Error Analysis on Subject - Verb Agreement in the Cambridge Checkpoint Writing Exam of Indonesian Secondary 2 Students

Corpus - Based Research
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ABSTRACT

The aimed to look into the most common subject-verb agreement errors in nonfiction and fiction works written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam. A corpus-based research design is used in the study, which allows for large sample sizes and authentic language analysis. The sample consisted of 20 students (10 from each category) chosen at random using stratified sampling. The study employs manual analysis to identify subject-verb agreement errors in writing samples, followed by a coding scheme to classify the errors.

The findings indicate that subject-verb agreement errors are more common in nonfiction works than in fiction works. In both categories, the most common type of error is the use of a singular subject with a plural verb. Other common errors include using a plural subject with a singular verb, missing auxiliary verbs, and incorrect agreement when compound subjects are present. Subject-verb agreement errors were also found to be more common in Paper 1 (essay writing) than in Paper 2 (directed writing).

These findings have significant implications for language teaching and evaluation. Language teachers can use the findings to develop targeted pedagogical approaches to help students improve their writing skills, while examiners can use the findings to improve assessment criteria and identify areas that require additional attention. The study also emphasizes the utility of corpus-based research designs for analyzing language errors in a real-world context.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Subject-verb agreement (SVA) is important in writing because it ensures that sentences are grammatically correct and logical. Mastering subject - verb agreement, according to Celce - Murcia and Larsen - Freeman (2015), is critical for effective communication in English, particularly in academic writing, where precision and accuracy are highly valued.

In grammatical concepts, SVA states that the subject of a sentence must agree with the main verb of the same sentence. Singular subjects are assigned singular verbs, while plural subjects are assigned plural verbs. The most common verb agreement mistakes occur when students lose sight of the true subject of the sentence—for example, by considering the object of a preposition to be part of the subject—and use the incorrect form of the verb.

According to Swan and Smith (2001), subject-verb agreement is one of the most common grammatical errors among non-native English speakers. Errors in subject-verb agreement can stifle effective communication, leading to misunderstandings and misinterpretations. For non-native English speakers who want to improve their overall English proficiency, addressing subject-verb agreement issues is critical.

English is the global economic language, according to David Graddol (2006) in his study "English Next: Why Global English may mean the End of English as a Foreign Language." Many international businesses and organizations use it as their primary means of communication. By improving their command of the language, non-native English speakers can improve their career prospects and chances of success in the global job market.

English is a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools, and many Indonesians study English as a second language. However, more Indonesians need to improve their English language skills, particularly in the areas of speaking and writing. This is because Indonesia has a large population and a growing economy, and having good English language skills can provide more opportunities for Indonesians to succeed in the global arena(Setyadi, 2019).

Learning English in Indonesia can be difficult due to significant differences between the English and Indonesian language systems. These differences frequently confuse Indonesian learners, posing a challenge to their language acquisition. For example, while subject-verb agreement in English varies depending on the number or person of the subject, Indonesian grammar has a different rule. Regardless of the subject, the verb in Indonesian always remains in its base form. This disparity in grammar rules can make it difficult for Indonesian students to adapt to the nuances of the English language.

The sentences "Saya makan" (I eat), "Dia makan" (He/She/It eats), "Kami makan" (We eat), and "Mereka makan" (They eat) demonstrate that the verb "makan" (eat) remains the same in Indonesian regardless of the number or person of the subject. This means that regardless of whether the subject is singular or plural, or whether it refers to the first, second, or third person, the verb remains in its base form. The lack of subject-verb agreement in Indonesian grammar can be difficult for learners who are used to verb forms changing depending on the subject in other languages.

According to Cambridge Assessment International Education (2021), the Cambridge Checkpoint Exam in English is intended for students studying English as their first language and is intended to assess their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills at the primary or middle school level. Accredited Cambridge schools in Indonesia use this as an annual exam to assess their students' language proficiency and prepare them for higher level English studies. The exam is also used as a tool for school improvement because it provides valuable data on students' English language strengths and weaknesses.

