

**AN ANALYSIS OF THIRD YEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS'
ABILITY IN USING ENGLISH SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT OF SIMPLE
PRESENT SENTENCES**

Thesis

***Submitted as a Partial fulfillment of the Requirement
to Get the Strata One (S1) Degree***



By:

**Name : Yennita Rosa
BP / NIM : 2005 / 67446**

Advisors

**Prof. Dr. Hj. Hermawati Syarif, M.Hum.
Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed.**

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE LITERATURE AND ARTS
STATE UNIVERSITY OF PADANG
2011**

HALAMAN PERSETUJUAN SKRIPSI

AN ANALYSIS OF THIRD YEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING ENGLISH SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT OF SIMPLE PRESENT SENTENCES

Nama : Yennita Rosa
NIM / BP : 67446 / 2005
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa Sastra dan Seni

Padang, Februari 2011

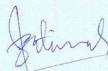
Disetujui oleh:

Pembimbing I



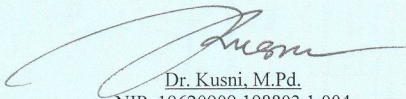
Prof. Dr. Hj. Hermawati Syarif, M.Hum.
NIP. 19510721 197503 2 001

Pembimbing II



Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed.
NIP. 19720615 199903 2 002

Diketahui oleh:
Ketua Jurusan



Dr. Kusni, M.Pd.
NIP. 19620909 198803 1 004

HALAMAN PENGESAHAN LULUS UJIAN SKRIPSI

Dinyatakan lulus setelah dipertahankan di depan Tim Penguji Skripsi Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris Fakultas Bahasa Sastra dan Seni Universitas Negeri Padang

AN ANALYSIS OF THIRD YEAR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENTS' ABILITY IN USING ENGLISH SUBJECT – VERB AGREEMENT OF SIMPLE PRESENT SENTENCES

Nama : Yennita Rosa
NIM / BP : 67446 / 2005
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Jurusan : Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris
Fakultas : Bahasa Sastra dan Seni

Padang, Februari 2011

Tim Penguji:

Tanda Tangan

Ketua : Prof. Dr. Hj. Hermawati Syarif, M.Hum



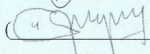
Sekretaris : Sitti Fatimah, S.S., M.Ed.



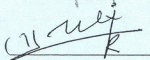
Anggota : 1. Dra. Hj. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D



2. Drs. Amri Isyam, M.Pd



3. Yuli Tiarina, S.Pd., M.Pd



ABSTRAK

Rosa, Yennita. 2011. *An Analysis of Third Year English Department Students' Ability in Using English Subject – Verb Agreement of Simple Present Sentences.* (Unpublished Thesis). Padang: FBSS-UNP

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan kemampuan *grammar* mahasiswa tingkat III Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris tahun 2010/2011 dalam menggunakan *subject-verb agreement* dengan tepat untuk setiap pemakaian jenis *Subject* yang berbeda dalam sebuah essay deskriptif.

Rancangan penelitian yang digunakan adalah rancangan *qualitative descriptive*. Kemudian, populasi penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa tingkat III di Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa Sastra dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Padang tahun 2010/2011 yang berjumlah 6 kelas. Sample penelitian ini berjumlah 34 orang mahasiswa dari populasi yang berjumlah 186 orang mahasiswa. Sample diambil dengan menggunakan teknik *cluster sampling*.

Selanjutnya, data dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan tes *writing*. Mahasiswa diminta untuk menulis essay deskriptif selama 60 menit dalam 3 kali pertemuan. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh, kemampuan *grammar* mahasiswa dalam menggunakan *subject-verb agreement* dengan tepat untuk setiap pemakaian jenis *Subject* yang berbeda dalam sebuah essay deskriptif dikategorikan *baik*. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari kemampuan mahasiswa dalam menggunakan *Singular Subject* dengan rincian: 15 (44.12%) orang mendapatkan nilai sangat baik, 8 (23.53%) orang mendapatkan nilai baik, 5 (14.71%) orang mendapatkan nilai cukup, 5 (14.71%) mendapatkan nilai rendah, dan 1 (2.94%) orang mendapatkan nilai sangat rendah. Sedangkan dalam menggunakan *Plural Subject*, kemampuan mahasiswa dikategorikan *sangat baik*. Hal ini dapat dilihat dari rincian berikut: 28 (82.35%) orang mendapatkan nilai sangat baik, dan 6 (17.65%) orang mendapatkan nilai baik.

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian diatas, penulis berkesimpulan bahwa sebagian besar mahasiswa tingkat III Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris tahun 2010/2011 Fakultas Bahasa Sastra dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Padang, mempunyai kemampuan yang baik dalam menggunakan *subject-verb agreement*; 23 (67.65%) orang pada *Singular Subjects* dan 34 (100.00%) orang untuk *Plural subjects* yang termasuk kategori baik dalam penggunaan *subject-verb agreement*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, the writer would like to thank to Allah SWT for His great blessings that this thesis is finally accomplished and for His abundant love in the writer's life so she can fill her days with smiles and gratitude.

