



**THE CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDENTS' MASTERY OF  
SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT AND THEIR WRITING ABILITY IN  
RECOUNT TEXT**

*SKRIPSI*

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## ABSTRACT

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**Key words:** Correlation, subject-verb agreement mastery, writing ability, recount text

Most of EFL learners consider that writing skill is difficult to master. This is because they have to pay attention to grammar and the coherence of the paragraph when writing a text. To write a recount text, EFL learners must understand the grammar rules to make a good writing. There are many materials that are taught and learned in grammar, such as tenses, subject-verb agreement, etc. Subject-verb agreement is a basic grammar that EFL learners should understand because conducting sentences, paragraphs, or essays require proper subject-verb agreement. However, in several studies, subject-verb agreement is found to be one of the most common errors in writing.

This study is aimed to discover whether there is a correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text. The sample of the study was 34 students of X MIPA 4 which was randomly selected from the tenth-grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar. This research used a quantitative correlational research design. There were two tests used in collecting the data for the research. The first test was subject-verb agreement mastery test that consisted of 30 items divided into 20 multiple choice and 10 fill in the blank. The second test was recount text writing test about historical event happened in the past. The results of the tests were analyzed using SPSS.

The finding of the research revealed that the correlation coefficient was 0.370, and Sig. value (2-tailed) was 0.031. The correlation coefficient 0.370 showed a positive result and indicated that relationship between students' subject-verb agreement mastery and writing ability in recount text was weak. In addition, the significance value 0.031 was lower than level of significance 0.05 which can be inferred that there is a correlation in a weak level between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text. It revealed that subject-verb agreement had less influence in students' recount text writing ability. The result also showed that the level of most of students' mastery of subject-verb agreement was insufficient. It was showed by the mean score of 47.03, and the percentage of most of the students who had insufficient level is 64.71% while the percentage of the students who had satisfactory level is 20.59%. The students who had above average level and below average level, each had a percentage of 5.88%, and 2.94% of the students had outstanding level.

Based on the findings, it is suggested to English teachers to apply any teaching method that is suitable to teach grammar and writing, since many of the students have errors in using subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense and deepen the students' knowledge about grammar to create better writing. Moreover, the future researchers can conduct the same research using different text genres or using different types of recount text. The future researchers can conduct the research with larger samples and ensure that the instruments used is in accordance with the material being taught, so the result of the test will be more relevant and reliable.



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objective of the study, the hypothesis, the significance of the study, the scope and limitation of the study, and the definition of key terms.

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching and learning English intend to master language skills which are listening, reading, speaking, and writing. However, most of EFL learners consider that writing skill is difficult to master (Fitria, 2016). This is because they have to pay attention to grammar and the coherence of the paragraph when writing a text. Further, Shafira (2021) explains that writing is considered to be challenging because the EFL learners are not only finding the right vocabulary and using the right grammar when writing, but also exploring and expressing thoughts in a foreign language. Saragih, Silalahi, & Pardede (2014) also state that writing is one of difficult skills for EFL learners because they lack of knowledge about grammar, vocabulary, and spelling.

There are many genres of text that should be learned by EFL learners. Based on the 2013 Indonesia curriculum, some genres of texts that need to be learned by the tenth grade students in English subjects are descriptive texts, recount texts, narrative texts, procedural texts, and news items (Shafira, 2021). Each of them has different purposes, generic structures, and language

features that can be used in the text. In this case, the researcher's focus is on recount text which has learned since in the junior high school because some students have difficulties in writing a recount text. As stated by Yulianawati (2018) that some students were found to have difficulty in writing recount text in terms of the use of tense, vocabulary, and specific participants.

In writing, of course it cannot be separated with grammar. To write a recount text, EFL learners must understand the grammar rules to make a good writing. According to Cowan (2008), grammar is defined as a set of rules that describes how words can be arranged to form correct sentences in a certain language. Therefore, grammar must be mastered to be able to master writing skills. However, it is not only grammar that must be considered when writing paragraphs, but also other aspects such as punctuation, spelling, etc. Helmiati, Sudarsono, and Susilowati (2019) states that learners not only have to pay attention to grammar in writing but also have to pay attention to vocabulary, spelling, and sentence patterns.

