

**ERROR ANALYSIS OF SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT IN EFL
COLLEGE STUDENTS' WRITINGS : A CASE STUDY AT ENGLISH
DEPARTMENT FACULTY OF LETTERS ANDALAS UNIVERSITY**

A Thesis

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ABSTRAK

Di dalam skripsi ini dibahas tentang kesilapan dalam kesesuaian antara subjek dan verba di dalam tulisan mahasiswa Sastra Inggris Universitas Andalas. Informan terdiri atas 40 mahasiswa yang berasal dari angkatan 2008 sampai angkatan 2005. Adalah teori *Jane Strauss* dan *Gerald Nelson* yang digunakan. Data terdiri dari 3 tahap. Tahap pertama informan membuat karangan sederhana dengan tema *Who is Your Idol*. Tahap kedua adalah *grammar drill*. Tahap ketiga adalah kuestioner tentang motivasi dari partisipan dalam hal pembelalajaran bahasa inggris.

Hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa informan melakukan kesalahan dalam *linking verb* dan *basic rule of subject verb agreement*. Lebih dari 50% informan masih membuat kesilapan. Dalam *grammar drilling test*, menunjukkan hasil yang sebaliknya. Lebih dari 60% informan menjawab dengan benar. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa informan mempunyai kemampuan dala hal *grammar* tetapi tidak bisa menerapkannya di dalam tulisan.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

Language transfer is considered as one of the most problematic phenomena in Second Language Acquisition. It plays an important role in learning another language. That is why it consists of two parts, language acquisition and language transfer. Both of them are related each other because language transfer is a process that goes hand in hand with the learning of a second language since once a person starts learning another language the transfer process begins.

When language features in the two languages are similar, positive transfer from the first language to the second language occurs. When language features in the two languages are different, learning difficulties and error happen. This transfer process is a fact for researchers that the native language definitely plays a major role in second language acquisition.

English language is already acknowledged as the most important language in the world and used by various societies all over the world. In some countries, like United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, Singapore, English is used as the first language. Other countries such as Malaysia use English as a second language. In Indonesia, English has become a foreign language.

In Indonesia, English is mostly learned by getting instructions in formal institution such as in a classroom. Although this may not be the best way to learn

how to speak English fluently, this is a good way to learn the grammar. In a classroom, the learning starts from the simplest rule, so that the learner will gain a good basic on English.

Indonesian native speakers are not accustomed to the grammar of English because of the differences of the grammar between the two languages. Furthermore, English language has different grammar from Indonesian such as tenses, inflectional adjective, and so on to be learned. Sometimes the rules are confusing for the students. Consequently, the grammatical errors occur even for simple rules. For example: Indonesia learners tend to make error dealing with Subject-Verb Agreement such as saying "She walk" instead of "She walks."

However, it is assumed that English Department students have good English competence in which they have mastered the simple rules and learned the more complex one, and the students are free in making error because they have been learning English for almost three year.

The best medium that is used to identify the students' competence on grammar is writing because the students have enough time to think clearly and cross check what have been written. In writing, the students also can choose the grammatically correct sentences which appear from the their mind concept. Meanwhile, spoken language cannot be used as the medium because there is a possibility for the speaker to be more fluent but less accurate utterances. While speaking, we only express the utterances from the feeling without considering grammatical aspect because when we are speaking, we just focus on the meaning what we are saying to the listener.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is clearly seen that error commonly happens in the linking verb and main rules of subject-verb agreement. Participants mostly unconsciously in making the error because there is influence derives from the first language that has different grammatical rule with English. As proven by the result of essay writing on the freshmen, error may evidently be the case in their early period of learning writing. When this issue is continuously neglected, they will form a habit which results in unsuccessful automaticity as shown in the sophomore, junior, and senior students' writings.

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the junior students do not have enough comprehension over the SVA rule. Their score on SVA grammar test is relatively higher than their seniors. However, errors that they produce in their essays are variously more than their seniors do. Therefore, it can be concluded that the senior students seem to comprehend SVA rules and apply them more correctly than the junior students do.

The same case occurs between junior and sophomore students where junior students perform better than the sophomores do. Freshmen, however, seems to be out of ordinary because they evidently comprehend SVA rule more correctly and apply it consistently more accurate than the sophomores do. The reason for this unexpected outcome may be due to the shorter essay the juniors produce. This seems to help them minimize SVA errors. At last, a negative correlation may result from the two different kinds of test. The higher score a student gets in their

grammar drill, the fewer SVA errors they make in the essay. However, this study is not designed to address its significance. Therefore, deeper and more comprehensive future investigations need to be conducted by considering these aspects. The effect the quality of writing, there is inconsistency of the students' writing, ambiguity to the reader. Because it is inconsistency, the quality of writing, structurally is less.

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