The writer would also like to express her thanks to her advisors: Prof. Dr. Hj. Hermawati Syarif. M.Hum and Sitti Fatimah, S.S, M.Ed for their valuable guidance, suggestions and advices as well as for their supports given during the writing of this thesis. Her thanks are also dedicated to her examiners; Dra. Hj. Yenni Rozimela, M.Ed., Ph.D., Drs. Amri Isyam, M.Pd., Yuli Tiarina, S.Pd., M.Pd. for their comment and suggestions. And the deepest thanks go to lecturer, Witri Oktavia, S.S and the owner of an English Course in Padang, Joko Jatmiko, for their willingness to be the scorers of this research. The writer also thanks Chairperson, Secretary, all teaching and administration staffs of English Department of State University of Padang for their great support during her studies at this department.

The writer would also like to express her special gratitude to her beloved and best parents in the world (Almarhum Saharman and Herawati Abbas) and her brother (Doni Hermansyah) for their everlasting supports, spirits, courage, and affections and prays, so the writer could accomplish this thesis. Also, the writer would like to give regards to all of her friends from NR 1A, NR 2A, NR 3AK,

and NR 4AK (anum, yaya, ticha, fara, adek) and Septia Malinda, Dwinta Anggun Ummami, Resti Prima Sari, Dilla Tifella, Rezie Rezkia, who are very cooperative, joyful and helpful. The writer also apologizes deeply that she cannot mention the names of her other friends, because there are so many friends who have given courage and spirit to the success of this thesis.

Everything done by her friends is meaningful for the writer, even the smallest things. Last but not least, the writer would like to say her greatest thank to her someone special (Kurniawan Putra) for being patient to support her with a great love in completing this thesis.

Finally, the writer has done her best, but she still has mistakes on this thesis. The writer hopes there are critics and suggestion in order to improve the thesis. Also, the writer hopes this thesis will give some benefit, especially for the writer.

Yennita Rosa

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRAK	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vi
LIST OF APPENDICES	vii

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem	1
B. Identification of the Problem	3
C. Limitation of the Problem	5
D. Formulation of the Problem	5
E. Research Questions	5
F. Purpose of the Research	5
G. Significance of the Research	6
H. Definition of Key Terms	6

CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Some Concepts of Grammar	7
B. The Aims of Learning Grammar	9
C. The Simple Present Tense	11
D. Subject – Verb Agreement	13
E. Mistakes and Errors	17
F. Previous Studies	17
G. Conceptual Framework	19

CHAPTER III. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Design of the Research	22
B. Population and Sample	22
C. Instrumentation	23
D. Technique of Data Collection	25
E. Technique of Data Analysis	25

CHAPTER IV. RESEARCH FINDINGS

A. Data Description	28
B. Data Analysis	31
C. Discussion	35

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion	39
B. Suggestions	39

BIBLIOGRAPHY	41
---------------------------	-----------

APPENDICES	43
-------------------------	-----------

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The Indicators in Checking the Students Answer.....	26
Table 2: The Rating Quality for Students' ability in Using Subject-Verb Agreement	27
Table 3: Students' Ability in Using Singular Subjects in the First Meeting	29
Table 4: Students' Ability in Using Singular Subjects in the Second Meeting	30
Table 5: Students' Ability in Using Singular Subjects in the Third Meeting	31
Table 6: Students' Ability in Using Plural Subjects in the First Meeting	32
Table 7: Students' Ability in Using Plural Subjects in the Second Meeting	33
Table 8: Students' Ability in Using Plural Subjects in the Third Meeting	34

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Indicators of each rules of subject-verb agreement.....	41
Appendix 2. Students' topic.....	44
Appendix 3. Writing test sheet	45
Appendix 4. Students' scores	46
Appendix 5. Students' Score in Using Subject-Verb Agreement in Simple Present Sentences	55
Appendix 6. Students' essays	57

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Problem

In Indonesia, English is taught to the students from elementary schools to universities. This is because Indonesian schools especially the senior high schools in town like Padang are preparing themselves to standardize their schools internationally. In studying English, the students should master the four English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) integratedly. Besides, the students should also acquire the English grammar. Grammar determines the success in mastering the four basic skills. Without grammar, the language skills of a student will not be perfect. In other words, grammar is a tool to have better mastery in the four basic skills and it can help the students to learn English effectively. Consequently, the English Department of State University of Padang prepares its students for three semesters with grammar courses. They are Grammar I, II, and III.

Grammar courses are very helpful because in grammar courses, the rules of English grammar taught are suitable to the students' need in learning English. In these courses, the students are provided with the lessons about grammar completely. The English Department through the lecturers manages the subjects and materials of grammar that should be learned by the students in the syllabus of the grammar courses in each semester.