The writing exam is divided into two parts: paper 1 for nonfiction and paper 2 for fiction. Paper 1 of the Checkpoint Exam in English's Writing component assesses students' ability to write a nonfiction piece, such as a report, review, or article. On the other hand, paper 2 of the Checkpoint Exam in English's Writing component assesses students' ability to write a piece of fiction, such as a story or a play.

The purpose of this research is to examine the subject - verb agreement errors in the Cambridge Checkpoint Writing Exam of secondary 2 students in both fiction and nonfiction.

B. Statement of the Problem

The primary goal of this research was to examine the subject - verb agreement errors in secondary 2 students' Cambridge Checkpoint Exams. Its specific goal was to provide answers to the following questions:

- What are the most common types of subject - verb agreement errors found in the nonfiction works written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam?
- What are the most common types of subject - verb agreement errors found in the fiction works written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam?
- Which part of the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam has more occurrence of subject - verb agreement errors?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A number of literatures have been reviewed in order to develop an empirical basis for designing this research. The insights gained from the review processes shaped the overall processes of this research. The discussion of such reviews is presented in the following subsections.

A. Concept of Subject - Verb Agreement

➢ *Definition of Subject - Verb Agreement*
Subject-verb agreement is an important aspect of grammar rules because it determines the relationship between a sentence's subject and verb. The subject and verb are essential components of a sentence and cannot exist apart from one another. Subject-verb agreement refers to the rule that governs the proper agreement of the subject and verb.

A subject is a noun or pronoun that performs an action in grammar, whereas a verb is the action itself (Straus et al., 2014). Subject-verb agreement is an important grammar rule that governs the proper use of verb forms after the subject in a sentence. In a simple sentence, the verb usually comes after the subject and can take the form of a word or phrase containing a simple verb form, adverb, auxiliary, or modal. To maintain subject-verb agreement, the verb form must match the subject form. A singular subject, for example, takes a singular verb, whereas a plural subject takes a plural verb (Sihombing & Burton, 2007).

Similar to pronouns, verbs have three personas: first, second, and third (Lingga & Utomo, 2006). In each sentence, make sure that the person of the verb corresponds to the person of the subject. In the first person, for example, the verb form "am" is used for "I," while "drink" is used for the subject "I" as well. "Are" and "drink" in the second person correspond to the subject "you." "Is" is used in the third person for the singular subject "she," while "drinks" is the corresponding verb form.

Verbs, like nouns and pronouns, have two numbers: singular and plural. It is critical to ensure that the verb matches the subject's number, whether singular or plural. For instance, "eats" refers to the singular subject "she," whereas "eat" refers to the plural subject "they."

It is critical to write grammatically correct sentences. However, when using the simple present tense, students frequently struggle with the rule of subject-verb agreement. The main cause of errors is a misunderstanding of the rules governing subject-verb agreement. This is especially important in business letters, where the simple present tense is frequently used, resulting in frequent errors when applying this rule.

To summarize, subject-verb agreement requires the writer to choose a verb that corresponds to the sentence's subject in terms of person and number (Kurniawan & Seprizanna, 2016). To ensure number agreement between the subject and verb, a singular subject should be followed by a singular verb, and a plural subject should be followed by a plural verb.

➢ *The Rules of Subject - Verb Agreement*
There are some points to note about subject-verb agreement according to (Eastwood, 2002), they are:

- Singular and Plural Verbs
When it comes to verbs, both singular and plural forms must agree in terms of number with their respective subjects. A singular subject requires a singular verb, whereas a plural subject requires a plural verb. Verbs must match their subject in both number (singular/plural) and person (first, second, or third) in simple present tense sentences. If the subject is in the third person singular, the present tense ending "-s" (or "-es") is used for verbs.

