

Chapter I: Introduction

This chapter presents the basic consideration of this research regarding the problem of Subject-verb agreement in students' writing and a query in the research question followed by research objectives, research delimitation which compiles the scope of the research and the focus of this study; the types of error in Subject-verb agreement, as well as research significances which present a highly significant in theoretical and practical contribution.

Research Background

Subject verb agreement is the basic feature of English grammar that forms the number of the subject distinctively by the agreement of the verb. To clarify this statement, Azar (1999) has explained that subject verb agreement is a term of English grammar that the verb of a sentence must agrees with the number of subject, not with any other word that is placed between them. Singular subject must be followed by the verb that agrees with singular subject and plural subject needs the verb that agrees with its number as well. Accordingly, subject verb agreement becomes the fundamental aspect of grammar in English language which refers to the number of subject.

The number of subject matters to the verb used in a sentence. If the number of subject is changed, the verb of its subject needs to change as well to create the agreement between the subject and the verb. For instance:

(1.) *The people are from Malaysia*

The subject of the sentence is “*people*” that refers to a group and categorizes as the collective noun, thus the verb needs to be a plural verb “*are*” which agrees with the plural subject to achieve the agreement (Azar, 1999, p.88).

The agreement between subject and verb needs to be attained because the disagreement between them can affect the structure and value in writing. Disagreement of subject and verb particularly in writing text causes the idea of sentence difficult to convey. It is because writing is a complex process to determine an idea into a text. Hence, the writer needs to choose the right diction and order the words grammatically to persuade the reader an idea in understandable way (Meyers, 2005). Therefore, if the rule of subject verb agreement is disobeyed by the writer, it causes the disagreement and it has an impact on the structure and the grammatical rule of a sentence.

Consequently it affects the process of delivering the idea from the writer to the reader becomes difficult.

Disagreement between the subject and the verb impacts on the syntactic rule of a sentence. If a verb is not agreeing with the subject, it can affect the structure of a correct sentence. For example:

**Implementing the “Full day school” which means the process of learning longer than usual, or “English day” that requires students talk in English in a day with no exception, are highly expected to enhance students’ capability.*

The sentence is a complex sentence that has two independent clauses and one dependent clause.

The sentence presents two ideas of programs that can be implemented at school. Even though there are two subjects in the sentence, there is a coordinating conjunction “*or*” between them that makes the subject singular (Azar, 1999, p.88). The disagreement of the verb contravenes the

rules of grammatical sentence and confuses the reader to what subject that the verb agrees with.

Hence, the sentence changes to “*Implementing the “Full day school” which means the process of learning longer than usual, or “English day” that requires students talk in English in a day with no exception, is highly expected to enhance students’ capability*” in so doing the sentence becomes grammatically and easy to understand.

Even though subject verb agreement is one of the basic features of English grammar, it is inevitable that EFL students are still committing mistakes and producing error on it. It is proven by the preliminary research in which the errors of subject-verb agreement are identified in students’ writing. The following data clarify this point:

* *Learning English have so much more distinctively flexible methods when it comes to the process. (Abas, 2017)*

* *Speaking English is very crucial and have many benefits. (Abas, 2017)*

Gerund is the subject of the first example as well as the second example “*Learning*” and “*Speaking*” that form of verb by adding “*-ing*” at the end of verb and has a function as noun. If a gerund is used in a sentence as the subject, the verb that follows the subject is a verb which agrees with singular subject because gerund takes the singular subject (Azar, 1999, p.88).

Unfortunately, the students used “*have*” that does not agree with the number of subject, instead of using “*has*” which agrees with the subject. Based on this issue, the students are failed to identify the number of subject and affected the agreement then produced ungrammatical sentence.

Despite the error of subject verb agreement will not cause the severe communication problem such as change the meaning of a sentence, this issue needs to be solved since the subject verb agreement has taken the role as the requirement of the grammatical sentence. Hence, this study provides the descriptive qualitative method to find the frequency of error in subject verb agreement and describes its occurrence.

Argumentative essay deals with the present tense and past tense that applied subject verb agreement, so that this essay becomes the test that used to reveal its occurrence. The occurrence of this issue also is supported by the result of interview that uncovers the causal factors that lead students to produce the error. Therefore this study does not only fundamentally focus in finding the error, but also assisting them to overcome the flaws which force them to learn more about grammar and will enhance their capability in writing.

Research Question

Considering the major concern of this study, this study focuses on the following one research question:

What are the types of subject-verb agreement error in students' argumentative writing?

Research Objectives

In accordance with the research question, the aims of this study are to find out and to describe the types of subject-verb agreement error that occurred in students' argumentative writing.

Research Delimitation

Since subject verb agreement has become the primary issue of this research, this research focuses on the error of Subject verb agreement in students' argumentative writing. Furthermore, the participants are nominated based on some requisites. They passed certain subjects; Writing General Communication, Writing Professional context, Writing for Academic Purposes, Basic English Grammar and Advance English Grammar and they achieved 3.70 minimally in those subjects which means they are good enough in writing; particularly in English grammar. Based on those requirements, they are eligible to be the participants of this research.

Research Significances

Concerning the impacts of this research, this research is expected to be significant in both theoretical and practical contribution:

In terms of theoretical contribution, this study is expected to be conducive for some aspects. For the lecturer, this study can help the lecturers know their students' ability in writing particularly their knowledge about subject-verb agreement. Hence, the lecturers will prepare the best method in classroom and do exercise repeatedly to increase students' capability in writing. This research also can be the references for the students to learn more about the subject-verb agreement.

On the practical contribution, this study helps students recognize the types of error subject-verb agreement that occurred in students' writing, thus they learn from it, increase their awareness and it affects their capability in writing. Moreover, this study also can be utilized as a reference for the next researcher who has interest in linguistic particularly in grammar study.