Based on the syllabus of grammar courses, there are a lot of English grammatical rules that are taught, such as verb tenses, passive voice, reported speech, adjective clauses, exclamation, gerunds, comparisons, subject and verb agreement, infinitives, determiners of quantifiers in sentences. In this case, the third year students of the English Department in State University of Padang academic year 2010/2011 have learned about subject and verb agreement. By the end of grammar classes especially Grammar III, students are expected to be able to apply the usage of all lesson in grammar correctly in real life included subject-verb agreement.

In all languages especially English, subject – verb agreement should be concerned. Singular subject should take singular verb and plural subject should take plural verb. This idea is supported by Einsohn (2002) subject – verb agreement means choosing verb to match a singular or plural subject. Sometimes, students are confused to make the verb agree with the subject in a sentence. They tend to use the verb without deeply considering about the subject in a sentence.

The writer has observed the ability of her friends in using subject-verb agreement when she was at the third year. Frequently, they did some mistakes in using it. For instance, *My mother and I is going to be at home*. They should have written: *My mother and I are going to be at home*. They thought that the subject of this sentence is *my mother*, so they used *is*. They did not realize that there is another subject; *I*. In this case, *are* should be used in that sentence as the verb agreement. Another example is, *Each of the members **have** a specific task*. They should have written: *Each of the members has a specific task*. They thought that

the subject of this sentence is *members* which refers to something in plural. However they did not check the previous pronoun that precedes *members*. As we know that *each* does not refer to a specific person or thing. In this case, *has* should be used in that sentence as the verb agreement.

From the examples above, it is clearly described that students often do grammatical mistakes in making simple present sentences. It is not like when they make the simple past sentences that all subjects only need the second form of a verb (Verb 2), e.g. *The girls in that class **won** the dance competition in this city last year* or *The girl in that class **won** the dance competition in this city last year*. These two examples look similar but they are clearly different because the first example uses plural subject and the second uses singular subject. In fact, both subjects use the same verb; it is **won**. The writer pay attention more in simple present than simple past because there will be less grammatical errors in simple past than in simple present tense

Based on the experience, it's still a serious homework for all teachers especially lecturers at English Department in State University of Padang to make the student more careful in constructing a sentence. It is expected that the students pay attention more about the sentence construction, the verb which is used should agree the subject, especially in simple present sentences.

B. Identification of the Problem

Based on the background of the problem above, there are three major problems occurring when the students learn grammar. In general about learning

English, it seems difficult for them to master the grammar and to apply the grammatical rules such as verb tenses, passive voice, reported speech, adjective clauses, exclamation, gerunds, comparisons, subject and verb agreement, infinitives, determiners of quantifiers in constructing English sentences even though they have learned the grammar in some courses. There is a stereotype about English among the students that makes them not interested in learning English without recognizing it. Although the teacher has taught and explained the lesson clearly, they keep on ignoring the teacher teaching and explaining. Moreover, they tend to annoy the rest of the students who like and get interested in English.

Using subject and verb agreement in a sentence, for example, is one of the materials in grammar courses that should be mastered by the students. The lecturers have taught the students how to determine the subject and verb agreement in a sentence. However, sometimes the students do not pay attention to the lecturers' explanation and they do not want to find more additional information about them.

In dealing with subject and verb agreement, some of the students of English Department in State University of Padang usually are confused when they found a complicated subject which consists of adjective or other modifiers. They tend to group the compound subjects into plural. However, in some cases, compound subjects are achieved as the singular one e.g. *Every student in this classroom **has** to do the final project.* Mostly the students think that *every* means plural subject. They tend to write *Every **students** **have** to do the final project.*

There are two grammatical errors in this example; they are in subject and the predicate. Based on the grammar rule, after having *every* there should be singular noun followed by singular verb as well.

C. Limitation of the Problem

Based on the identification of the problem above, the problem is limited to the analysis of grammatical ability of the third year students of English Department in using subject and verb agreement of Simple Present sentences. The writer focuses on this problem because there are less grammatical errors in simple past if it is compared with the simple present tense. Finally most of the students' writings are lack of correct subject-verb agreement when they use Simple Present sentences in academic writing like paper and thesis.

The writer also limited the problem into the students' ability in using simple singular subject and simple plural subject of subject-verb agreement of simple present sentences. Previously, the writer would like to observe the students' ability in using subject-verb agreement of complex subject. However, the writer didn't get the data based what the writer would like to find previously because of the instrument used that could not elicit the students use the complex subjects as expected.

D. Formulation of the Problem

From the limitation of the problem above, the problem of the study can be formulated as "How was the ability of the third year English Department students

of State University of Padang in academic year of 2010/2011 in determining subject and verb agreement in simple present sentences?”

E. Research Questions

The research questions of this study are formulated in the following:

1. How was the ability of the third year English Department students of State University of Padang in academic year of 2010/2011 in using singular subjects of simple present sentences?
2. How was the ability of the third year English Department students of State University of Padang in academic year of 2010/2011 in using plural subjects of simple present sentences?