  Examples:
  - The room is dirty.
  - Joseph is a smart student.
  - Vincent loves English lessons.
  - The rooms are dirty.
  - Joseph and Vincent are smart students.
  - They love English lessons.

- Uncountable Nouns
Uncountable nouns are things that cannot be counted with numbers. They could be names for abstract ideas or qualities, or they could be names for physical objects that are too small or amorphous to count (liquids, powders, gases, and so on). With a singular verb, uncountable nouns are used. They do not usually have a plural form.
  Examples:
  - There is no more water in the river.
  - Please help yourself to some cheese.

- Phrase or Clause as Subject
A phrase or clause between subject and verb does not change the number of the subject.

  Examples:
  - A can of black beans sits on the shelf.
  - The child who went to the playstation was bored.

- Indefinite Pronouns
Singular indefinite pronoun subjects take singular verbs. While, plural indefinite pronouns take plural verbs.

  Examples:
  - Everyone loves her angelic voice.
  - Something is missing in his piece of art.
  - Several students were invited to the show last night.

- Collective Nouns
Collective nouns may be singular or plural, depending on meaning.

  Examples:
  - The jury has decided to dismiss the case. *(In this example, the jury is acting one unit; therefore, the verb is singular.)*
  - The jury members have been arguing the case for one week. *(In this example, the jury members are acting as twelve individuals; therefore, the verb is plural.)*

- Correlative Conjunctions
  When correlative conjunctions join sentences with two singular subjects, the verb must also be singular.

  Example:
  - Neither John nor Joseph is going to the party tonight.

  When correlative conjunctions join sentences with one singular and one plural subject, the verb used must agree to the noun or subject it is placed closest to in the sentence.

  Example: Either my students or his student likes watching movies in the theater.

B. Concept of Error

Numerous experts and researchers have defined the concept of error. We considered the following definitions in this study: (1) According to Norrish (1992), an error is a consistent deviation made by a learner who consistently fails to learn something correctly, and (2) According to Cunningworth (cited in Hasyim, 2002, p.25), errors are systematic deviations from the language norms being learned. The term "systematic deviation" appears to be a key component in these definitions, referring to a recurring deviation.

Furthermore, errors are likely to occur when there are significant differences between the learner's mother tongue or any previously acquired language and the language they are attempting to acquire, according to Zhang (p.86). Zhang also emphasizes that mistakes made by learners while producing language can reveal their underlying knowledge of the newly acquired language.

It is critical to distinguish between "mistakes" and "errors" when analyzing learners' errors. Brown (2000, p. 217) defines a "mistake" as a performance error caused by a failure to correctly apply a known system. An "error," on the other hand, is a noticeable deviation from the grammar of a native speaker that reflects the learner's interlanguage competence.

Based on the distinction between "mistakes" and "errors," it can be concluded that errors occur when a learner deviates from a native speaker's grammar, whereas mistakes occur when a learner fails to correctly apply a known system. Even if the learner has learned the language but does not fully understand the correct form, errors can occur. Meanwhile, mistakes can occur when a learner forgets the correct form or is unable to apply what they have learned.

C. Error Analysis

➢ *Definition of Error Analysis*

In the field of second language acquisition, error analysis is a popular approach that involves examining and categorizing deviations from the rules of the second language in order to uncover the learner's underlying system. This method focuses on analyzing L2 learners' errors by comparing their acquired rules to the target language rules and providing explanations for the errors found. Error analysis can be extremely beneficial to teachers because it provides valuable insights into their students' errors, allowing them to identify and correct misunderstandings, anticipate potential errors, and improve their teaching effectiveness. Teachers can identify the most common sources of errors in students' learning processes by conducting error analysis, allowing them to address them in a targeted and efficient manner.

➢ *The Aims of Error Analysis*

Errors are unavoidable in second language learning, but error analysis is a valuable process for both students and teachers. Error analysis assists students in identifying the aspects of grammar that they find difficult, while it assists teachers in determining the learners' existing knowledge and areas that require additional attention. According to Shidar in Tarigan's book (cited in Irawati, 2015), there are four main uses of error analysis: organizing teaching materials from easy to difficult, determining teaching emphasis and

application, planning and improving remedial instruction and practice, and creating items for learner competence tests.

