



STUDENTS' SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT ERRORS IN WRITING RECOUNT TEXT MADE BY SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study is aimed to examine the written subject and verb agreement errors made by the eleventh grade students of SMA Al Istiqamah Simpang Ampek, West Pasaman when they were writing a recount text. Error analysis technique was carried out in this research in order to find the proportion of each type of error made by students. The research is a descriptive study with 30 students participating in the study. The instrument used is writing test about recount text. All subject verb agreement errors that appear in students writing are analyzed using Surface Strategy Taxonomy introduced by Dulay et.al. The findings showed that (1) the students contributed the three types of errors in term of subject verb agreement in their recount writing, those were (a) omission (45 error / 26%), (b) addition (10 error/ 6%), (c) misformation (118 error / 68 %), then there was no error in misordering found in this study. (2) The sources of the errors are inter-lingual transfer (45/ 26%) and intra-lingual transfer (128/ 74%). The research reveals that the students are still having difficulties in using correct patterns of subject and verb agreement in their writing.

Key words: error analysis, subject-verb agreement error, recount text, interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer

A. INTRODUCTION

In teaching and learning process, there are four skills that should be mastered by every level of students. According to Choudury (2013,p. 27), “the four core of language skills are listening, speaking, reading and writing where writing is obviously the most difficult skill for second and foreign language learners to master”. He asserts that the main reason for this difficulty is the fact that writing is very complex process which involves both creating and organizing ideas and translating them into cohesive texts which are readable.

In English subject of senior high school, basically writing skill, students are taught how to write descriptive text, narrative text, recount text, procedure text and expository text. From those texts, recount text is an easier one to write for the students. It is caused by the students can write their personal experience in the past form. According to Pardiyono (2009) recount text is a kind of text that tells the reader about the activity that has been done or has been finished by someone

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in the past. In the Bahasa Indonesia, Pardiyono explains *“Informasi tentang berbagai kegiatan atau aktivitas yang telah dilakukan dapat disampaikan dalam bentuk teks recount”*. Another quotation is explained by Zaida (2013), “A recount retells past events or experiences in the order they happened.” Based on the explanation above, it can be summarized that a recount text is a kind of text which retells the writer’s activity, experience, and events that happened in the past.

Talking about writing, it cannot be separated with the use of grammar. The sentences written by the students are expected to be not only grammatically correct but also semantically acceptable. Grammatically correct sentence means that the sentence should follow the rules of the language. Meanwhile, semantically acceptable sentence means that the sentence should be meaningful and far from ambiguity. It means that even a person have good ideas of writing, it will be useless if the students lack of vocabulary and grammar mastery.

“Moreover, the students tend to make errors in their writing” Anantri (2017, p. 12). It means that the students are weak in writing English due to the lack of grammar mastery, especially in term of subject verb agreement rule. Subject verb agreement means that the subject and the verb should have agreement each other. According to Sparks (2006, p.1) “subject verb agreement is a fancy term for a simple idea: the subject and the verb must work together to construct the correct sentence”. According to Nordquist (2018) subject-verb agreement is the correspondence of a verb with its subject in person (first, second, or third) and number (singular or plural). It is also called subject-verb concord. The principle of subject-verb agreement applies to finite verbs in the present tense and, in a limited way, to the past forms of the verb to be (was and were). It means that the subject should agree with the verb.

Furthermore, the students also have problem in subject verb agreement because their mother language (L1) is quite different with English. In an Indonesian sentence, the verbs do not change even though their subject is singular or plural; even it happens in the present, past or in the future. In contrast, English verbs always depend on the subject and the time when an action happen (tense).