F. Purpose of the Research

The purposes of this research are to find out:

1. the ability of the third year English Department students of State University of Padang in academic year of 2010/2011 in using singular subjects.
2. the ability of the third year English Department students of State University of Padang in academic year of 2010/2011 in using plural subjects.

G. Significance of the Research

This research finding gives a great significant contribution both practical and theoretical values of the scientific knowledge to teaching grammar, for both the teachers and the students. It gives the information for the lecturers about the clear description of their students' ability and they are expected to pay more attention to this problem in order to help the students to master grammar perfectly. It is also expected that the students know the level of their ability and enrich it in applying grammar especially in writing task.

H. Definitions of Key terms

1. Grammatical ability : the ability of the third year students of English Department in using subject – verb agreement in sentences.
2. Subject – verb agreement : the agreement in choosing a verb to agree with the singular or plural subject in a sentence.
3. Simple present sentences : sentences which show things in general truth, perception and habitual action.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A. Some Concepts of Grammar

Grammar plays an important role in teaching and learning process. It is a need to pay attention a lot to grammar which is the basic element in acquiring the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In other words, grammar cannot be separated from the four language skills. In arranging a good sentence both in spoken and written forms, grammar is a necessity. Thornbury (1999) confirms that grammar is a description of the rules that lead the language user of how the language sentences are formed when they listen, speak, read, and write. As a result, grammar should be mastered by the English language learners to improve their competencies in English language.

Arranging some words for spoken English language is not as complicated as in written language. There must be some rules to be obeyed called grammar. Cowan (2008) states that grammar is a set of rules in arranging words into good sentences in a particular language. In the relation to grammar of English, grammar means all rules that has function to form English sentences correctly. This idea is in line with what Ur (2007) defines previously that grammar is the way of a language manipulates and combines words in order to form longer units of meaning. If people use the grammar correctly, they will get the meaning of the sentences which they have mentioned. As a result, the communication runs well.

previously Klammer (2000) has mentioned that grammar enables the writer to group word and to organize them in a good order to form unit of ideas in the correct English sentence.

English written language does not only talk about how to arrange the words correctly, but it also agrees the pattern to use in sentence. As what Indonesian language has, English also has parts of speech: adjective, adverb, article, conjunction, noun, preposition, pronoun, and verb. Then parts of the speech will be put together correctly based on the pattern to get the meaning e.g. *A growing number **of** people are **fluent** in several **languages**.* There are an article, preposition, adjective and noun in this sentence. Here the use of *of* is as the word which relates the noun with other words (growing number and people), so that the sentence will be meaningful. The ideas above support what Coelho (2004) states that grammar refers to the language patterns that indicate the relationships among words in sentences. In other words, the sentence will be understood easily if the words are match. For example, the subject used in a sentence must be suitable with the verb in order to get the correct meaning. Consequently, people will not be confused in acquiring the meaning.

Furthermore, Brown (2001) has stated that grammar is a system of rules controlling the common arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence. He elaborates that the correct arrangement of a sentence based on the rules will make the readers get the meaning of the sentence easily. Thus, meaningful sentence comes out from the correct arrangement and relationship of words in the sentence.

In conclusion, grammar is the rule in arranging words into a sentence which has meaning. The language users should be careful in choosing the words in order to get the correct agreement.

B. The Aims of Learning Grammar

Learning English grammar has many aims. The students can use English in communication correctly is one of them. This statement is supported by the ideas from Smedley (1983) who states that there are four aims of learning grammar at school; First, it helps students to learn foreign language easily; second, it helps the students write more effectively; third, it gives students an insight, knowledge into the way language works; and last, it equips students with grammatical nomenclature (to put the name in good order), which is useful for reading.

Furthermore, Burton (1984) finds that in understanding a foreign language, English, learners have to know the words that they want to use in expressing their ideas and they have to know how to use the words in a language. Harmer (1986) also supports the idea that grammar is one of the most important components of English language, because it enables the students to organize units of ideas into correct English sentences. In other words, the learners should study the grammar because through grammar courses, they will be able to know the rules in constructing words into meaningful sentences. The learners' mastery of the grammar will facilitate them to achieve the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing better. Grammar also helps the readers to see the

language systematically. Grammar plays an important role in daily activities related to English, whether people use it consciously or unconsciously.

Similarly, Krashen (1987) supports that without knowing the rules of a language; EFL learners would not be able to use the language for effective communication. Hughes (1989) states that grammar must be accepted whether it is important or not in English teaching. As a result, learning the rules of a language and using it correctly in appropriate situations will make the students recognize how to acquire the language itself. Grammatical ability will determine what people can achieve in performing four English basic skills. It means that mastering grammar is very important because it is used all the time in four English basic skills; listening, speaking, reading, writing consciously or unconsciously.

