’t going**” does not obey the rule of the grammar).
- Correct: **They don’t go.** (*Simple Present Tense*).
- Subject-verb agreement error: **They have going** (**They** is plural, “*have*” is the helping verb, and “*going*” is the main verb , but “**have going**” does not obey the rule of the grammar).
- Correct: **They have gone** (*Present Perfect Tense*), or
They have been going (*Present Perfect Continuous Tense*)

6. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect form of verb.

The verb that follows the subject must always be in the correct form.

Subject-verb agreement error: **He going** (**He** is singular. “*going*” is the main verb , but “**he going**” does not obey the rule of the grammar).

- Correct: **He is going** (*Present Continuous Tense*), or
He goes (*Simple Present Tense*)

7. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect double use of verb “be.”

There must be only one verb of “be” that follow the subject, except for the Passive Voice of the Present Continuous Tense.

- Subject-verb agreement error: **I am is** (I is singular. “am” is the present form of “be”, and “is” is also the present form of “be” for the third-person singular, but “**am is**” does not obey the rule of the grammar).
- Correct: **I am.**

Analysis and Findings

There are 500 clauses to be analyzed in this study. In the first part, the writers will analyze the data by identifying and classifying the types of errors occurred in each clause. Next, in the second part, the writers will discuss the findings as a result of the analysis.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the researchers will focus on the analysis of subject-verb agreement. They will use the theory which has been discussed in the preceding chapter (chapter III). To analyze the data, the researchers will apply the following procedures. Firstly, the entire data will be classified to find out the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors (table 1:01-25). Secondly, the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors will be separated and analyzed to determine the classifications of the subject-verb agreement errors, here the researchers will also present the possible correct subject-verb agreements to all clauses containing subject-verb agreement errors (table 2:01-25). Thirdly, using the classifications resulting from the preceding analysis, the researchers will analyze the classified data (table 3:01-25); the classifications used will be:

1. Disagreement: Singular subject – Plural verb.
2. Disagreement: Plural subject – Singular verb.
3. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect Verb1-Verb2 agreement.
4. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect Modal – Verb agreement.
5. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect be/do/have – verb agreement.
6. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect form of verb.
7. Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect double use of verb “be.”

Finally, since the analysis will be focused on the subject-verb agreement, other errors appeared will be neglected and considered to be correct.

After analyzing all the data, the researchers will calculate the number of errors of each class. The total number of errors of each class will be entered into another table (table-4) in order to calculate the percentage of its occurrence.

Disagreement: Singular Subject – Plural Verb.

The researchers find four incorrect clauses in which the singular subjects do not agree with their verbs. Here are the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. **It** *mean* national resurrection
2. **It** *means* national resurrection.
3. A **friend** of my father *give* me a dog
4. A **friend** of my father *gave* me a dog.
5. **She** *hope* that Tyson
She *hoped* that Tyson
6. Her **mother** always *buy* her books.
7. Her **mother** always *buys* her books.

In clauses numbers 1 and 4, the singular subjects “it” and “mother” do not respectively agree with the verbs “mean” and “buy,” since the subjects are *singular*, but the verbs are *plural*.

In clauses numbers 2 and 3 singular subjects “friend” and “she” do not respectively agree with the verbs “give” and “hope,” since the subjects are *singular*, but the verbs are *plural*.

Disagreement: Plural Subject – Singular Verb.

The researchers find three incorrect clauses in which the plural subjects do not agree with their verbs. Here are the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. **All** who were in school *was* friendly
All, who were in school, *were* friendly
2. My **friends** *was* care with me.
My **friends** *cared* for me.
3. My **parents** *has* limitation of fund.
My **parents** *have* limitation of fund.

In clause number 1, the plural subject “all” does not agree with the verb “was,” so the sentence “All who were in school was friendly” is incorrect. Here, the verb “were” in the adjective clause “who were in school” indicate that “who” refers to plural subject, therefore “all” in the sentence “All who were in school was friendly” also refers to plural subject.

In clause number 2, the plural subject “friends” does not agree with the verb “was.” The helping verb “was” also does not agree with the verb “care.” Therefore the clause “My friends was care with me” is incorrect.

