

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

English has four skills and some linguistics components that must be mastered in teaching learning process. Grammar is one of English components that must be mastered in order to able to construct English sentences. Traditionally, grammar subdivided into two different but inter-related areas of study.¹

Writing is difficult to be done by students because it needs a correct grammar, content, main idea, or topic. To make a writer easier to write, the students should be able to know the writing strategies. The previous study written by Noor Asiah said that some strategies used by students are to learn writing material that had been given, to do writing exercise, to improve in memorizing vocabulary, to learn more about grammatical structure, to do a consultation to the writing lecturer, and doing work group. In English there are four skills should be mastered by students, they are speaking, reading, listening, and writing. This part of the skill is important to be a master to make student easy to understand about English. Writing is an important part should be mastered by students, because of every when they learn in English subject, they always write something such as English lesson, English note, story, and English news. Writing

¹ Andrew Radford, *Syntax*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, p.1

is one material that taught in English education department of State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya.

One of the discussions in writing that is important to be highlighted is subject-verb agreement. There are many verbs that used in the English. A verb must agree with a subject that followed. These influence very much with the meaning of that sentence. It is related with grammar also because one of English grammar subject is about subject-verb agreement material. It is the suitability between subject and object (predicate).² The agreement is the determination of the inflectional form of one word according to a grammatical feature, such as number or gender, or another word.³

When to begin writing, it is important to make sure that subjects and verbs agree with each other. That means that plural subjects should be matched to plural verbs and singular verbs should be matched to singular subjects. If do not do this rule, the sentence is not grammatically incorrect but confusing to boot. For example to writing a diary, in commonly the students use simple past tense. In the past tense, however, subject-verb agreement is a little less complicated. Because in the past tense, regardless of whether the subject is singular or plural, the verb form stays the same. So, *The robot menaced me from across the bar*. And *The robots menaced me from across the bar*. keep the same

²Fuad Mas'ud, *Essentials of English Grammar*, Jogjakarta: BPFTE, 2006, p.135

³Shared Vision Unlimited, Verb Agreement, <http://www.shared-visions.com/?id=478&sid=1> (Online on May 17th, 2013).

verb form, though the first sentence has a singular subject ('robot') and the second sentence has a plural subject ('robots'). Of course, there are some exceptions. When certain helping verbs are used as the main verb, then the students have to pay attention to subject-verb agreement again. The most common are 'has'/'have' and 'was'/'were.' Take this example: *The robot has destroyed the village.* Both 'has' and 'robot' are singular, and 'has' is the main verb here. If the main subject is plural, pluralize must also 'have', as in, *The robots have destroyed the village.* Or, *The photo was plastered all over campus.* Compared to *The photos were plastered all over campus.* 'Photo' - 'was.' 'Photos' - 'were.'⁴

One part of writing to be learned is a paragraph. In writing the subject, the first-grade students learned how to write good sentences. Some of the students sometimes had difficulties when they wrote a sentence, some of them didn't know the sentence grammatically.

Diary was a notebook made by the students to write about several important things such as their experiences, daily activities, planning in the future, or some ideas. Some students think that diary as a notebook to write an important thing for them. So based on the background above, it is interesting to find out the error of subject-verb agreement of student's writing in their diaries, and want to know the content of student's diaries.

⁴Christopher Curley, Verb Tense & Subject-Verb Agreement, <http://study.com/academy/lesson/verb-tense-subject-verb-agreement.html>, (Online on May, 7th 2013)

Based on writer's experience when was studied in the fourth semester that the students had difficulties in constructing a good sentence especially in subject-verb agreement. Although this is the base material in English, in fact, many students still make some errors when they make it in a sentence or a paragraph. The reasons for the errors are poor knowledge about tenses, such as present tense and past tense. Furthermore, the students had some difficulties in writing a long sentence in form of paragraphs and cannot defend structure of tense used continuity. The students also made an error in vocabulary and spelling. In another class, the students had material about the diary and the lecturer instructed to write diary regularly in a semester. The purpose was to build students' awareness to write and gave more comprehension in grammatical writing. Based on that experience, this study will combine two treatments to be the solution to solve students' problems in writing a good sentence and difficulties in grammar comprehension.