Heine (1997) also supports those ideas by stating a language structure which is called “grammar” is important to be mastered by every language learners because it will make them understand the language easier. The students should learn English grammar because it organizes almost all parts of language which is very useful to get advanced comprehension in learning English (Klamer, 2000). Finally, Ur (2007) states that students will not be able to use a language without knowing how to put and match the words in a sentence. From those theories mentioned, it can be pictured out that to understand the language easier and to get advanced comprehension in learning English, grammar is very important to be mastered.

Based on the theories above, it can be concluded that grammar is one of the most important language aspects to learn, especially in learning a foreign language such as English. Through grammar, the learners are easily facilitated in expressing their ideas when they communicate with others and people can learn language easily. It also help students to produce a good writing or paper by combining sentences in appropriate order and providing the knowledge and skills on how a sentence is constructed.

One of the simple kinds of writing work done by the students is descriptive essay. Mostly, this essay conducted the students to use the simple kind of tenses; simple present tense. Although it is a simple tense, a lot of errors are done in this tense. It is not yet known whether it is because the students do not master it very well or just because of miswriting.

C. The Simple Present Tense

There are some periods of time. They are past times, present times and future. All of these determine how people talk structurally correct or not. The differences create some certain structures in sentences. In delivering ideas or thought that happens in present situation. English grammar has simple present tense, present continuous tense, and present perfect tense. While in past situation, English grammar has past tense, past continuous tense, past perfect. Finally in the future situation, English grammar has future tense, future continuous, and future perfect.

For daily conversation and free writing people tend to use simple present tense to express their ideas or thought. Simple present tense is used to express the routine activity e.g. *Everybody needs a job to make a living*. In similar way, Murphy (2000) states that simple present are used to talk about things in general, to say something that is true in general, and to say something that happens repeatedly e.g. *Every student wears school uniform to the school*. Moreover, this idea is in line with Hinkel (2004) who states that simple present refers to actions that are general (no specific or definite time mentioned). It is used to show general things which most of people know about that for example, *People work to make a living*. Furthermore, Obrecht and Ferris (2005) state that simple present are used to speak about general truth, commonly in essays, e.g. *The sun always rises in the east*, to write about perceptions and states of being, to speak about habitual action.

Finally, there are variations in applying simple present tense based on the subject variations. It often happens in simple present tense where there is an exception for singular subject. If the subject is singular, the verb following is ending by (-s / -es). This could be problem when some people especially students as English department students do not consider much about singular or plural subject.

Based on the definition above, the writer concludes that the Simple Present Tense is a kind of tense which is used to express habitual action and something in general. It is usually used in daily conversation and in a kind of essay named Descriptive essay which mostly uses simple present sentences. Simple present

tense is also used in creating a short essay when someone wishes to apply for a job or a school.

D. Subject – Verb Agreement

After considering much about the use of singular and plural subject, the next is to pay attention to the subject-verb agreement which plays an important role in making the correct sentences. Einsohn (2000) mentions that subject-verb agreement is a singular subject takes a singular verb, and a plural subject takes a plural verb. Similarly, Bartell in GED (2003) states that subject-verb agreement is choosing a present-tense verb to match a singular or plural subject. The basic rules for subject-verb agreement are: first, the presents-tense verbs of singular subjects (except *I* and *You*) end in s e.g. *She exhibits all of her collection from her gallery once a year* (*she* belongs to singular subject). Second, the present-tense verbs of plural subjects (and *I* and *You*) do not end in s e.g. *They always play the drama amazingly* (*they* belongs to plural subject). However, some variations of subjects are available (all subjects except the subject pronoun: *I*, *You*, *We*, *They*, *She*, *He* and *It*). For example, *The ideas in that book are interesting*. The main subject here is *ideas* and it is regarded as plural subject. The subject has a specific information *in that book* which sometimes makes the students confused to decide the sentence needs plural or singular verb.

Here are the basic rules of subject-verb agreement which explained by Isyam and team in the guideline book for students in taking Structure 4 class in 2007: the first rule is about the review of basics. Here the verb used in the

sentence is easily decided whether it needs singular or plural verb e.g. *My friend lives in Boston.* The main subject is *friend* and it is a singular subject. As a result, singular verb is needed for this sentence. Sometimes, there is a prepositional phrase comes between the subject and verb e.g. *That book on political parties is interesting.* The main subject for this sentence is *book* and it is a singular subject. The singular verb is needed because the prepositional phrase that comes between the subject and verb does not affect the verb.

The second rule is using expressions of quantity such as *some of, most of, half of, two-thirds of, ninety percent of.* When there is an expression of quantity is available in a sentence, the verb is determined by the noun (or pronoun) which follows it e.g. *A lot of the equipment is new.* Because the word *equipment* is regarded as the singular subject, the singular verb is needed in this sentence.