The ultimate goal of error analysis is to identify the characteristics of students' errors, especially in writing, so that teachers can assist students in reconstructing their writing. This is consistent with Vahdatinejad's (as cited in Amara, 2015) viewpoint that the goal of error analysis is to determine what learners still need to learn by providing information on their areas of competence.

➢ *The Procedure of Error Analysis*
Error analysis has become a key focus in classroom activities in the realm of pedagogical improvements. According to M. and Larry (2008), conducting error analysis can be accomplished in six steps. The first step is data collection, in which the researcher considers various methods for collecting data from learners. Following that, based on the data collected, errors are identified. These can include mistakes in verb form, tenses sequence, or subject-verb agreement. The errors are then classified and quantified, allowing the researcher to determine the frequency with which each student makes grammatical agreement errors. The source of the errors is then investigated, and finally, corrective actions are implemented.

D. First Language Interferences
ESL learners face numerous problems in second language acquisition (SLA). One of the many factors that hinder the attainment of proficiency in the second language (L2) is the interference of one's first language (L1).

These interferences are discussed in the theory of language transfer which refers to the influence of one's prior experiences and culture on learning a new language (Amin, 2017). Positive transfer occurs when one's native language supports the acquisition of a second or foreign language. Similarly, negative transfer happens when learners incorrectly translate their previous linguistic and cultural information from their L1 into their target language.

When learners of a second language want to write or speak in the target language, they tend to rely on their first language structures. Hence, if the structures of both languages are different, a lot of errors may arise (Derakhshan & Karimi, 2015).

According to a study by Puspita (2021) on the interferences of Indonesian grammatical structure in English compositions, the use of singular/plural nouns, articles, and tenses are the most common errors in the area of morphology. The study's findings also indicated that word order, subject-verb agreement, and negation are the most frequent syntactical errors. The errors in tenses were attributed to the fact that, unlike in the English language where verbs are conjugated, the verbs in Indonesian language do not change from present to past or future. The interferences on the use of singular/plural nouns stemmed from the unavailability of this English language feature in Indonesian language.

Linarsi, Irwan, and Putra (2020) also looked at the interference of Indonesian grammatical aspects with learning English as a foreign language. Their study showed that at least six different types of subject-verb agreement (SVA) in English have been hampered by the Indonesian SVA pattern, particularly the singular subject + singular verb, the use of *to be*, plural subject + plural verb, modal auxiliary + V1 bare infinitive, two subjects combined by "and" + plural verb, and two subjects separated by "or".

CHAPTER THREE

REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

Several studies have been conducted on the subject of SVA. Sirait (2003), for example, investigated subject-verb agreement errors in the narrative writing of fifteen students at Universitas Kristen Indonesia during their first semester of English literature. The study discovered 35 sentences with errors in which a singular subject was given a singular verb. In addition, six sentences contained errors in which a plural subject was given a plural verb. Three sentences contained errors involving intervening phrases between the subject and the verb, but the subject-verb agreement was unaffected. Three other sentences contained mistakes in the use of "there + be + subject," and two sentences contained mistakes in the use of collective nouns.

Many students struggle with the general rule of subject-verb agreement rather than its specific sub-rules. This is due to the absence of subject-verb agreement rules in their first language (L1). The study also discovered that students had difficulty remembering the various rules of subject-verb agreement. Some students may have had difficulty recalling or distinguishing the rules, or they may have lacked knowledge of the rules entirely. Furthermore, there may have been too many subject-verb agreement rules to remember. According to the findings, students make subject-verb agreement errors because they struggle to learn and apply the rules correctly, as noted by Richards (1971, cited in Heydari & Bagheri, 2012).