Subject verb agreement is one of the most common errors found in a writing based on various researches. And also, similar studies on error analysis have been conducted by several scholars. One is conducted by Tama Aprezky Anantri entitled an error analysis of subject verb agreement in narrative writing of the tenth grade students of madrasah aliyah negeri 2 palembang. Second, the research is done by Fuat Ginanjar with entitled “An error analysis of subject-verb agreement in expository essay made by first year students of Nusantara PGRI Kediri University in academic year 2014/2015”. Most researches were conducted to find out what are the types of errors account in the students’ writing and the common errors found in their writing. There are few researches that analyze the factor causes of errors made by the students in writing.

Based on the explanation above, the writer is interested in analyzing students’ writing especially in their subject verb agreement errors. The writer would like to carry out a research under the title “Students’ Subject Verb Agreement Errors in Writing Recount Text Made by Senior High School Students”.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This research conducts by using qualitative descriptive design. According to Dornyei, zoltan (2007, p.38) “qualitative research is concerned with subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals and thus the explicit goal of research is to explor the participants’ views of the situation being studied”. The method was intended to describe exactly a phenomenon or problem that researcher observed. It means that the writer identified the students’ subject-verb agreement errors in writing recount text based on surface strategy taxonomy. The population of this research was the entire eleventh grade students of AL-Istiqamah senior high school which consist of seven classes (245 students).The sample was taken by using *cluster sampling*. The sample of the study was XI IPA 1 class which consist of 33 students.

In this research, the writing test was used as a research instrument. The writer asked the students to write their experienced in paragraph consisted of three generic structures (orientation, events and reorientation) about 100-130 words within sixty minutes. Then, the writer analyzed students’ subject verb agreement error in their writing recount text based on surface strategy taxonomy. In order to collect the data of this research, the writer was used the writing test. Before doing the test, the writer gave an explanation to remind the students about recount text. Then, the writer asked the students to write the recount text consisted of three generic structures (orientation, events and reorientation) about 100-130 words within sixty minutes. The topic used about students experienced. Next, their writing will be analyzed by the researcher in order to know the error types and error causes that they had produced in their writing task. The data analysis was started after all the students’ recount text writing collected. Then, the researcher identified the errors. The reseracher read the students’ writing task and underline the errors. After identifying the errors made by students based on Surface Strategy Taxonomy, the reseracher calculated the percentage of errors made according to the Dulay’s Surface Strategy Taxonomy.

The calculation of percentage of type of errors is based on the following formula (Allan:2004)

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

P = Percentage of Error

F = Frequency of Each Type of Errors

N = Total Frequency of All Errors

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Finding

Data analysis showed that there were three types of errors found in students’ recount writing. The types of error were analysed by using Dulay’s theory, the surface strategy taxonomy which consists of four types of errors; omission, addition, misformation, and misordering error. The frequency and the percentage of types of errors could be seen in the table 1 below:

1. Frequency and Percentage of Types of Error

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage of Students' Errors

Types of errors	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	45	26%
Addition	10	6%
Misformation	118	68%
Misordering	0	0%
Total	173	100%

a. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Error in Omission

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage of students' errors in Omission

Type of error	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Omission	Errors in the use of "was or were and verb"	31	69%
	Errors in the use of "suffix"	4	9%
	Errors in the use of "had"	2	4%
	Errors in the use of "subject"	8	18%
Total		45	100%

b. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Error in Addition

Table 3
Frequency and Percentage of Students' errors in Addition

Type of error	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Addition	Double Markings	1	10%
	Regularization	9	90%
Total		10	100%

c. Frequency and Percentage of Students' Error in Misinformation

Table 4
Frequency and Percentage of Students' Errors in Misinformation

Type of error	Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Misformation	Regularization	7	6%
	Archi Forms	1	1%
	Alternating Forms	110	93%
Total		118	100%

2. Source of students' error

There are four major factor causes of errors in second language learning proposed by Brown (2007), they are interlingual transfer, intralingual transfer, context of learning and communication strategies. The frequency and the percentage of source of errors could be seen in the table 5 below:

Table 5
Frequency and Percentage of Sources of Error

Source of Errors	Frequency	Percentage
Interlingual Transfer	45	26%
Intralingual Transfer	128	74%
Context Learning	0	0%
Communication Strategies	0	0%
Total	173	100%