The third rule is using singular words. When *every* and *each* are used in the sentence, the singular verb is required (Notice: nouns that immediately follow *every* and *each* are singular) e.g. *Every student is invited.* In the same way, *everyone* and *everybody* always take a singular verb. However, *each of, one of* and *none of* are followed by a plural noun (notice the pattern: *one of / each of / none of + plural noun + singular verb*) e.g. *Each of the students has a schedule.*

The fourth rule is using *there* followed by *be* and *subject* e.g. *There are some books on the shelf.* Because the main subject in this sentence is *books*, the *be* put after *there* must be plural *be*. When there are more than one subject in the use of *there*, the *be* needed is a plural *be* e.g. *There are a pen, a ruler and a piece of paper on the desk.*

The fifth rule talks about some irregularities that might be found in sentences. For example, the expressions of *time*, *money*, and *distance* are usually singular e.g. *Ten dollars is too much to pay*. Then, nouns ending in *-ics* take singular verbs when they refer to an area of study (*physics*, *economics*, and *linguistics*). However, some *-ics* nouns take plural verbs if they refer to a particular situation instead of a field of study e.g. *Mathematics is easy for her*. and *The statistics in that report are not accurate*.

Moreover Putman (2009) states that subject and verb should agree in person or number. This means that singular subjects require singular verbs and plural subjects require plural verbs. He also describe some rules in subject – verb agreement as follows: the first rule is two or more subjects joined by *and*, *or*, or *nor*. When subjects Joined by *and* require a plural verb e.g. *The President and secretary are going to the conference*. In different ways, when subjects joined by *or*, or *nor* require a verb that agrees with the subject closest to the verb e.g. *Tom or his brothers are going to attend*.

The second rule is when indefinite pronoun is used in the sentence. Most indefinite pronouns such as *anyone*, *everybody*, *nobody*, *someone*, *each* and *something* require singular verbs e.g. *Everybody is responsible*. Some indefinite pronouns such as *all*, *most*, *some*, *none*, and *any* require a verb that matches the noun to which they refer e.g. *All of the property is distributed*. *None of the items are missing*. Plural indefinite pronouns such as *both*, *many*, *several*, and *others* require a plural verb e.g. *Although there are multiple presentations, several employees are not in attendance*.

The third rule is about the use of collective nouns which refer to a group such as *jury*, *family*, *crowd*, and *majority*. They commonly require a singular verb e.g. *The family is present*. The fourth rule is about Nouns that are in plural form but have a singular meaning such as *politics*, *news*, and *tactics*. they require a singular verb e.g. *The news is bad*. *The politics of the party is corrupt*. The fifth rule is talking about The title of a work. It takes a singular verb e.g. *Military tactics is wonderful reading*.

The last point of the rules from Putman (2009) is about Relative pronouns which refer to another noun in the sentence such as *who*, *which* and *that*. They require a verb that agrees with their antecedent (the noun the relative pronouns refers to). If the antecedent is singular, the verb should be singular. If the antecedent is plural, the verb should be plural e.g. *Our client, who was present at the scene, is indicated*. *The clients, who were present at the scene, are indicated*.

Based on the explanation above, the writer can conclude that in agreeing a verb, the most important thing to consider is about the core subject used in the sentences. There is usually some more additional information such as prepositional phrase or clause that disturbs many writers in creating the correct sentences. Considering about the irregular rules is also playing an important role in making good subject-verb agreement in sentences, especially in simple present sentences.

In applying subject-verb agreement, some students sometimes cannot do it perfectly. It can be called as mistakes and errors. The two terms seem similar.

However, they are different and they show different conclusion for the students' wrongness in writing.

E. Mistakes and Errors

There has been unclear information about mistakes and errors in students' mind. Some students said they are the same. Actually they are different and Ellis (2003) states that they need to be distinguished each other. She also defines that a mistake is the inability of the students to reflect what they actually know of the target language like English, and an error is the result from the gap in the students' knowledge of the target language. Earlier than this, Porte (1988) defines that an error is a wrong habit that we do in daily life and we cannot ignore it. On the contrary, a mistake is the result from carelessness, a slip of tongue (pen), or momentary lapse in thought. It means that the students are categorized having errors when they make the wrongness in high frequency in producing English sentences. Otherwise, the students are categorized having mistakes when they make the wrongness in low frequency in producing English.

Chomsky in Dulay (1982) states that error occurs because the learner is lacking in knowledge of the rule of the language, and it is called competence error. Corder in Dulay (1982) is in line with this idea that error is a systematic deviation due to the learners' still developing the knowledge of the second Language rule system.

Based on the explanation above, it s clearly describe the different between mistakes and errors. Finally this research shows the findings that the students

often have mistakes in using subject-verb agreement for both singular and plural subjects. It can be seen that they have had the knowledge about it but they still did it incorrectly.

