An Analysis of Second Semester English Department Students of UNP at Subject-Verb Agreement in their Paragraph Writing Assignments

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Abstract

This research aimed to analyze the students' subject-verb agreement accuracy in the paragraph writing assignments. This research is descriptive quantitative research. Thepopulation in this research is the first year, second semester of 2018 English Department students of Universitas Negeri Padang. The sample was taken by using cluster randomsampling. There are40 students that become the sample of the research. In thisresearch, the data was collected from the students and lecturers who taught paragraph writing class.Based on the findings and discussion about the students' subject-verb agreement, the researcher found thatSubject-Verb Agreement accuracy of second semester English Department students in *Paragraph Writing* course at UniversitasNegeri Padang is 37,4%, which is categorized as Fail. The sequence of the types of errors from the highest to the lowest made by the students was *omission, misformation, addition, and misordering*.

Key words: Subject Verb Agreement, Subject Verb Concord,Paragraph Writing

A. INTRODUCTION

The importance of subject-verb agreement is emphasized by Stapa and Izahar, (2010:58) who state that subject verb agreement is one of the important aspects in grammar.In addition, Mali and Yulia (2011:21) state subject-verb agreement as an essential element to master by English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students, who are prepared to be English teachers in the future. However, they still find the fact that English Language Education Study Program students made 28 Subject-Verb agreement errors on the agreement from 30 writings. Furthermore, Henry,(2017:1) also states that Subject-Verb Agreement errors are very serious and are a signal of the lack of English Language mastery.

Subject-verb agreement is one of the most common errors found in a writing based on various researches. Subject-Verb Agreement errors are commonly detected in the writings of ESL learners. Maros et al. (2007:7) found that subject-verb agreement constituted 47% of the errors recorded in the written essays in Malaysian schools. The similar result was presented in the research by Darus and

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Subramaniam (2009:490) who discover subject-verb agreement as one of the common errors committed. Other studies by Noorizah and Mustapha (1998) in Tafida and Okunade (2016:22) listed Subject-Verb Agreement as one of the several types of grammatical errors among Malay students. These indicate that Subject-Verb Agreement errors are frequently found in writings and it should be more noticed by both students and the teachers.

The writer focuses on the Subject-Verb Agreement because the previous researches in the scope of grammar within writing do not focus on the Subject-Verb Agreement. In the researcher's experience, a lot of students in writing class neglected the grammar of their writing, and the clear example seen by the researcher was the subject-verb agreement. Students tend to focus more on the content rather than grammatical accuracy because they are taking a writing class. Most researches done wer conducted to see what grammatical errors account in the students' writings, and subject-verb agreement tended to come as the one of the common errors found in the writing. There are few researches that analyze how accurate is the subject-verb agreement in students' paragraph writing.

From the problems above, the researcher concluded that the analysis of subject verb agreement in the students' paragraph writing was conducted to find out the subject-verb agreement of the English Department students. The researcher wanted to discover the subject-verb agreement of the English Department students of UNP.

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B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a descriptive quantitative research. Descriptive and inferential statistical tests can be used to look at the differences between the groups. Therefore, by using this type of research, the researcher analyzed, interpreted, and described the subject-verb agreement of English Department students within their paragraph writing assignments. This research was conducted to the first year, second semester students in English Language and Literature Department at Universitas Negeri Padang. The data was collected and analyzed in order to answer the research questions.

The population of this research was 252 students on the 2018 first year in English Department of Universitas Negeri Padang, especially the students who are just finished the second semester. Creswell (2012:142) defined population as a group of individuals which have the same characteristics. They were chosen as the population because they all are currently finished taking paragraph writing classes and they used the same syllabus. They were also in the same year of study, the first year. However, they had different and various English backgrounds because each school that they were graduated from has different teaching methods. As well, some students took additional English courses. This made the data collected more diverse. There are 252 students of eight classes: K.1, K.2, K.3, K.4, K.5, NK.1, NK.2, and NK.3. Five classes are education students, and three classes are non-education students.

A population is represented by a sample. "A sample is a group of individuals, items, or events that represents the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn" (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009, p.124). Additionally,

Creswell (2012:142) also explained sample as a subgroup of the target population that the researcher wants to examine. The sample of this research was chosen based on the cluster random sampling technique. The sample will be 15% of the population, which are 38 students sample from 252 students. To make the data more even, the sample will be 40. The researcher got 5 students randomly from each class. They were chosen by pointing at the students name list while the researcher was blindfolded.

The sources of the data of this research were the students' paragraph writing assignments. The assignments were their daily assignments given by the lecturers taught paragraph writing class. There were two types of assignments collected, written on a piece of paper and typed. The researcher used Surface Strategy Taxonomy which has been validated to analyze and group the errors occured in the students paragraph writing assignments.