B. Discussion

1. Analysis of Students' Errors

From the identification and distribution of students' errors, it can be concluded that from 30 students' writing recount text, there were 173 errors found in students' recount writing, which were classified into omission, addition and misformation. Meanwhile, misordering was not found in students' recount writing. From the result of calculating, misformation became the most frequent type of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 118 (68%). Then, omission became the second frequent type of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 45 (26%). And the last type of error occurred on student' recount writing was addition with the total number of occurrence 10 (6%).

a. Error in Omission

From 45 errors in omission, 31 errors fell in the use of "was or were and verb", 4 errors fell in the use of "suffix", 2 errors fell in the use of "had" and 8 errors fell in the use of "subject". It would be discussed further below:

The errors showed that the students were not able to make subject and agreed with the linking verb "be" (was or were) before an adjective. It could be seen that the students made errors in the sentences such as the sentence "*In the pasumpahan island we # so fun*" instead of "*in the pasumpahan islan we were so fun*", then, the sentence "*...all people # so tired*" instead of *all people were so tired*, next, the sentence "*we # sleepy*" instead of "*we were sleepy*", the sentence "*because we # very tired*" instead of "*because we were very tired*", and also, "*It # very nice for visited*" instead of "*it was nice for visited*"

Furthermore, the students also did not put the linking verb "be" (was or were) before they wrote a noun. It should be noticed that the students made errors

in the sentence such as “*After that we # selfie together*” instead of “*After that we were selfie together*” next, the sentence “*I # so thank full to my mother and father*” instead of “*I was so thank full to my mother and father*” , then, the sentence “*Last they # selfi*” instead of “*Last they were selfi*”. The students also omitted auxiliary verb (was or were). It could be seen in the sentence “*we # sleeping in the house of mister Drs. H Baharudin*” instead of “*we were sleeping in the house of mister Drs. H Baharudin*”.

After that, the errors in omission fell in the use of suffix. It could be seen in the sentence “*... with my big family and many #friend*” instead of “*... with my big family and many friends*”, then, “*I have two *sister and one brother*” instead of “*I have two sisters and one brother*”, and also “*I have two young *brother*” instead of “*I have two young *brother*”.

Next, the errors in omission fell in the use of “had”. It could be seen in the sentence “*at 10.40 we #break time to breakfast*” instead of “*at 10.40 we had break time to breakfast*” and the sentence “*I and big family # lunch in the restaurant seafood in Carocok beach*” instead of “*I and big family # lunch in the restaurant seafood in Carocok beach*”

The last, the errors in omission fell in the use of verb. It could be seen in the sentence “*Before we went home, # looked for some beautiful souvenir at the nearby shop there*” instead of “*Before we went home, I looked for some beautiful souvenir at the nearby shop there*” and the sentence “*Next # went market to buy fish*” instead of “*Next we went market to buy fish*” and other sentence like that.

b. Error in Addition

From 10 errors in addition, 1 error was in double markings and 9 errors were in regularization. For more information, it would be discussed below:

Based on surface strategy taxonomy proposed by Dulay, Burt, and Krashen (1982, p.156), errors in addition were divided into double markings, regularization and simple addition. From 9 errors in addition, 1 error was in double marking where the students added verb even the verb had been applied. For the example in the sentence “*she *liked posted to story*” instead of “*she liked to post it in the story*”

The other error was in adding the suffix -ed and -ing in irregular verb and it became regularization in addition. It could be seen in the sentences: “*.....to *visited mall*” instead of “*to visit mall*”, then, “*...to *playing in Bukittinggi zoo*” instead of “*to play in bukittinggi zoo*”, next, “*to *followed competition*” instead of “*to follow competition*” and other sentences like that.

c. Error in Misformation

From 118 errors found in misformation, there were 7 errors in regularization, 1 error in archi forms, and 110 errors in alternating form. It would be discussed further below:

From all those errors, there were 6 sentences contributed regularization error: “*After *buyed chili, we met seller sate and ice cream*” instead of “*after we bought chili, we met seller sate and ice cream*” , next, “*At 06.45 we *buyed vegetable and fruits*” instead of “*At 06.45 we *buyed vegetable and fruits*” and “*My youngest brother *always maked my family laugh because he *always singed on in the car*” instead of “*My youngest brother made my family laugh because he*”

sang on in the car”, then, “*My father cannot sleep because *he drived the car*” instead of “*My father cannot sleep because he drove the car*” and other sentences like this. The students made error where they used the regular verb for irregular verb.

Then, 1 sentence contributed misformation error in archi-forms: the student made error when he/she used a singular verb for a plural subject. For the example: “*After that, the winners *was immediately announced, alhamdulillah we got two medals*” instead of “*After that, the winners were immediately announced, alhamdulillah we got two medals*”

After that, there were 110 misformation errors in alternating forms made by the students. The students did not alternate the present form into the past formsuch as the sentence: first, “*When I *go to tintin island*” instead of “*when I went to tintin island*”, second, “*The dusk *have end*” instead of “*the dusk had end*”, next, “*When I *go to pasumpahan island*” instead of “*when I went to pasumpahan island*”, then, “*all the games we *try before break time*” instead of “*all the games we triedbefore break time*” and also “*we *changes our uniform*” instead of “*we changed our uniform*”.

d. Error in Misordering

Errors in misordering were an incorrect placement of a morpheme or group of morphemein an utterance, *e.g. Colour my dress was pink*. In this study, there were no subject verb agreement errors in misordering found.

2. Analysis of Students’ Source of Error

As seen on the table 5, there were two types of source of error found in students’ recount writing; interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Meanwhile, context of learning and communication strategies were not found in students’ recount writing. There were 173 errors in this study. From the result of calculating, intralingual transfer became the most frequent source of error on students’ recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 128 (74%). Then, interlingual transfer became the second frequent source of error on students’ recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 45 (26%).

Moreover, the students make errors in subject verb agreement is because of the L1 interference (inter language errors) where these students notice that in their L1, there is no rule which says that a singular subject requires a single form of verb. Besides, According to Brown (2007, p.264) “faulty generalization or over-generalization also involves where a deviant structure has been constructed by these students based on their experience of other structures in the target language”. Furthermore, it can also be called intralingual transfer as the major factor that caused the students to make errors in their recount writing.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study collected some important information from the eleventh grade students of SMA Al Istiqamah recount writing in term of subject verb agreement errors in using Surface Strategy Taxonomy by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982). Based on the findings and discussion, it could be concluded that:

First, the students contributed the three types of error in term of subject verb agreement in their recount writing, those were (1) omission (26%), (2)

addition (6%) and (3) Misformation (68%). Meanwhile, there was no error in misordering found in this study.

Second, misformation became the most frequent type of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 118 (68,2%). Then, omission became the second frequent type of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 45 (26%). And the last type of error occurred on student' recount writing was addition with the total number of occurrence 10 (5,78%).

Third, there were two types of source of error found in students' recount writing; interlingual transfer and intralingual transfer. Meanwhile, context of learning and communication strategies were not found in students' recount writing. Based on the result of calculating, intralingual transfer became the most frequent source of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 128 (74%). Then, interlingual transfer became the second frequent source of error on students' recount writing with the total number of occurrence was 45 (26%).

Based on the study that was carried out, the writer would like to give some suggestion to the teachers of English and to the students:

1. For the teachers of English, it is expected to make correction and give more explanations toward students' errors during learning process in students writing when they make errors especially in term of misformation and other type of subject verb agreement errors.
2. For the students, it is expected to practice more about the tense, especially in writing the students are expected to understand about the tense that used in every text. And also, they are expected to differentiate between regular verb and irregular verb.

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