F. Previous Study

There are some studies about the grammatical ability of the English Department students especially in State University of Padang. Esa (2005) analyzed the difficulties encountered by the second year students of English Department of UNP in using conditional sentence. She found that the most difficult task in using proper tense was the past unreal conditional sentences, and using proper modal, the most difficult one was the future factual sentence. Herawati (2008) also found that there were four difficulties faced by the third year English Department of UNP in changing direct speech into reported speech. The difficulties were in changing tenses, changing adverb of place, changing adverb of time, and changing the pronoun.

Meanwhile, Sudirman (2003) found that the errors of grammatical that were made by the students in English Department were the use of *verb*, *be*, *gerund*, and other grammatical component to form a sentence. For examples: *She enjoy traveling*; *She do not go*; *They happy*, etc. Moreover, Mizna (2005) also found that the errors made by the English Department students of Padang State University were found to be in the use of parts of speech. She found that the students of English Department of UNP failed in using appropriate verb tense in their writing.

Similarly, Isyam (2007) found that there are some grammatical mistakes and errors done by the third year English department students to apply the concord of subject and its verb of Simple Present sentences. He found that some of the students in his research did the concord correctly e.g. *He always teaches interestingly*. They could agree the subject *He* as the third singular subject with the singular verb too like *teaches*. However, some other students still did it incorrectly e.g. *None of his students hate him*. They could not agree the subject *None of his students* as the singular subject with the singular subject. They should have written *hates* not *hate*. He not only discussed about concord in one tense like Simple Present tense but also several other tenses such as Simple past tense, the present and Past Continuous Tense, The Present Perfect and Present perfect Continuous tense and the Simple Future with *be going to*. Besides, he discussed about the concord of subject - complement, subject - object with reflexive pronoun.

The previous researchers above showed that English Department students still make some errors in structure and grammatical components. The similarity between this research and the previous researches is they are still discussing about grammatical ability from the English Department Students. However, this research focuses on analyzing the third year of English Department of UNP students' ability in using subject-verb agreement of simple present sentences. The research is done because there is no research that had analyzed the students' ability in using subject-verb agreement of simple present sentences in English

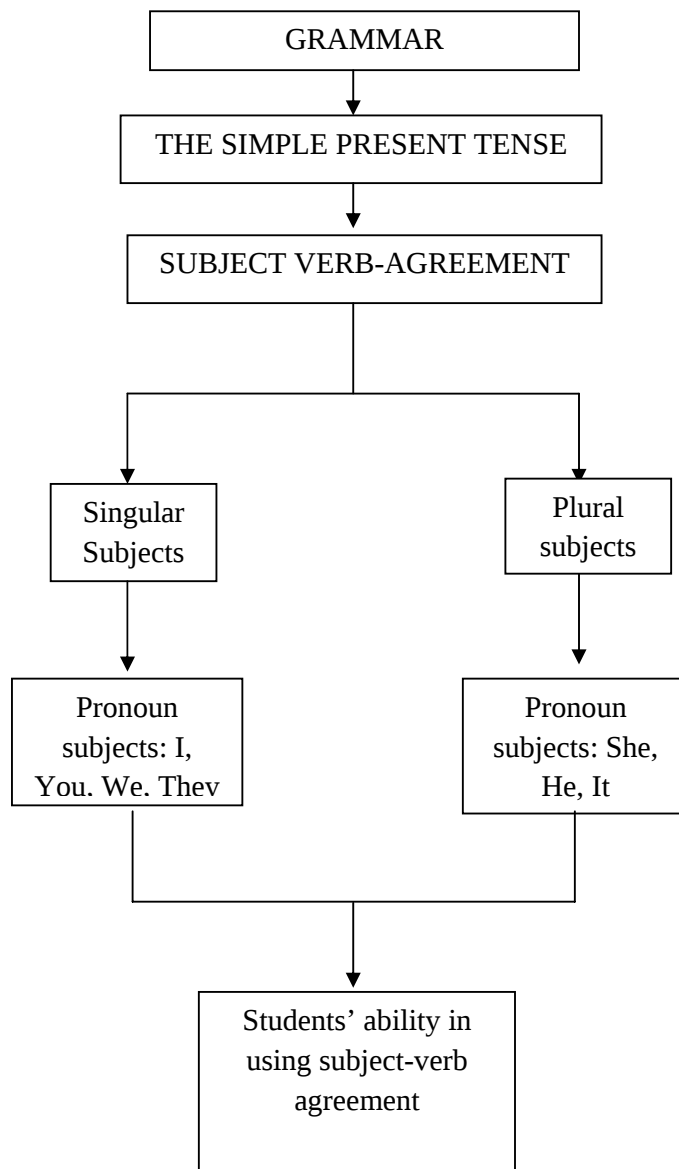
Department of UNP before. Every single mistake in creating simple present sentences is checked whether it is correct or not.

G. Conceptual framework

Mastering grammar is very useful in English communication. Students need many practices and exercises in grammar. Students should master the grammar of a language because it permeates all language skills. Students who learn English as foreign language should know the rules of English language in forming a good sentence. It is better for the students to practice the language and to do exercises so that they can use the language correctly.