Another study of Maya (2016) about grade 12 students' writing difficulties in using subject - verb agreement "Expression of Quantity (many, much, and some)" at SMAN 8 Mataram, Indonesia. An examination of the data revealed that 95 students lacked mastery of the rules governing subject-verb agreement, particularly in the use of nouns and vocabulary for subject-verb agreement words like "some," "many," and "much." One student reported receiving no subject-verb agreement instruction since elementary school, while five students stated that they rarely applied subject-verb agreement rules in their daily lives, either because they disliked speaking or writing in English or because they substituted alternative words for "some," "many," or "much."

Furthermore, Saly Kurnia Octaviani and Arumsari (2021) used a descriptive qualitative research method with document analysis as the data collection technique in their study, which was published in the International Journal of English Linguistics, Literature, and Education (IJELLE). The study focused on the analysis of English application letters written by fourth-semester college students in STMIK Sinar Nusantara Surakarta's Information System program. The findings revealed that students made a total of 260 errors in their application letters, which were classified as omission errors (35.35%), misformation errors (30.80%), misordering errors (24.23%), and addition errors (9.62%). These findings shed light on the most common errors made by college students in written English communication, particularly in application letters.

Moreover, Shafa Firda Nila (2017) used a qualitative research method with a descriptive design in her study, which was published in The 1st International Conference on Language, Literature, and Teaching. The study focused on the difficulties third-semester students majoring in Management and Accounting at Perguruan Tinggi Bina Bangsa Banten had in writing English business letters. The study included 51 students, with 39 letters written by Management students and 12 letters written by Accounting students. According to the findings, the students made a total of 639 errors in their writing, with verb errors being the most common (77), followed by noun errors (62), article errors (60), word choice errors (130), sentence structure errors (117), spelling errors (61), punctuation errors (72), and capitalization errors (60). These findings indicate that students face a number of challenges when writing English business letters, which may impact their communication with international business partners and limit their future career opportunities.

In addition to the above mentioned studies, the study by Arista, Yana, andSugiharti, sought to examine the sentence structure errors made by twelfth-grade students when writing application letters. In the academic year 2015 - 2016, the authors used a qualitative research method with a sample of 50 participants chosen using simple random sampling from a total population of 284 students at SMKN 5 Batam. The findings revealed that the students made a total of 1188 errors in both the application letter format and sentence structure, with omission errors (45.03%), selection errors (36.03%), addition errors (3.45%), and ordering errors (4.88%) accounting for the majority of errors. These findings highlight the most common mistakes students make when writing application letters and the need for interventions to improve their writing skills, particularly in sentence structure.

According to the studies reviewed, subject-verb agreement (SVA) is a difficult aspect of English grammar for many students. Some of the reasons students struggle with SVA are the absence of SVA rules in their first language, difficulty recalling or distinguishing rules, and having too many rules to remember. The studies also show that errors in SVA can have a significant impact on students' written communication, as evidenced by an examination of college students' application letters and business letters. The findings highlight the significance of interventions for improving students' SVA skills and overall writing ability.

Maya's research focuses on the difficulties that Indonesian grade 12 students have when using SVA with nouns and vocabulary for words like "many," "much," and "some." Similarly, Sirait's research looks at SVA errors in Indonesian students' narrative writing in their first semester of English literature. These studies provide a relevant comparison to the current study's research topic, which investigates SVA errors in the writing exam of Indonesian secondary 2 students. The study by Rika Arista, Dewi Yana, and Sri Sugiharti highlights the common sentence structure errors made by twelfth-grade students when writing application letters, emphasizing the importance of interventions to improve writing skills, such as SVA.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

This section gives information on the research design, participants of the study, research instruments, and data collection and analysis procedures.