In clause number 3, the plural subject “parents” does not agree with the verb “has,” therefore the clause “My parents has limitation of fund” is incorrect.

Singular/Plural Subject – Incorrect Verb1-Verb2 Agreement.

The researchers find incorrect clauses in which the subjects either singular or plural have two verbs (Verb1 and Verb2) and these verbs do not agree with one another, therefore the whole clauses are incorrect. Here are some examples of the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. I ***began speak*** like another baby.
I ***began to speak*** like another baby.
2. I ***want to tried*** to inside the best class.
I ***wanted to try*** to enter the best class.
3. It ***made*** me ***cried*** a lot.
It ***made*** me ***cry*** a lot.

In clause number 1, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “began speak,” so the clause “I ***began speak*** like another baby.” is incorrect. Here, the verb “speak” should be preceded by “to” to make it agree with “began.” So, the clause should be “I ***began to speak*** like another baby.”

In clause number 2, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “want to tried,” so the clause “I ***want to tried*** to inside the best class.” is incorrect. Here, the verb “***want***” should be in the past form, while the verb “***tried***” should be in the base or infinitive form, so the clause should be “I ***wanted to try*** to enter the best class. Here, the student has wrongly chosen the word “inside” instead of “enter.”

In clause number 3, the singular subject “It” does not agree with the verb “***made*** me ***cried***,” so the clause “It ***made*** me ***cried*** a lot.” is incorrect. Here, the verb “***cried***” should be in the base form, so the clause should be “It ***made*** me ***cry*** a lot.”

Singular/Plural Subject – Incorrect Modal – Verb Agreement

The researchers find incorrect clauses in which the subjects either singular or plural are followed by modal auxiliaries and verbs, but these modals do not agree with the verbs, therefore the whole clauses are incorrect. Here are some examples of the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. I ***can walked***.
I ***could walk***.
2. I ***must to endure*** Student Orientation.
I ***must endure*** Student Orientation.

In clause number 1, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “***can walked***,” so the clause “I ***can walked***.” is incorrect. Here, the verb “***walked***” should be in the base form” to make it agree with “***can***.” Since the student seems to tell the past event, so the modal auxiliary “***can***” should be change into past form “***could***.” Therefore, the clause should be “I ***could walk***.”

In clause number 2, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**must to endure**,” so the clause “**I must to endure** student orientation.” is incorrect. Here, the verb “**endure**” should be in the form of “infinitive” without “to” to make it agree with “**must**.” Therefore, the clause should be “**I must endure** student orientation.”

Singular/Plural subject – Incorrect be/do/have – verb agreement.

The researchers find incorrect clauses in which the subjects either singular or plural are followed by helping verbs **be**, **do**, or **have** and main verbs, but these helping verbs do not agree with the main verbs, therefore the whole clauses are incorrect. Here are some examples of the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. **I was not do** everything yet.

I did not do anything yet

2. **This is** very **fuss** for me

This is very **fussing** for me.

In clause number 1, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**was not do**,” so the clause “**I was not do** everything yet” is incorrect. Here, the helping verb “**was**” should be replaced by the helping verb “**did**” in order to agree with the main verb “do” (note: the student has mistakenly chosen the helping verb “**was**” instead of “**did**”). Therefore, the clause should be “**I did not do** anything yet.”

In clause number 2, the singular subject “**This**” does not agree with the verb “**is** very **fuss**,” so the clause “**This is** very **fuss** for me” is incorrect. Here, the verb “**is**” functions as main verb, while the verb “**fuss**” should be in the present participle and functions as adjective. The student has mistakenly considered the word “**fuss**” as an adjective instead of a verb. Therefore, the clause should be “**This is** very **fussing** for me.”

Singular/Plural Subject – Incorrect Form of Verb.

The researchers find incorrect clauses in which the subjects either singular or plural are followed by incorrect forms of verb, therefore the whole clauses are incorrect. Here are some examples of the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. **I majoring** on English literature.

2. **I major** in English literature.

3. **I often foughted** with my friend.