Grammar is one of the subjects that must be learned by the English Department students. They learn grammar I, II, III, and IV. Unfortunately, the students still see grammar is difficult to be mastered. Although they have practiced and exercised it, they still have problems in grammar. The exclamation is one aspect of grammar that is considered as difficult lesson for the third year of English Department students.

Due to the ideas above, the writer tends to find out problems faced by the English Department students, especially in using subject-verb agreement. It concerns with the appropriate use of subject and verb. The following diagram draws the process of the research.



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

A. Conclusion

By noticing the research finding in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the students of English Department of State University of Padang in Academic year 2010/2011 in using subject – verb agreement of simple present sentences through writing essay was considered very good. It can be seen that most of the sample students could use correct verb either for singular subjects or plural subjects. Generally, their ability in determining the verbs based on the subjects in an essay was very good because they have learnt it in the previous semester and they have passed it very well. However, there were still some errors that they made in determining the verbs based on the subjects. It also can be seen that they did not get used to telling their ideas in writing. Thus, it makes their essays grammatically incorrect due to the spoken language used in the written material.

B. Suggestion

Related to the research finding in the previous chapter, there are some suggestions that can be given to both students and the next researchers. The students need to be careful in writing their essay in limited time. Finally, it is suggested to the next researchers after this research to choose more appropriate instrument than the writer had in this research in measuring the students'

grammatical ability especially in using subject – verb agreement in order to get the clear description about the students' mistakes and errors

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartell, Elanie and team. 2003. *GED: Language Arts, Writing*. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies
- Brown, H. Douglas. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. San Francisco: Longman, Inc
- Burton, S.H. 1984. *Mastering English Grammar*. London: Macmillan Education Ltd
- Coelho, Elizabeth. 2004. *Adding English: a guide to teaching in multilingual classroom*. Toronto: Pippin Publishing Corporation
- Cowan, Ron. 2008. *The Teacher's Grammar of English: A Course Book and Reference Guide*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Dulay, H., M. Burt, and S. Krashen. 1982. *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press
- Einsohn, Amy. 2002. *The copyeditor's handbook: A guide for book publishing and corporate communications, with exercises and answer keys*. London: university of California Press
- Ellis in Isyam, Amri. 2007. "EFL Learners' Concord mastery and their Grammatical Deviations". *Unpublished Thesis*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang
- Esa, Devi Rahma. 2005. "Difficulties Encountered by The Second Year Students of English Department of UNP In Using Conditional Sentences". *Unpublished Thesis*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang
- Gay, L. R. 1987. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. Ohio: Merrill Publishing Company
- Harmer, Jeremy. 1986. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman Ltd
- Heine, Bernd. 1997. *Cognitive Foundations of Grammar*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Herawati, Herni. 2008. "Difficulties Encountered by The Third Year Students of the English Department of State University of Padang in Changing Direct Speech into Reported Speech". *Unpublished Thesis*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang

- Hinkel, Eli. 2004. *Teaching Academic ESL Writing: Practical techniques in Vocabulary and Grammar*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc
- Hubbard, Peter. 1984. *A Training Course for TEFL*. Oxford: Oxford University
- Hughes, Arthur. 1989. *Testing for Language Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Isyam, Amri. 2007. "EFL Learners' Concord mastery and their Grammatical Deviations". *Unpublished Thesis*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang
- _____ and Team. 2007. *Structure 4: A compilation*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang
- Klammer, 2000. *Analyzing English Grammar*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Krashen, Stephen D. 1987. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International
- Mizna, Yuliza. 2005. "Verb Tense Errors in Compositions of English Department Students of Padang State University". *Unpublished Paper*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang
- Murphy, Raymond with Smalzer, William R. 2000. *Grammar In Use Intermediate*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Obrecht, Fred and Ferris, Boak. *How to Prepare for the California State University Writing proficiency Exams*. New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc
- Porte, Cremee K. 1988. *Mistakes, Errors and Blank Checks: Correction in Communicative Language Teaching*. Spain: University of Granada
- Putman, William H. 2009. *Legal Analysis and Writing*. Canada: Nelson Education Ltd.
- Smedley, Don. 1983. *Teaching the Basic Skills*. New York: Methuen Co
- Sudjana. 1991. *Penelitian Hasil Proses Belajar Mengajar*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosida Karya
- Sudirman. 2003. "Grammatical Errors Made by the Third Year English Department Students of Padang State University in Writing". *Unpublished Thesis*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang

Thornbury, Scott. 1999. *How to Teach Grammar*. London: Pearson Education Limited

Universitas Negeri Padang. 2005. *Buku Pedoman Akademik Universitas Negeri Padang*. Padang: Universitas Negeri Padang

Ur, Penny. 2007. *Grammar Practice Activities: a Practical Guide for Teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press