Grammar lessons cover a wide variety of subjects, including tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the others. Subject-verb agreement means that the subject and its verb should agree one another. Subject-verb agreement is important material that should be learned by EFL learners. According to Mahdalena (2021), subject-verb agreement is a basic grammar that EFL learners should understand because it affects EFL learners in many aspects. The important aspects in writing are conducting sentences, paragraphs, or essays which require proper subject-verb agreement.

However, in several studies, subject-verb agreement is found to be one of the most common errors in writing. This is due to the difference in sentence structure between Indonesian and English. In an Indonesian sentence, there is no change in the verb even though the subject is singular or plural, and the tense is present, past, or future. On the other hand, the subject and the timing of the action determine the verb in every English sentence (tense).

In a study entitled *Learners' Errors in Writing the Recount Text* by Khoirunisa, Suryanti, and Mariam (2021), learners' errors in using subject-verb agreement become the second frequent type of errors after errors in using past tense. The results showed that the frequency of errors in subject-verb agreement were 21 out of 31 students. It also explained that the students made errors because of having difficulties in recognizing the subject that made the students cannot produce the correct form of the verb properly.

Moreover, the result of the study with the title *Students' Subject-Verb Agreement Errors in Writing Recount Text Made by Senior High School Students* that conducted by Mesrawati and Narius (2019) also shows that the EFL learners who participated still have difficulties in using the correct pattern of subject-verb agreement in their recount text writing. It is also stated by Pandapatan (2020) in his research that many students make mistakes in choosing the right verbs that match the subject which is not well enough to produce a good writing.

As stated that students have difficulties in writing recount text, and many of them have errors in using subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense when writing a recount text, the writer assumed that grammar especially subject-

verb agreement has influence in writing ability in recount text. Having a good subject-verb agreement mastery can make the writers conveyed the messages to the readers more understandable. Thus, by connecting the mastery of subject-verb agreement to writing ability in recount text, the students could know that grammar mastery especially subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense give effect in their ability to write recount text.

Following the previous explanation above, the researcher would like to conduct a research related to subject-verb agreement mastery and writing ability in recount text. The researcher conducts this study in order to discover if there is any correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text.

### **1.2 Statements of the Problem**

The following research questions are formulated in consideration of the study's background:

1. Is there any correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text?
2. How is the level of subject-verb agreement mastery on the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar?



### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purposes of the study are as follows:

1. To discover whether there is a correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text.
2. To know the level of subject-verb agreement mastery on the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar.

### 1.4 Hypothesis

The hypothesis is predictions that the researcher assumes among two variables. The researcher proposes the hypothesis as follows:

Ho: There is no correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text.

Ha: There is a correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text.

### 1.5 Significance of the Study ★★★★★★

The result of the study is expected to be beneficial both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this study provides information to the reader about the relationship between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text at the tenth grade high school students that can be used as a reference for other researchers who are interested in conducting a similar research. It also can be used as the support to the teaching of grammar and writing and complement the previous studies related to grammar mastery especially subject-verb agreement and writing ability.

Meanwhile practically, the result of this research can give information to the students that mastering subject-verb agreement is quite important especially in the use of to be “was/were” and the verbs that agree with the subjects in the form of past tense. It also can help the English teacher to determine the right method in teaching subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense. The finding of the research also informs the readers that mastering subject-verb agreement has any correlation with students’ writing ability in recount text.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

Based on the curriculum in the senior high school, there are some genres of text that need to be studied to the students in English subjects. They include descriptive texts, recount texts, narrative texts, procedural texts, and news items. The researcher chooses the recount text in conducting this research. Since grammar covers a wide range of subjects, including tenses, subject-verb agreement, and the others, the focus of this research is on the subject-verb agreement.

Therefore, to avoid the research becoming wider, the researcher needs to limit this research to make the problem vivid. The limitation of the study is on the correlation between students’ mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text at the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar in academic year 2021/2022 and the sample used in this study is only one class consisting of 34 students.