A. Research Design

According to Biber et al. (2018), corpus linguistics is a research method that has recently been developed to enable empirical study of language use and variation and to produce more generalized and reliable research findings. It is primarily a methodological approach that supports the idea that language is systematic and can be defined using quantitative and empirical methods by looking at the patterns of language use in natural texts. This approach is useful in analyzing the frequency of errors in the subject-verb agreement since this strategy involves the collection of spoken or written words, sentences, phrases, or texts to better understand language use and variation IGI Global (n.d.).

This research design is ideal for the researcher's study because it allows for a large sample size, providing a representative sample of the student population. This is especially true in error analysis research, where a large enough sample size is required to identify the types and frequency of errors (McEnery & Wilson, 2001). Furthermore, a corpus-based approach facilitates data collection and analysis because the researcher can quickly identify and extract relevant data from the corpus using specialized tools.

Furthermore, the corpus used in the study is likely to contain authentic language produced by exam students, which is important for analyzing errors in context. This ensures that the errors identified are relevant to real-world language and not just the result of artificial language. As a result, a corpus - based research design is an ideal approach for an error analysis on subject - verb agreement in the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam of Indonesian Secondary 2 students because it provides a large sample size, objectivity, authenticity, and efficiency.

B. Research Population and Sample

➢ *Research Population*

The research population is the group of people the research wishes to study. The research population in this case is secondary students enrolled in a Cambridge accredited international school in Indonesia. These students are in their second year and are most likely between the ages of 13 and 14.

➢ *Research Sample*

A research sample is a subset of a research population chosen by the researcher to be studied. In this case, the research used a random stratified sampling technique to select 20 students, ten from nonfiction writing and ten from fiction writing. The stratification ensures that the sample contains an equal number of participants from both nonfiction and fiction writing outputs. The randomization component of the sampling technique aids in the reduction of potential bias in the selection process, ensuring that the sample is as representative of the research population as possible.

C. Data Collection and Technique

➢ *Data Collection*

The data for this research study were gathered by analyzing the writing outputs of 20 Indonesian secondary 2 students, ten of whom wrote nonfiction and ten of whom wrote fiction. The writing samples were obtained from the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam, which is a standardized assessment tool used to assess students' writing skills in international schools (Cambridge Assessment International Education, n.d.).

The analysis focuses on subject - verb agreement errors in writing outputs. These grammatical errors are common and can impair the clarity and coherence of written communication. The researcher hopes to identify patterns and trends in the students' writing abilities by analyzing these errors, which could inform pedagogical approaches to improving their writing skills.

➢ *Data Collection Technique*

A manual analysis of a corpus is a data collection technique that is used in this study. Reading and analyzing individual writing samples from a corpus to identify subject-verb agreement errors is what manual analysis entails. This method allows for a more thorough examination of the errors and a better understanding of the specific contexts in which the errors occur (Hyland, 2005).

A corpus of writing samples from the Cambridge Checkpoint Exam (Paper 1 and Paper 2) were compiled by the researcher to conduct a manual analysis.

In each writing sample, the researcher manually identified and categorized subject-verb agreement errors. This entails identifying the subject and verb in each sentence and determining whether there is a mismatch between the two. The type of error, such as a singular subject with a plural verb or a plural subject with a singular verb, can be used to categorize errors.

To ensure the consistency of the manual analysis, the researcher employed a coding scheme to categorize the errors. The coding scheme can be pre-existing or customized for this study.

Using a corpus for manual analysis allows for a more fine-grained analysis of subject-verb agreement errors in Indonesian secondary 2 students' writing. The researcher examined the errors in context and identified patterns in the students' language use. Furthermore, the manual analysis approach gives the researcher more control over error categorization and ensures that the analysis is tailored to the specific research questions.

D. Data Analysis Procedures

The research study's data analysis procedures included several steps. The researcher first transcribed the writing outputs and identified the subject-verb agreement errors in each writing sample. These errors were classified according to a predetermined coding scheme, which includes categories like general rule, uncountable nouns, collective nouns or noun counters, correlative conjunctions, noun quantifiers, phrase or clause as subject, and indefinite pronouns.