4. **I often fought** with my friend.

In clause number 1, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**majoring**,” so the clause “**I majoring** on English literature,” is incorrect. Here, the student has mistakenly used the present participle form of the verb “**major**” instead of the past tense form or the simple present form. Therefore, the clause should be “**I majored** in English literature,” or “**I major** in English literature.”

In clause number 2, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**fighited**,” so the clause “**I often fighited** with my friend,” is incorrect. Here, the student has mistakenly applied the past form of the verb “**fight**.” He/she has wrongly assumed the verb “fight” as regular verb, so he/she has changed “fight” into “fighited” instead of “fought.” Therefore, the clause should be “**I often fought** with my friend.”

Singular/Plural Subject – Incorrect Double Use of Verb “be.”

The researchers find incorrect clauses in which the subjects either singular or plural are followed by incorrect double use of verb, “be,” therefore the whole clauses are incorrect. Here are some examples of the clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors, which are followed by the possible correct answers.

1. **I am is** like another babies
I am (was) like other babies.
2. **I am is accepted**
I am (was) accepted.

In clause number 1, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**am is**,” so the clause “**I am is** like another babies,” is incorrect. Here, the student has mistakenly used the double verb be “**am is**” whereby only one verb is needed. Therefore, the clause should be “**I am** like other babies,” or “**I was** like other babies.”

In clause number 2, the singular subject “I” does not agree with the verb “**am is accepted**,” so the clause “**I am is accepted**,” is incorrect. Here, the student has mistakenly used the double verb be “**am is**” whereby only one verb is needed. Therefore, the clause should be “**I am accepted**,” or “**I was accepted**.”

7.1. Findings

The total number of all errors is **124** out of **500** clauses. (Look at Table 1-01 to Table 1-25). It means that the occurrence of error from all clauses is **24.80%**. From 124 incorrect clauses found in the data (Look at Table 2-01 to Table 2-25), 43 errors belong to “**Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect be/do/have-verb agreement**” (34.68%); 31 errors belong to “**Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect Verb1-Verb2 agreement**” (25%); 19 errors belong to

“*Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect form of verb*” (15.32%); 17 errors belong to “*Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect Modal-Verb agreement*” (13.71%); 7 errors belong to “*Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect double use of verb be*,” (5.65%), 4 errors belong to “*Disagreement: Singular subject - Plural verb*” (3.23%), and 3 errors belong to “*Disagreement: Plural subject - Singular verb*” (2.42%).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

(1). The number of errors found in the descriptive writing concerning subject-verb agreement is as follows:

The number of clauses is 500, the number of errors is 124, so the percentage of subject-verb agreement errors is 24.80%. Hence, the researchers conclude that students' mastery in subject-verb agreement still needs to be improved. Students still need to learn more about the rules of grammar especially concerning subject-verb agreement.

(2) The types of errors and their occurrences which are found in the 124 clauses which contain subject-verb agreement errors are as follows:

Table 4: Classifications of Types of Error of Clauses

No	TYPES OF ERROR	OCCURANCE	PERCENTAGE
1	Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect be/do/have-verb agreement	43	34.68%
2	Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect Verb1-Verb2 agreement	31	25.00%
3	Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect form of verb	19	15.32%
4	Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect Modal-Verb agreement	17	13.71%
5	Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect double use of verb "be"	7	5.65%
6	Disagreement: Singular subject - Plural verb	4	3.23%
7	Disagreement: Plural subject - Singular verb	3	2.42%
GRAND TOTAL		124	100.00%

(3). The highest occurrence of the type of error made by students is the error in “Singular/Plural Subject - Incorrect be/do/have-verb agreement,” it occurs 43 times (34.68%).

Suggestion

Based on the result of the analysis which shows that some students still do not have complete mastery in subject-verb agreement, the researchers would like to suggest to the English lecturers how to solve the problem when the student makes an error:

- 1). Identify the student's error.
- 2). Classify the type of error the student has made.
- 3). State the grammar rule which has been violated.
- 4). Give correct form to show contrast with the inappropriate form.
- 5). Give examples showing the rule in action.

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