Thus, it is interesting to know the ability of the second-semester students in writing diaries. This study entitled research "The Error Analysis of Subject-Verb Agreement in Writing Diary at The Second Semester Students of The English Education Program at IAIN of Palangka Raya".

B. Problems of study

According to the background above, the problems of the study are as follow:

1. What are the types of error which cause subject-verb agreement error in writing diary?
2. What are the factors which cause subject-verb agreement errors in writing diary?

C. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study as follows:

1. To describe the type of errors which cause subject-verb agreement error in writing diary.
2. To describe the factors which cause subject-verb agreement error in writing diary.

D. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study was conducted in State Islamic Institute of Palangka Raya. Which focus on the type of error which causes subject-verb agreement errors and the factors which cause subject-verb agreement errors in writing a diary of the second-semester students. There are many errors in English and factors which cause it but this research limits it only for subject-verb agreement errors. The other errors will not be criticism in this research. The numbers of the subjects are three students. This study uses a purposive sampling technique to recruit three students which have problems in subject-verb agreement material. On the other

hand, this study limits the types and the factors which cause subject-verb agreement error in writing diary and does not general to other errors.

E. Significance of the Study

The significances of the Study are as follow:

1. Theoretical significance

The result of this study will give empirical data about the type of error which cause subject-verb agreement errors and the factors which cause subject-verb agreement errors in writing a diary of the second-semester students.

2. Practical significance

The result of the study gives a contribution to the lecturer about the subject-verb agreement errors in writing diary are attained by the students. The study purpose is to help the students to solve their problem in writing a diary with a good subject-verb agreement written. Furthermore, the result of this study probably gives support to the lecturer and students in developing their knowledge about writing especially write sentence and paragraph with subject-verb agreement appropriately.

F. Definition of Key Terms

1. Error

The error is the flawed side of learner speech or writing that deviate from some rules or selected norms that mature language performance. They are part of the conversation of composition that deviates from some selected norms

or mature language performance, no matter what the characteristic of causes of deviation might be.⁵ In this study, the error means the students' fallacy in subject-verb agreement in writing diary.

2. Error Analysis

Error analysis is an analytical tool, as are the specification of transitional construction, the computation of acquisition orders, and the delineation of special utterance types.⁶ In this study, error analysis means a list of steps to analyze the students' errors in subject-verb agreement in writing a diary.

3. Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject-verb agreement refers to the fact that the subject and verb in a sentence must agree in number. In other words, they both must be singular or they both must be plural. The tricky part is in knowing the singular and plural forms of subjects and verbs.⁷ In this study, the subject-verb agreement means the students' error in writing diary produced by the students.

4. Writing Diary

Diary is a book with spaces for each day of the year, in which one can write down appointments, things to be done in the future, etc.⁸ In this study, writing diary means the students' writing product which is analyzed by using

⁵Heidi Dulay, *Language two*. New York: Oxford university press,1982, p.138

⁶*Ibid*, p.145

⁷WP Smith, Subject Verb Agreement, <http://www.k12reader.com/term/subject-verb-agreement/>, (Online on May 7th,2013)

⁸ Hornby, A.S, *Oxford Advnced Learners Dictionary*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.320

error analysis steps. The writing diary covers three meetings in a month. It is collected two times a week.

G. Framework of the study

In order to give the guidance for the writer and the readers in understanding the research paper, this study makes an outline about the content of the research as follows:

- Chapter I : Introduction that consist of the background of the study, problems of the study, objectives of the study, significances of the study, limitation of the study, and outlines of the study.
- Chapter II : Review of related literature consists of previous study, definition of error, error analysis, classification of error subject-verb agreement, writing, diary.
- Chapter III : Research method which present time and place of the study, approach and type of the study, subject and object of the study, data collecting procedures, endorsement of data, and data analysis procedures.
- Chapter IV : The result of the study.
- Chapter V : Closing