After categorizing the errors, the researcher computed the frequency of each error category and generated descriptive statistics. The researcher identified the most common types of subject-verb agreement errors made by the selected research participants as a result of this.

Finally, based on the research questions, the researcher interpreted the data analysis results and drew conclusions. The findings were discussed in light of previous research on subject-verb agreement errors and writing proficiency.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter summarizes the findings of the investigation and is divided into two sections: research findings and discussion. The research findings section includes all of the data gathered, whereas the discussion section interprets and explains the findings.

A. Research Findings

The study's objectives were to be met through data analysis. The first goal was to identify the most common subject-verb agreement errors in nonfiction and fiction pieces written for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam by Indonesian secondary 2 students. The second goal was to find out how frequently these errors appeared in nonfiction and fiction works written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam. Finally, the study sought to identify the factors that contribute to subject-verb agreement errors in nonfiction and fiction works written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam.

The findings of this study present the findings of an analysis of a corpus of 20 writing samples (10 nonfiction and 10 fiction) written by Indonesian secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam. All sentences were analyzed after the samples were combined into a single corpus. The study discovered four major types of errors in subject-verb agreement in nonfiction and fiction writing. Errors related to the general rule that a singular subject must have a singular verb and vice versa, noun quantifiers, phrases or clauses used as subjects, and the use of indefinite pronouns were among those identified.

Table 1: Frequency of Subject - Verb Agreement Errors found in the Nonfiction works by Indonesian Secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam		
Subject - Verb Agreement Errors	**Number of Errors**	**Percentage**
General Rule (GR)	15	31.30%
Phrase or Clause as Subject (PS)	4	8.33%
Noun Quantifier (QT)	3	6.25%
Uncountable Nouns (UC)	1	2.08%
Collective Nouns (CN)	0	0
Correlative Conjunctions (CC)	0	0

Table 1 shows that 31.30% of the 23 errors identified in Secondary 2 students' nonfiction writing works were related to general rules that specify the verb must agree with the number of subjects. The use of a phrase or clause as the subject was the second most common error, accounting for 8.33% of all errors. The use of noun quantifiers was the third most common error, accounting for only 6.25% of all errors. Uncountable nouns accounted for only 2.08% of all errors. Surprisingly, no errors in the use of collective nouns or correlative conjunctions were found in subject-verb agreement.

Table 2: Frequency of Subject - Verb Agreement Errors found in the Fiction works by Indonesian Secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam		
Subject - Verb Agreement Errors	**Number of Errors**	**Percentage**
General Rule (GR)	20	41.67%
Phrase or Clause as Subject (PS)	3	6.25%
Noun Quantifier (QT)	2	4.17%
Uncountable Nouns (UC)	0	0
Collective Nouns (CN)	0	0
Correlative Conjunctions (CC)	0	0

According to the research findings presented in Table 2, Indonesian Secondary 2 students have a 41.67% error rate in the general rule of subject-verb agreement, particularly in fiction writing where the verb must agree with the number of subjects. Furthermore, these students made three mistakes when using phrases or clauses as subjects, accounting for 6.25% of all errors observed. The students made two noun quantifier errors, accounting for 4.17% of the total errors observed. Unexpectedly, no errors were found in the remaining subject-verb agreement categories, which included uncountable nouns, collective nouns, and correlative conjunctions.