### 1.7 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding, the following are the definitions for some key terminology used in this study:

#### 1. Correlation

The term correlation refers to a relationship existing between two or more entities or variables. In another meaning, a correlation is how two variables move in relation with one another. The researcher investigates the relationship between students' subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text in this study.

#### 2. Recount text

A recount text is known as a text that retells a former experience or event. The events in the recount text are usually put in chronological order. Among various types of recount text, this research focuses on historical recount text which retells historical events in the past. Recount text has generic structure consisting of orientation which gives the background information about the event, events which are a sequence of occurrences organized chronologically, and re-orientation which contains what happened in the end or a personal comment about the event.

#### 3. Subject-verb agreement

The term of subject-verb agreement refers to the requirement that the subjects and the verbs agree one another in number. This means if the subject is singular, the verb must also be singular. Likewise, if the subject is plural, the verb must be plural as well. Subject-verb agreement is needed in producing a good

recount text writing. Hence, in this study, the subjects and the verbs must agree one correctly in the form of past tense.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This chapter conveys the conclusion of this study and the suggestions to the students, English teachers, and further researchers.

#### 5.1 Conclusion

After completing the investigation and data analysis, the researcher draws some conclusions. First, there is a correlation in a weak level between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text. Recalling that the correlation coefficient 0.370 is in the range of 0.21-0.40, means that the two variables are positively correlated at a weak level. In addition, the significance value 0.031 is less than level of significance 0.05 which means that  $H_a$  is accepted and  $H_o$  is rejected.

Second, the level of the students' subject-verb agreement mastery is insufficient. This can be seen from the mean score of 47.03, and the percentage of most of the students who had insufficient level is 64.71% while the percentage of the students who had satisfactory level is 20.59%. The students who had above average level and below average level, each had a percentage of 5.88%, and 2.94% of the students were in the outstanding level.

Third, the weak correlation is affected by some factors. The students had bad score in subject-verb agreement is due to the students' lack understanding about subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense, inadequate of seriousness and attention to the materials given in the classroom, and the teacher could not

achieved the teaching goals. Meanwhile, the students who had good score in writing recount text might be due to their capability to think creatively, develop their ideas, and use the good vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation, etc.

To sum up, subject-verb agreement had a weak relationship with recount text writing. In other words, getting a bad score in the subject-verb agreement does not really mean getting a bad score in writing a text and vice versa. This is evidenced by the correlation between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and their writing ability in recount text in the tenth-grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar in the academic year 2021/2022 is in a weak level.

## 5.2 Suggestion

In light of the results and the conclusion of the study, the writer conveyed some suggestions related to teaching and learning English as follows:

1. For the students

Since the result of the subject-verb agreement mastery test was categorized as poor or insufficient level, the writer suggests the tenth grade students of SMAN 1 Manyar that they need to be serious and pay attention to the materials given in the classroom. They also need to learn more in order to improve their subject-verb agreement mastery in the form of past tense, especially in the use of to be "was/were" and the past form of the verbs that agree with the subject. They also should improve their knowledge through learning grammatical features of recount text in order to know the language features used in the text and their use. Therefore, grammar can give greater influence on the students' writing ability.

## 2. For English teachers

For English teachers, the writer suggests the teacher to apply any teaching method that is suitable to teach English, especially in grammar and writing, since many of the students have an error in using subject-verb agreement in the form of past tense. The teacher should deepen the students' knowledge in the use of grammar in every language skills especially writing in their teaching, so the students can be able to use proper language structure in order to create better writing.

## 3. For future researchers

The outcomes of this study can be considered as a reference for future researchers who will carry out any further research on the same topic or field. However, since this study is limited to the relationship between students' mastery of subject-verb agreement and writing ability in recount text, the researcher suggests to future researchers conduct the research using different text genres, such as descriptive, narrative, etc. The future researchers can also use recount text but with different types, such as personal recount text or others. The future researchers can also conduct the research with larger samples since the researcher only used 34 students as the sample in this study, and ensure that the instruments used is in accordance with the material being taught, so the result of the test will be more relevant and reliable.

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