Surface Strategy Taxonomy

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
Omission	Refers to the absence of an item which must be present in a well-formed utterance.	-	-
Addition	The presence of an extra item which must not be present in a well formed utterance is characteristic for additions.	Double marking	failure to delete certain items which are required to
		Regularization	overlooking exceptions and spreading rules to domains where they do not apply
		Simple addition	not describable as double markings or regularizations
Misinformation	Refers to the use of the wrong form of the morpheme or structure.	Regularization	a regular marker is used in place of an irregular one
		Archi Form	the selection of one member of a class of forms to present others in the class
		Alternating Form	fairly free alternation of various members of a class with each other
Misordering	Characterized by incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemes in an	-	-

		utterance.		

After getting the number of errors made in the paragraph writings assignments, the percentages of subject-verb agreement were calculated. The percentage of Subject-Verb Agreement were calculated based on the formula proposed by Bungin (2006, p. 133) as stated below:

$A = \frac{fx}{N} \times 100$

A = The subject-verb agreement

fx = Number of correct subject-verb agreement cases

N = Number of all subject-verb agreement cases

100% = Constant Numeral

The researcher interpreted the percentage of the subject-verb agreement accuracy found in students' paragraph writing assignments by using the score category below :

Arikunto (2007,134)

Accuracy	Category	Criteria
80-100 %	A	Very Good
66-79 %	B	Good
56-65 %	C	Fair
40-55 %	D	Poor
0-39 %	E	Fail

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

After collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher found the subject-verb agreement and kinds of errors in second semester English Department students' Paragraph Writing assignments. The accuracy is gotten by using Bungin's formula. Based on the result, the highest score was achieved by student 21 with 76% accuracy, which is categorized as Very Good. The lowest score was gotten by student 6, student 12, student 32 and student 34. They got 0% accuracy and it is categorized as Fail. Furthermore, based on the result, 0 student got category A (Very Good). 4 students got category B (Good). 6 students got category C (Fair). 8 students got category D (Poor). 22 students got category E (Fail). The mean of the students' score is 52,3%. The mean of the students' score is 37,4 %. In conclusion, based on the mean score, the students have Fail accuracy in subject-verb agreement cases.

2. Discussion

The mean accuracy of students in using subject-verb agreement in this research is 37,4 %, which is categorized as Fail. Similarly, Ali A. Shami, Ibrahim (2013:109) did a research on the university students' errors in using subject-verb agreement in writing. The students' subject-verb agreement comes higher, 60% of the students gave incorrect answers and only 40% of them answered correctly. In addition, the students' subject-verb agreement in this research is also lower than the the research of Suryo and Yustisia (2018:105). The subject-verb agreement

ability of the students is categorized into poor, while the students' subject-verb agreement in this research is categorized into fail.

Dulay et al (1982:158) categorized errors into four types: omission, addition, misformation, and misordering errors. In this case, the student of English Language and Literature Department who were taking Paragraph writing course did all of the four types of errors. These errors were found in various kind of sentences, which are simple, compound, and complex sentences. In fact, it is related to the theory of Sutomo. J (2011:1) about the things that cause disagreement between subject and verb, among others. The irregular plural noun, the uncountable noun which has no plural form, and the singular noun ending in – s caused the disagreement in most of the students sentences.

Based on the data collected, the types subject-verb agreement errors found are different for each student. The highest percentage of errors committed by students in their paragraph writing is omission errors with the percentage of 58,2%. The lowest percentage of errors is misordering errors with only 2%. Misinformation errors have 23,6% and followed by addition errors with 15,8%.

It can be stated that subject verb agreement still becomes a problem for the students in the context of writing. It is along with the research conducted by Darus and Subramaniam (2009:490) who found that SVA was among the six most common errors made by the subjects who included singular/plural form, verb tense, word choice, preposition and word order. Indeed, it can be seen from the result of this research, omission of Subject-Verb agreement errors are found in every students' writing. It means that every students in this research has committed Subject-Verb agreement errors in the category of omission. The fact that SVA errors are commonly found in the students writing is correlated with the research of Mali and Yulia (2011:21). They found that ELESP students make 28 SVA errors on the agreement from 30 writings. These results show that Subject-Verb agreement errors are commonly found in students' writing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion above,it can be concluded that the Subject-Verb Agreement accuracy of second semester English Department students in *Paragraph Writing* course at UniversitasNegeri Padang is 37,4%, which is categorized as Fail. The sequence of the types of errors from the highest to the lowest made by the students was *omission, misformation, addition, and misordering*.

Based on the findings, the researcher would like to propose some recommendations which would be useful for the students, lecturers and other researchers.It is really recommended for the English Department students to learn and practice more on their subject-verb agreement. Practices will lead them to be better and it is suggested for English lecturers to focus not only on the content of the writing but also on the grammatical aspects of the students' writing, such as their subject-verb agreement.

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