Table 3: Frequency of Subject - Verb Agreement Errors found in the Nonfiction and Fiction works written by Indonesian Secondary 2 students for the Cambridge Checkpoint writing exam						
Subject - Verb Agreement Errors	**Nonfiction**	**Percentage**	**Fiction**	**Percentage**	**Grand Total**	**Percentage**
General Rule (GR)	15	31.30%	20	41.67%	35	72.92%
Phrase or Clause as Subject (PS)	4	8.33%	3	6.25%	7	14.58%
Noun Quantifier (QT)	3	6.25%	2	4.17%	5	10.42%
Indefinite Pronouns (IP)	1	2.08%	0	0	1	2.08%
Uncountable Nouns (UC)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Collective Nouns (CN)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Correlative Conjunctions (CC)	0	0	0	0	0	0

According to Table 3, the most common mistake in subject-verb agreement is related to the general rule that a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb. This error was found in 72.92% of cases, with nonfiction writing accounting for 31.30% and fiction writing accounting for 41.67%. The use of a phrase or clause as the subject was the second most common error, accounting for 14.58% of errors (8.33% in nonfiction and 6.25% in fiction). The third most common error involved noun quantifiers, accounting for 10.42% of all errors (6.25% in nonfiction and 4.17% in fiction). The use of indefinite pronouns was the least common error, occurring only in nonfiction and accounting for 2.08% of all errors. There were no errors found in the remaining subject-verb agreement categories. These findings imply that the general rule for subject-verb agreement is the area where writers are most likely to make mistakes, especially in fiction writing.

B. Research Discussion

The findings of this study on subject-verb agreement (SVA) errors in writing by Indonesian Secondary 2 students show that the general rule that a singular subject requires a singular verb and a plural subject requires a plural verb is the most difficult for students to grasp. This is consistent with the theory of first language interferences, which states that the absence of SVA rules in students' first language (L1) can lead to errors in their second language (L2). The study also discovered that students had difficulty recalling or distinguishing between the various SVA rules, indicating that they may have lacked complete knowledge of the rules. This is consistent with Richards' (1971) previous research, which found that students make SVA errors because they struggle to learn and apply the rules correctly.

Other studies have looked into SVA errors in student writing. Sirait (2003) discovered, for example, that Indonesian students studying English literature struggled with SVA errors, particularly with intervening phrases between the subject and the verb as well as collective nouns. Similarly, Maya (2016) discovered that grade 12 students in Indonesia struggled to master SVA rules, particularly the use of nouns and vocabulary for subject-verb agreement words such as "some," "many," and "much." These findings suggest that SVA errors are a recurring issue in Indonesian student writing.

The current study also discovered that SVA errors were more common in fiction writing, with students making 41.67% errors in the general rule of SVA. This suggests that using more complex language structures and literary techniques in fiction writing may present additional challenges for students who are still learning basic SVA rules. It is worth noting, however, that the study found no errors in the use of collective nouns or correlative conjunctions in subject-verb agreement. This could be because these rules are less commonly used or taught in writing classes.

Indeed, the findings of this study on SVA errors in the writing of Indonesian Secondary 2 students suggest that students struggle the most with the general rule of SVA, possibly because SVA rules do not exist in their L1. Furthermore, students may struggle to remember or distinguish between the various SVA rules, resulting in errors in their writing. These findings emphasize the significance of targeted writing instruction that addresses common SVA errors and provides students with strategies for mastering SVA rules. Further research could look into how first language interference affects other aspects of student writing, such as grammar and vocabulary usage.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

The study on subject-verb agreement errors in writing by Indonesian Secondary 2 students shows that these errors are a significant problem for students. According to the findings, students have the most difficulty with the general rule of SVA, possibly because SVA rules do not exist in their L1. Furthermore, students may have an incomplete understanding of SVA rules, which can lead to errors in their writing. The study also emphasizes the significance of targeted instruction that addresses common SVA errors and gives students strategies for mastering SVA rules.

Furthermore, the study discovered that SVA errors were more common in fiction writing, implying that using more complex language structures and literary techniques may present additional challenges for students still learning basic SVA rules. However, no errors in the use of collective nouns or correlative conjunctions in subject-verb agreement were discovered in the study, possibly because these rules are less commonly used or taught in writing classes.

Overall, the study's findings highlight the importance of targeted writing instruction that addresses common SVA errors and provides students with strategies for mastering SVA rules. Future research should also look into how first language interference affects other aspects of student writing, such as grammar and vocabulary usage.

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